

THE CSDA Signet

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO YAH” (Exodus 28:36)

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THE JUDGMENT SEAT *Of* CHRIST

"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Romans 14:10) Adventists have long expected the judgment of the living. Ellen White made the following statement in 1884: "The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. Forty years has this work been in progress. Soon, none know how soon, it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Savior's admonition, 'Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.' 'Watch ye therefore, . . . lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.'" [*The Spirit of Prophecy, v.4, p. 314*] And in 1890 she penned this statement: "The judgment of the dead has been going on, and soon the judgment will begin upon the living, and every case will be decided. It will be known whose names are retained upon the book of life, and whose are blotted out." [*Signs of the Times, June 2, 1890*]

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are 'the times of refreshing' to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.' (Acts 3:19:20)" [*The Great Controversy, p. 611-12*] The foregoing information indicates to us that the "blotting out of sins" takes place during the "times of refreshing". This also happens concurrently with the outpouring of the "latter rain". What is the purpose of the "latter rain"? The "early rain" brings the precious seed to life through germination, while the "latter rain" finishes the plant's growth to maturity ripening the fruit for harvest.

"I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place, when the mighty angel will come down from Heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning. Christ

has told us to watch; 'for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.' 'Watch and pray' is the charge that is given us by our Redeemer. Day by day we are to seek the enlightenment of the Spirit of God, that it may do its office work upon the soul and character. O, how much time has been wasted through giving attention to trifling things." (*The 1888*

Materials, p. 960). If our lamps are trimmed and burning, evidence of spiritual life exists. Only those who have the Son have the life; and only those who have been benefited by the "early rain" can be nurtured by the "latter rain". Before the harvest, the process of ripening must occur. Notice carefully that the admonition to be ready for the coming of the Son of man, is a warning of the coming "judgment of the living".

During the current period of earth's history men and women should be thinking of "what God and Jesus are doing . . . What are they doing? They are cleansing the sanctuary. . . . We should be with Him in this work and be cleansing the sanctuary of our souls of all unrighteousness, that our names may be written in the Lamb's book of life, that our sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. It is the most solemn work that was ever given to mortals." [*Lift Him Up, p. 216*]

In this issue...

The Judgment Seat of Christ
The Investigative Judgment and the Latter Rain... Page 1

The Unity of Faith
The Principles of an Organized Church... Page 4

Adventists have known of this fact for more than a century, but who are making their robes white in the blood of the Lamb? "I urge upon you the necessity of purity in every thought, in every word, in every action. We have an individual accountability to God, and individual work which no one can do for us." [*Mind, Character, and Personality vol. 1, p. 289*]

"O that every church member . . . might realize that this life is a school in which to prepare for examination by the God of Heaven, with regard to purity, cleanness of thought, unselfishness of action! Every word and act, every thought, is recorded on the record books of Heaven . . ." [*Messages to Young People, p. 391*] Are you preparing? "The all-seeing eye of God is upon us; the secret thoughts of our hearts are not hidden. Every one of us will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. I inquire of you today, How do you stand before God? How does He who can understand every motive, see every thought, hear every word, behold every action of your life, regard your case? Will you consider these solemn questions before every case shall be irrevocably fixed . . ." in the investigative judgment of the living. [*The Youth Instructor, July 21, 1892*] "The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment [begins] at which their cases are to be investigated." (This is contrary to the commonly held belief that one receives his eternal reward upon death.)

"The apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out 'when the times of refreshing shall come. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be.' (*The Great Controversy, p. 485*). We know that the cases of all will have been judged when probation closes. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Rev. 22:11)

Adventists believe that the investigative judgment for the righteous dead began in 1844. It follows that the "times of refreshing" for the righteous dead also began in 1844. It has taken many years to investigate the individual cases of the dead saints. In like manner, it will take a segment of time to process the living saints during the "times of refreshing" or "investigative judgment of the living". In addition, there must be an overlapping of the timing of these processes, since, while the living are being judged, God's people are also dying. Remember, each case is to be considered individually, and yet, many souls may enter the process simultaneously. For one to fall away or back-slide during the time of the judgment of the living, after voluntarily standing "before the judgment seat of Christ", eternal ruin would be his lot.

