



Of course, we would have problems with the way that Jehovah's Witnesses interpret the prophecies anyway (for example, they have absolutely no comprehensible justification for applying the "seven times" of Daniel 4:16 to the "time of the Gentiles" that would exist until the restoration); but even were that correct, that is not conclusive evidence of the Body of Christ. But even were they perfectly correct, there is still something else that needs to be present to indicate the validity of their organization.

Now the Latter Day Saints make an appeal to emotion when discussing their acceptance of Joseph Smith as a prophet. And, to be fair, it is true that some things must be taken on faith; however, we must be very careful when deciding what we are going to use as our standard of truth. The Scriptures tell us, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa 8:20) Additionally, we know, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2Tim 3:16) And we are cautioned, "Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." (Pro 3:5)

In essence, we must judge our experiences, thoughts, emotions and beliefs by the Words of the Bible, trusting in its plain teachings more than what we "feel" to be true. The most profound testimony a Latter Day Saint typically provides is that they know that the Mormon Church is true, and that Joseph Smith is a prophet, because when they prayed and asked God if it was true, they received a witness of the Holy Spirit that it was. I asked our recent visitor, "So, this witness... is it a feeling, an emotion?" And he said, "Yes, it is a feeling."

Now, as unstable as that may sound, the truth is that a good student of the Bible knows that the standard of truth must be the written Word. Our guest knew (although they are taught not to say that!) for I replied, "In our experience, it is best to judge our feelings by the Word, and not the Word by our feelings. How is it that you know your feelings are right?"

I continued, "We know that in some religions, believers 'feel' very justified in blowing themselves up to promote their faith. We know their feelings are very strong, enough for them to die for, so what is it that separates your feeling from theirs?"

He replied, "This feeling that comes is the true voice of God."

I said, "Well, I understand you accept that from your perspective, but those who hear other messages also very strongly believe that they are hearing the true voice. Their convictions are as strong as yours that they are hearing God, so how do you deal with that? What I would say is, we know the feelings to be right ones when the behavior they produce is in accordance with the Word's description of a born-again believer. Wouldn't you agree that this is true?"

He said, "Yes, the actions follow, and that is how we can tell." So I said, "Ah, then you DO base your beliefs on the Bible, and not on the feeling, because you do what we do, and rightly so..."

you judge it to be true or false based upon the testimony in the Scriptures."

He agreed with me, somewhat hesitantly, but... there are still other issues involved there. For example, an individual who accepts Joseph Smith as a prophet, and the Mormon Church as the true one, receives the feeling, and is generally baptized into the faith, before they see any real "fruit of the Spirit" based upon that feeling. Furthermore, from a CSDA perspective, we would not see this feeling as leading to the genuine Christian walk, because... one of the differences we had with both the Jehovah's Witness missionary and our Latter Day Saint guests was that of the doctrine of Victory over sin.

All prophecy and prophets aside, temporarily, Creation Seventh Day Adventists (and anyone who reads the Gospels and the Epistles of John and others without accepting compromise) can never consider a message to be legitimate unless it teaches the full power of Christ in the believer, the power to overcome all deliberate acts of sin in the life through a thorough transformation of the mind. As it is written, "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom 12:2) And again, "we have the mind of Christ." (1Cor 2:16b)

The Messiah did not tell His followers, "Go forth and preach the prophecies to every creature," nor did He say, "Baptize everyone by the authority of this or that prophet." Instead, "He said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'" (Mark 16:15)

Of course, any evangelist will protest, "But I *am* preaching the Gospel."

The Bible tells us that there are messages called "the gospel" that are not beneficial. In fact, Paul rebukes the Church at Galatia, saying, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:6-8) There are other "gospels," yet, as Paul indicates, they are not truly *gospel*, not truly "good news" but rather news that is apparently good, yet results only in continued bondage to sin and self.

