

CRITIQUE OF THE THIRD QUARTER 2006
ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON
The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment

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The third quarter Sabbath School Quarterly, entitled *The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment*, was an unmitigated and tragic disaster. Despite the known fact that the majority of the denomination's scholars surrendered the 1844 tradition decades ago and that it has long been impossible to find a top scholar prepared to teach it or write on it, the church still insisted on disinterring the dead.

Raymond Cottrell, the one who had most to do with the *SDA Bible Commentary* (next to the editor), for many years spoke and wrote in protest against the decaying heirloom of the 1844 Investigative Judgment. He addressed Andrews University scholars on this topic just a week before the Forum of October 22, 1979. Fred Veltman, chairman of the theology department at Pacific Union College for years, told Neal Wilson he could not believe the doctrine, and the only reply he received was: 'That's all right. But don't go public.' Harry Lowe, while Editor of the *Ministry* said: 'Brother Ford, we cannot establish a doctrine of the church on the vision of a man in a cornfield.' Earle Hilgert, a key writer for the *SDA Commentary*, found this teaching and others so distasteful that he withdrew from the church.

A Potomac University associate of Hilgert, R. Loasby, openly jeered at the 1844 teaching; and Heppenstall, on receiving my Glacier View document wrote to me saying, 'These are my views, right down the line.' Here in Australia, at an October 22, 2005 Forum, the Investigative Judgment teaching was repudiated by top scholars, including Drs Norman Young, Arthur Patrick and Alwyn Salom.

It is a salutary exercise to compare hundreds of Biblical scholars that Froom lists, to support our teaching on Conditional Immortality (*Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers*) and the entire lack of such scholars to support the Investigative Judgment (*Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*).

But more important, is the fact that

although Scripture insists seven times that truth must be established by at least two or three witnesses, there is not one witness for the 1844 doctrine. But what about Daniel 8:14? Well, the Hebrew word for days, though often used by Daniel, is not here to be found. The Hebrew expression rendered 'evening mornings' is not identical with the similar words of Genesis 1 (see modern translations), and Daniel 8:26 with its inclusion of the article before each Hebrew term proves that what is intended is the daily evening and morning sacrifice. ('Evening' and 'morning' refer to points of time, not the dark and light parts of the day. Take the concordance and see.)

Not only is 'days' missing from Daniel 8:14, but 'cleansed' is missing also—see most modern translations. Observe also that the defilement of the Sanctuary is not being caused by the sins of the saints, but by the nasty little horn—the Antichrist. (The *SDA Bible Dictionary* in its article on 'the little horn' says this quite clearly.) Furthermore, if we placed a New Testament in the hands of the *Lesson* author and asked for evidence of an attenuated Investigative Judgment, to what would he turn?

We are also led to wonder how much church history he knows. Is he aware that this theory was the last of several devised to explain away the disappointment of 1844, and that it took thirteen years to come to the fore? Does he know that many of our scholars down the years have protested against it, including W.W. Prescott? Is he further aware that the church has had committees dealing with the involved problems since the 1930's and has

never been able to find solutions? (The books turned out by the Daniel and Revelation Committee after Glacier View were excellent on many side issues and dreadful on the real centralities—as acknowledged by top SDA scholars.)

Does he know that when a church representative from Washington DC went to our top university many years before Glacier View to find a scholar willing to write on Daniel 8: 14, he was unable to find one? Does he know that our top schools ignored the Investigative Judgment doctrine for years prior to Glacier View? And of prior importance is this enquiry: Is he aware how many dear saints of the church have had their Christian assurance robbed by this unscriptural doctrine?

The main argument set forth in the first lesson of the Quarterly is that the Investigative Judgment is necessary in order to vindicate God. Right there, at the very beginning of the pamphlet, a great truth was travestied. It was the Cross (and not 1844) which vindicated God, as E.G. White taught over and over again (see the chapter, 'It is Finished' in *The Desire of Ages*).

Despite the laborious research of scholars over the last century and a half, SDA's appear to have learned nothing from them about the interpretation of Daniel. We have retained the basic prophetic positions of William Miller. Let me illustrate: The *Lesson* assumes the sequence of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the second coming of Christ, thereby omitting the most important event of all the ages—the First Advent and the Cross. Matthew 21:42-44, however, applies the stone of Psalm 118:22 and Daniel 2:34-45 to the first advent of Christ. Even our *SDA Bible Commentary* says, 'These words strongly reflect the thought of Daniel 2:44-45...' (Vol. 5:476).

To properly exegete Daniel, one must remember that it is not the practice of the Old Testament to separate the two advents. The kingdom of God is seen as a unit ushered in by the death of the Messiah and consummated at his return. Thus the parallel passage in Daniel 7:13-14 is cited by Christ in Matthew 28:18 as applying to him, because of the victory of the Cross. Among the Jews there was a well

known word-play in connection with the similar Hebrew words for 'stone' (*eben*) and 'son' (*ben*). Thus chapters 2 and 7 cover the same ground with the Son replacing the stone. Similarly, Daniel 9:24 comprehends both advents. Legally—though not empirically—sin, transgression and iniquity, were finished by the first advent.

Had our Quarterly acknowledged these truths about inaugurated and consummated eschatology, as taught by scholars for decades, the way would have been paved to correctly exegete Daniel 8:14. In that verse the Sanctuary is a symbol of the kingdom of God, and thus the verse parallels both the stone of Daniel 2 and the coming of the Son of Man in chapter 7, as well as the bringing in of the 'everlasting righteousness' of Daniel 9:24. All this was acknowledged in the 1978 Southern Publishing Association publication of my commentary on Daniel—a work which bent over backwards to give traditional Adventist teachings the benefit of the doubt wherever there was a doubt, but simultaneously, set forth many of the positions later presented in the Glacier view manuscript.

Daniel 2, rightly understood, is a miniature of the whole book. It contains both Hebrew and Aramaic narrative and prophecy. It speaks of the testing of the people of God and their ultimate vindication, as mirrored by the longed-for kingdom of the Messiah—the great mountain which grew from the tiny, despised stone.

Finally, on page 74 of the *Adult Teachers Guide*, much space is given to the supposedly great distinction between *chazon* and *mareh*—words translated as 'vision.' This is enough to make any Hebraist, not paid by the denomination, weep. The words are used interchangeably, as anyone who knows English can find out by using a Strong's Concordance. *Chazon* refers to the ecstatic experience of prophetic vision, and *mareh* to its contents. The latter comes from a root meaning 'to see.' *Mareh* is found several times in the later chapters of Daniel and it is **not** limited to the detail overheard, concerning the 2300 evening-mornings. O that the brethren might play fair!