This is by reason of the exalted level of that individual's understanding and accountability after consciously placing himself there for final examination. Remember, however, that the "throne of God" is a place to come in time of need. "Let us

therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Then, for the child of God, he finds himself standing before a "mercy seat" with righteous judgment being applied in the "blotting out of sins". During the "judgment of the living" all sins are repulsed as they are revealed, never more to return. We experience this "blotting-out" as we confess each sin specifically, and by repenting, send it beforehand to judgment. The sin is erased from our record, and we never commit it again. God's true people are aware of this ongoing final cleansing, as they work together in spiritual unity praying to hasten the second advent of their Lord and Savior.

Another way of talking about this time of judgment is "the sealing time". Adventists know that "the sealing message" began in 1848 with the addition of the Sabbath truth to the sanctuary doctrine. Saints have been sealed for Heaven in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 since that time. Ellen White died in the hope of a "special resurrection" for those saints being sealed in the three angels' messages. "Then the angel said, 'You just go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000 shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handy work of God.'" [*The Present Truth, August 1, 1849*]

The Bible, speaking of those laid to rest in the sealing message, says, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13). The 144,000 will be sealed from among the righteous living also. And this grand work of the final sealing is done during the judgment of the living, which closes up the work of redemption. Remember, "Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved . . ." [*The Faith I Live By, p. 287*]. "Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall on us . . ." [*Testimonies to the Church vol. 5, p. 214*]

To summarize what we have said to this point, "the times of refreshing" run concurrent with "investigative judgment", "the sealing time", the "cleansing of the sanctuary" and the "time of the latter rain". It is commonly held that "the times of refreshing" have most significant application to the outpouring of the "latter rain" on the living saints. Certainly, only the living would be aware of the final work of the Holy Spirit for man's salvation. So, during the time of the judgment of the living, we experience "latter rain" power, special purification of the soul temple, the final forming of Christ's image within, and the sealing of the soul by the truth of the three angels' messages.

The following paragraph written by Ellen White in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* explains: "Human nature is depraved, and is justly condemned by a holy God. But provision is made for the repenting sinner, so that by faith in the atonement of the only begotten Son of God, he may receive forgiveness of sin, find justification, receive adoption into the

heavenly family, and become an inheritor of the kingdom of God. Transformation of character is wrought through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which works upon the human agent, implanting in him, according to his desire and consent to have it done, a new nature. The image of God is restored to the soul, and day by day he is strengthened and renewed by grace, and is enabled more and more perfectly to reflect the character of Christ in righteousness and true holiness." [September 17, 1895]

The process of the final sealing, and thus, judgment of the living saints is described in Ezekiel, chapter nine. "The command is: 'Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.' These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God repented and humbled their hearts before Him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." [Testimonies to the Church, vol. 5, p. 210]

"The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. The wicked mock their sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law. Meekness and lowliness of heart are the conditions for strength and victory. The crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted." [Testimonies to the Church, vol. 5, p. 474]

Jesus is about to leave THE JUDGMENT SEAT in Heaven, where He has been making intercession for the living saints, to put on garments of vengeance and pour out His wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccl. 8:11) Instead of being softened by the patience and long forbearance that YAH has exercised toward them, those who fear not God and love not the truth strengthen their hearts in their evil course. But there are limits even to the forbearance of God, and many are exceeding these boundaries during His final work of judgment. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must vindicate His own honor probation closes.

We appeal to you. Make "your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). Surrender your whole being to Christ, place your name before THE JUDGMENT SEAT right now, repenting and receiving the refreshing from YAH's Heavenly presence. Join us, the living saints, in hastening the Messiah's second advent.

"There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost."

- Ellen G. White



Three of the “pillars” of the message presented by the Creation Seventh Day and Adventist Church are *Victory over Sin*, *Purity of Doctrine*, and *Unity of Faith*. Not coincidentally, these are three of the most difficult aspects of Christianity to find in today’s world. Rare is the Church that teaches victory over all known sin for the born-again believer, even in a halfhearted sense. Rare is that purity of doctrine that allows a congregation to keep “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12) Rare is the Church that understands unity of faith without falling into one or the other ditch of papal control or a lack of Biblical discipline.

Satan has labored especially hard against these elements of Christian religion, for without them those who claim to have accepted the Savior entirely lose their power, their testimony and their voice. James writes, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27) By darkening the heart of *agape*-love in humanity, the tempting spirits have worked against the self-forgetful giving that results in care for the fatherless and widows. By introducing the world into the doctrines and policies of religious groups, they have all but destroyed Biblical religion on this planet. Fortunately, despite all the calamities, (both physical and spiritual) the Almighty promises, “Yet will I leave a Remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.” (Ezek 6:8)

The called-out remnant, to which the Gentiles have been gathered under the New Covenant, (Eph 2:11-17) is the Bride of Christ. All who accept the Savior are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise;” (Gal 3:29) but not heirs only: disciples, friends, and co-laborers. (John 15:8, 15; 1Cor 3:9) These aspects of our relationship with the Creator place upon us a great responsibility as those who seek and accept the truth.