But what is "good news?" Is it good news that our divine Parent takes us out of sin, cleans us up, and restores us, only to send us right back into the spiritual mud pits in which we had wallowed? This cannot be it, for Peter speaks of those who are *not* saved, and those who teach them a faulty gospel, saying, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Yahshua the Messiah, they are again entangled



The Gospel is the only thing about which we can afford to be impatient. Christ does not want to bring us out of sin “someday,” and after much effort on our parts. He has made the day – the day of the Cross; He has made the effort – the infinite sacrifice He provided, leaving the glories of Heaven to be mocked, abused, and nailed to a wooden frame – to suffer in body and (especially) spirit for the wrongs that we have done. The work of establishing the faith is over. The Church has been gathered, and is being gathered; and She is preparing Herself to meet Her Husband. The time for those yet on the outside to gather is *yesterday*; for already the Groom appears to delay His coming. But we, who have brought extra oil, await the surprising, but long-awaited cry, “He cometh!”

We have all that that is required for our sanctification, because Christ has given to us all we need, and has done no incomplete work. The true Bride has the Law, the Testimony, the Good News, and... we who are Her members have the means of knowing when we are hearing a message with which She agrees. That is how we recognize the House of God.

Can you recognize It?

— D.P. Aguilar

## Tolerance *vs.* **LIBERTY**

One of the issues heavily discussed among the founding fathers of the United States was that of tolerance vs. liberty. The distinction might come as a strange one to some in our day, as the topic is usually one of “tolerance” vs “intolerance” as related to matters of personal opinion.

During the writing of the Constitution, however, “intolerance” had a far more severe meaning than the relatively sensitive definition given it today. For those who came to America in it’s founding stages, “intolerance” did not mean a verbal or perceived insult directed at ones heritage or beliefs – it meant being driven from country to country, imprisoned, tortured, suffering confiscation, taxation, and death for that heritage or belief.

For most today this is an unfamiliar concept. As a result, the line between “tolerance” and “liberty” has become greatly blurred, if not lost altogether – yet the difference is one that is critical to understand, particularly in these last moments of Earth’s history.

As George Washington wrote, “It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural right, for happily, the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection shall demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.”

For a man to offer tolerance to another man for his faith is to say, in essence, that the man has the power and authority to show tolerance or intolerance at his own discretion. Tolerance is something given as a favor, an indulgence of a sort, given of grace by one of greater power.

Liberty, on the other hand, is a God-given right, and at that an inalienable one – one that no man, no matter his station or position, can in any way ever take away. So in religious things, there is a great difference between “religious tolerance” and “religious liberty.” Tolerance is freedom allowed until revoked – liberty is freedom inherent and irrevocable.

As Christians, we must assert our religious liberty, not our religious tolerance. No man can assert tolerance because tolerance can be taken away at will by the one tolerating. It is upon this principle that we take issue with the idea of “concessions” in matters of religious liberty, and specifically in regards to the name Creation Seventh Day Adventist.

Most who have been following the Seventh-day Adventist trademark controversies from their beginning are familiar with Rafael Perez and the Eternal Gospel Church that were involved in a lawsuit in Miami, Florida in the late 1990s. Despite the firm protests at the beginning that they were Seventh-day Adventists and would not be giving up that name, they conceded out of court to a very specific and exact set of rules and restrictions for how they could use their name. A brief excerpt of this agreement follows:

“4. GENERAL CONFERENCE and PEREZ agree henceforth PEREZ shall use only the language (or its foreign equivalent), format, size, and style contained in this paragraph and as set forth in Exhibit “A” to this Agreement and GENERAL CONFERENCE agrees that such use will not violate the Court’s Order of April 27, 2000:

Line 1: “ETERNAL GOSPEL CHURCH” – This first line will be in all upper case letters.

Line 2: “Founded in (1990 or any later year) by Seventh-day Adventist Believers” – This second line will be in upper and lower case letters precisely as quoted, will be in the same color as the first line and words “Seventh-day Adventist” will not be emphasized in any fashion, e.g. will not be in a different color, will not be in a different type style, will not be bolded, etc.

The second line will not be more than 60% in size of the first line.

The first and second line will be positioned one on top of the other and centered, exactly as they appear in the example attached as Exhibit A hereto.” – As quoted in *Landmarks magazine*, June 2001

No reasonable man can possibly consider the terms of this agreement to be anything synonymous with “freedom” or