It is easy enough to convince individuals that in order to teach the right things, one must know the right things. Purity of doctrine is an easy concept to justify, even in the minds of nominal Christians, although it is likely to be seen only as the “ideal,” and not an attainable objective. While it is never going to be possible to know everything, it is entirely possible – and necessary – to grasp the meaning and application of all that we are instructed to do as disciples (*i.e.*, those who follow in the discipline) of the Messiah. “The secret things belong unto Yahweh our Elohim; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this

Victory over sin is almost never seen as a “bad” thing in the Christian world. Having faith in actually receiving this priceless gift... that is another story. But no one will say, “Ceasing from sin? What a terrible ideal!” The most common response we have received while teaching this message is, “Ceasing from sin? Nice, but not really practical.” That term “practical,” like the expression “real life,” is a word used to good effect by Satan, because he thus deceives many souls by artificially dividing what we “should” do from what we “can” do, as if it were not written, “with God all things are possible,” (Mat 11:26) and, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil 4:13)

Unity of faith, of these three pillars, often proves the most difficult to teach. This is because it is, often enough, not even seen as a necessary ideal. Satan has programmed – outright *programmed* – a great number of otherwise faithful and truth-seeking souls to equate the terms “organization” with “man-made,” and “structure” with “arbitrary control.” Often, when we say, “There must be unity,” the response comes, “But unity of *faith*,” or “But unity of *spirit*,” as if a unity of faith and spirit will not have visible consequences upon our outward mode of operation. These responses come as if unity of faith and spirit do not result naturally in unity of practice and goals.

What good is inward unity if I openly disagree with my brother? The Messiah taught, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” (Mat 5:23, 24) The religion of Christ is within the heart of the believer, certainly, (Luke 17:21) but its true power is visibly seen in the testimony that its adherents present to the world. I may say, “I love my brother,” but if, while feeling love for him in my heart, I steal from him, injure him, or envy his possessions and success, what manner of love is this? It is not the “love of the Father” (1John 2:15) that Christianity teaches, but a spiritualistic, mysterious kind of love that does not win my brother to my faith, and sets no example of the self-sacrificing *Agape* demonstrated by the Father through the Son.

Yet this is the kind of “love” we see too often in nominal Christianity. That which would be entirely unacceptable between two individuals is seen as quite tolerable among those factions that all claim to be “of Christ.” What do the Scriptures say about this? “For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1Cor 3:3)

Divisions in and of the Body are the result of carnality. Denominational divides are the result of individuals following fleshly impulses. Now this does not, and we must seek to be clear as glass on this, mean that all “divisions” are wrong. This does not mean that every group that identifies itself as Christ’s is in error because it sets up barriers and standards. Christ Himself places divisions: He called His nation out from the slavery they were enduring in Egypt. He called His Church out from among the unbelieving Hebrews. He called His Protestants out from among the corrupted Roman hierarchy. He called His Adventists out from among those who would not acknowledge the soon return of the Messiah and the continued importance of the “royal Law according to the Scripture.” (James 2:8)

In these last days He has called a people forth who have committed themselves to relying completely upon Him for their justification and their protection. He has summoned a people who understand the importance of victory, purity and unity.

“But how,” some may ask, “can you say, this is *the* people? How can you say, ‘We have it right, and all others are wrong,’ since that sounds just like any other carnal division?”

In order to answer that question thoroughly we must establish three things:

First, that there is such a thing as a “true” path to walk, and that not everyone who claims to be Christ’s – or even necessarily believes himself to be Christ’s – is a genuine follower.

Second, that the concept of “organization” is a part of God’s plan for His people, and not some man-made concept, which helps to maintain the believers upon that true path.

Third, that identifying one’s self with that genuinely God-inspired organization is a necessary part of the New Covenant in Yahshua.

The first is easy to establish, for the Bible makes it plain. Yahshua taught, “Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Mat 7:13, 14) This is true not only of individuals, but entire groups, for we also read in symbol, “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, ‘We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.’” (Isa 4:1)

The meaning of Isaiah’s prophecy becomes clear when we understand what the elements of that vision represent. We know a “woman” in prophecy is a Church. (Jer 6:2, 2Cor 11:2) We know that “bread,” and its constituents like leaven and wheat, are often used for doctrines and those who follow those doctrines. (2Cor 9:10, Luke 13:21, Mat 16:6, Luke 3:17) We know that apparel is a symbol of one’s spiritual state, whether of transgression or righteousness. (Zech 3:3, 4; Isa 61:10) What we find, therefore, is that in these troubled times many will say,

“Let me have *this* belief or *that* belief, let me understand holiness *this* way, or *that* way, only let me be called ‘Christian’ and I will be satisfied. And if you wish to have other brides, who have other beliefs, and other concepts of holiness as well, that is fine, only let ME be called also by your name.” Is this not what we see in Christendom today? This is the “ecumenical” movement most pronounced in inter- and non-denominational movements, but seen also in the apparent “tolerance” of the more established Christian groups.

Now, tolerance is not a bad thing so far as the basic concept goes. Every man has the right, given by the Creator, to worship according to the dictates of his conscience. No effort should ever be made to restrict the religious freedom of another, except when these beliefs deliberately cause harm or restrict the freedom of others. But this does not mean that all beliefs are equal under God. If that were so, Christ would not have said, “Go ye therefore, and *teach* all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (Mat 28:19, 20a)

If all beliefs that men label “Christian” were acceptable, why would the apostles have warned against “false teachers [...] who privily shall bring in damnable heresies”? (2Pet 2:1) Why would the Savior have said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”? (Mat 7:15)

Those who go in at the narrow way are the true followers. They have sought and found the genuine light of Heaven and, while grasping all they know, continue to seek greater and greater light. These are they who not only believe they are, but are in actuality, those who have walked in the way of Yahshua, and who will not be found among that deceived company seeking entrance into Heaven on the basis of the things they have done “in the name of Christ” while having no knowledge of His Person. (Mat 7:22, 23)

The second principle is also fairly easy to establish. While the deceiver would have some truth-seekers automatically equate “organization” and “structure” with artificial or man-made creations, we find that this is not at all the case. Truly, many (most) institutions have originated in the minds of men and demons. Certainly, Satan and his followers are quite efficient at corrupting truth and making of it error. But we find order and structure all through the Old and New Testaments, with absolutely no indication that Yahweh will ever be leading some rag-tag group(s) organized in declaration only, not truly united in spirit, and not truly united in worship and testimony.

Home churches may be beneficial until there is enough of a population to establish a congregational center. The Scriptures mention several home churches, (Acts 2:46) and these were a great blessing to the believers. They were, however, a temporary measure while the Gentiles learned of Moses by attendance at the Jewish synagogues, (Acts 15:21) and were quickly replaced by the system that Yahweh set in place as described

here: “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” (1Cor 12:27, 28)

Again, “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” (Eph 4:11, 12) Some, who say, “We do not need unity with other believers, only with the Father and Son,” do not understand, or grasp the importance of, the apostle’s teachings in Christ that state, “But now are they many members, yet but one Body. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” (1Cor 12:20, 26) “We are members one of another.” (Eph 4:25) Not only are we members of Christ, but “one of another.” What warmth, what familial love, this picture conveys! What a denial it is of those who would deliberately choose to worship in little groups, and not seek to draw others into covenant with the worldwide and visibly triumphant joy of fellowship!

Yes, some may worship in “little groups” out of necessity, for we are certainly to be scattered like salt over the earth, and we may be geographically separated from those of our Faith... but this is neither the goal nor a situation with which we are ever to be fully satisfied. And that there were established places of worship among the early Christians is pointed out by Paul’s description of worship sessions (including the Lord’s Supper) to the Corinthians, wherein he tells them they may as well stay in their homes if their purpose for congregating is not to honor the Father and Son. (1Cor 11:18-34)

The Holy Spirit, which leads the Bride, acts on the authority of the Almighty to both maintain and develop the practices of the Church and Its members. We find, for example, no clear Old Testament precedent for the apostles’ appointment of “deacons” and other helpers in Acts 6 and beyond. Do we say they were in error? Not at all... under the inspiration of God, the Gospel workers recognized a need and established an office to fill it. Were organization and structure not an integral part of Yahweh’s character and the message of His people, what right would there have been to not only maintain, but also *refine*, the administrative design laid out for us by our Heavenly Father?

Not every organization is man-made; not every structure is artificial. We are given good tools in Scripture to distinguish between what has originated in the infinite mind of the Creator and what has come forth from the limited minds of the creation. It is a fatal error to cast out all concept of arrangement and order simply because the experiences of the individual concerning such things might have been, up to this point, negative. If a man knows with certainty that there is a pearl of great price buried in the field, (Mat 13:46) and if he desires more than life to possess it, he will not surrender his quest if the first few objects he unearths are ordinary stones.

The third concept, that of openly declaring membership in the Body, is not very difficult to establish either, as long as the symbols of the Scriptures are consistently applied. We certainly find a kind of precedent in the national identity of the Hebrews, to which New Testament believers may say, “This is like our identity in Christ.” That is true, yet we also find an additional and openly declared covenant that became necessary when Babylon had overtaken much of the world, (Jer 25:9, 27:6) and some were sent out to deceive those who would rebuild Jerusalem after the Exile. (Neh 6:2)

We read, “And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.” (Neh 9:2) And they said, “Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it. And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it. Now those that sealed were, Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah, Seraiah, Azariah ...” (Neh 9:36, 38; 10:1, 2a) and a long list of names follows.

So why was there this necessity? These men were all already identified as “Israel,” so why the need for another open declaration? Why the need to set their names down as members of this covenant? It was because these men were not only making a covenant with Yahweh, but with *each other*. We read, after the list of names, “They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God’s law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of Yahweh our Elohim, and His judgments and His statutes” (Neh 10:29)

These men said, “We will covenant together to obey Yahweh, and to rebuild this place.” Is it not so in these last days? Babylon has taken over the world. A small remnant has escaped to maintain purity and to “edify” or build the Body in preparation for the reception of New Jerusalem. (Eph 4:16, Rev 21:2) There are deceivers all around, and the word “Christian” can mean a great many inconsistent and contradictory things. Do we therefore cast out the title our Father has given us, and say, “Do not call us Christians, but by some other name?” Not at all... we do as did the Israelites, and we say, “We are Christians, and Yahweh has also given a distinctive *covenant* by which we may cleave to our brethren.”

If unity with the Father and Son were the only important aspect, we would have but four of the Ten Commandments. Yet Yahshua said that the Law was founded not on one instruction only, but two: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Mat 22:37-40)

Remembering that “love” is not mere affection, but an active participation in the well being of another, it is impossible for one to say, “I am a member of the Body of Christ,” without

saying, "I am a member also of my brethren." It is impossible to covenant with Yahweh without (particularly in these last days) covenanting with the assembly of fellow-worshippers. Yahshua prayed "that [the disciples] all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (Acts 17:21)

And why have a "visible" covenant? Why a Church membership roll and baptismal certificates? It is because the more wicked a generation becomes, the more urgently visible signs are required to give an effective testimony to the lost. The Almighty spoke gently to Elijah, who was His friend, (1Ki 19:12) but He thundered from Sinai to awaken the reverence of those who had fallen heavily under the pagan influences of Egypt. In the early days of Christianity, there was no need to distinguish between "types" of Christians. All were in one united Body, all fellowshiped closely together, (Acts 2) and errors in doctrine were signally rebuked by the authority of the apostles, while the individual believers were instructed to vigorously stand for the truth. (2Th 3:6, Jude 1:3)

Even Heaven uses the concept of a "membership roll," opening the Lamb's Book of Life to read out those who are recorded therein. (Rev 21:27) Yahshua prayed to the Father that, "[His] will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven." (Mat 6:10) Additionally, He taught His followers that "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." (Mat 18:8) It is in keeping with this principle, and allowing an open and lasting testimony – like public baptisms – that the Creation Seventh Day and Adventist Church keeps congregational (not global) records of its covenanting saints, to which they – like the rebuilders of earthly Jerusalem – set their "seal."

For further information on the concept of Church Membership, as taught by this movement, our resources include such freely available books as:

The Two Temples:
<http://www.csda.us/binary/books/TTT.html>

A Sure Covenant:
<http://www.csda.us/binary/books/ASC.html>

The Highway of Holiness Volume 1:
<http://www.csda.us/binary/books/HOHV1.html>

The Highway of Holiness Volume 2:
(Coming soon at <http://www.csda.us/binary/books/HOHV2.html>)

Yours in the Messiah's love and
unity,
- David Aguilar



"During the course of His trial Jesus said, 'If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.' It is only when Christians mistakenly come to believe that Christ's kingdom is of this world that they resort to force in defending what they take to be its interests."

- Ellen G. White

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