



Free Advent Banner

"he that Wineth Souls is Wise"



VOL. I

SAVANNAH, GA., APRIL, 1921

NUMBER 6.

What Authority Has the Negro Membership in the S. D. A. Conference.

When trouble arose between the tribes of Israel during the reign of kings Rehoboam and Jeroboam, this question was finally asked by Israel: "What portion have we in David?" The decision was quickly made. "We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse" was the answer.

This question is similar to the one which the most intelligent Negroes of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are asking. They are longing for an answer. Note the questions. What authority have the Negro ministers in the conference? What delegates of Negro churches are recognized in the conference? Particularly the Southern Conferences?

Sister White says, "The colored members of ability and experience should be encouraged to lead the services of their own people; and their voices should be heard in the representative assemblies." From this, we would understand that Sister White would have reference to business meetings as well as to the preaching and prayer services.

But let me ask if this instruction is carried out. The answer is no, decidedly, no. For instance I call attention to the gathering of colored ministers and workers at Nashville, Tenn April 7-14, 1920. Were there any colored brethren of ability and experience in attendance at this meeting?

Yes. Were these colored

members of ability and experience permitted to lead the services of their own people? No. Was it the privilege of the supposed Negro leaders whose right it was to act chairman of the meeting of his own people when he really expected to do so? No. One may ask what reason could he have for assuming that he should act as chairman? Answer, the reasons are many. This one, however, will be sufficient. All other men (white of course) who were secretaries of the North American Negro Department were chairmen of such Negro assemblies, and the only reason that could be assigned as why he did not act chairman of this meeting is that he is a Negro. Again I ask, what authority has the Negro in the S. D. A. Conference among white leaders? Every honest Negro must answer, none whatever. This is especially true in the South.

In the history of all religious sects existing since the establishment of Christianity, among the many institutional changes that have effected more or less the destiny of human society, there have originated in variably in some one or more of five distinct principles as the cause. Such principles as the orthodoxy of doctrines; the right of religious conscience, the free exercise of human judgment; full religious liberty; or the proper form of ecclesiastical

economy. When heresy, religious intolerance, ecclesiastical errors find support with the controlling element of religious body, there are 3 sources to which the majority or minority can resort as the advocates of right principles; 1st, a persistent effort to effect a remedy; 2, an expulsion of the heretics or refractory ones, by the faithful adherents to the right or Third, by the withdrawal of the true adherent to principles, from the main body. To the first of these remedies for reform, the faithful advocates of truth frequently resort, but without avail. The second remedy has often been practical when the main body was not corrupt.

The third is only the practical means that a powerless minority can adopt to free themselves from participation in corrupt doctrines, and maintain right religious principles. This course has the written sanction of God. "Come out from among them." Rev. 18:4. This was the course pursued by the celebrated reformers: Luther, Knox and Wesley in the 15th and 17 centuries; they left their mother churches to enjoy liberty of conscience and action, and the free advocacy of Christian purity; and although excommunicated and anathematized by fulminating bulls, the former two, the latter persecuted and stigmatized, yet, what

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With the many church papers already in circulation, one would at once conclude that no more are needed. We must agree that there are quite enough papers giving the church news to the world. Then, why start another? Because there is another church on the great field, and is therefore in need of a silent messenger declaring the great principles for which it stands. Well, what the need of another church? We now have so many and each one preaching something different from the other and for this reason, many are stumbling and falling, some never to rise again. But again the question is asked: What church is this, and what is it that necessitates the establishment of another church? To these questions the answers will be given in the following:

About twenty-five or thirty years ago the Seventh-day Adventists began a definite work among the colored people of the South. For ten years the two races experienced little or no difficulty in the North and West in equal enjoyment of religious rights and privileges. But as the denomination grew in popularity and influence, race prejudice began to engender Negro proscription. As the number of Negroes increased in the churches, the race friction

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WHY THE BANNER IS PUBLISHED.

Why Free Seventh-day Adventist FREEROM IN THOUGHT-PROCLAMATION OF LIBERTY



and proscription grew more rapidly.

Then to add sin to sin, some of the leaders of the denomination a few years ago began in a deceptive and un-Christian way, the work of segregation in all their churches East and West. All this, of course, was contrary to their former teaching and profession. Some of the more intelligent Negroes resented this unscriptural course and demanded an explanation. As these leaders could not use the Bible to support them in their base acts of prejudice and proscription, they resorted to what is supposed to be writings of Mrs. E. G. White, and in 1909 issued "Testimonies," Vol. 9. In this book are two garbled chapters on the Negro question that will work any fair minded Christian hard to believe that God had anything to do with them.

Notice the claims made for these "Testimonies." In Vol 5 page 67, we read: "In these letters which I write in the Testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision, the precious rays of light shining from the throne."

Here, as you see, is a claim for absolute infallibility for all of Sister White's writings. While we do believe that Sister White was divinely inspired, we do not believe that she wrote everything that bears her signature.

On page 214 Testimonies, Vol. 9, we read: "The Colored people should not urge that

they be placed in equality with white people." This statement, though said to be the writings of sister White, and is therefore, inspired, is a contradiction to former writings by her. For in her testimony written December 17, 1895, and published in the little "Southern Work," we read: "Many of this race (Negro Race) have noble traits of character and keen preception of mind. If they had an opportunity to develop, they would stand upon an equality with the whites." Page 55. Again on page 202, Vol. 9, "Opportunities are continually presenting themselves in the Southren States and many WISE CHRISTIAN colored men will be called to the work. But for several reasons white men must be chosen as leaders." This we believe to be a permanent bar to Negro leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Now note this statement, The colored man may be wise and he may be a Christian, this is all that any poor mortal can be in this world, but because he is "black," he is not fit to be a leader in the S. D. A. denomination. Not so with the white man. So long as he is white, it matters not whether he is a Christian or wise, just be white, and he is a fit subject for a leader.

In the book of Acts chapter 10, verse 34, we read: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of person." "But in every nation he that feareth Him (God) and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." Verse 35.

While these words of the Apostle are impartial, the quo-

tations of Vol. 9, are grievous insults to every self-respecting colored man or woman that enters the denomination.

Therefore, comes the church of Free Seventh-day Adventists. We come believing all of the fundamental principles of the original body of Seventh-day Adventists. We believe that this people has been entrusted with the greatest message which has ever been given to mortals. We also believe that all the publications are truth-filled, granting that there are some mistakes, which many of the leaders will not deny.

We are Free, 1st. Because it is not Christian to estimate men by their outward appearance nor color. Acts 17:26; 2 Sam. 14:14. 2nd. Because birth, nationality, color, nor station do not elevate nor degrade men. Acts 10:28-35. 3rd. Because we accept the Bible alone as our supreme rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim. 16, 17, and we accept only such other writings as harmonize with God's word. Isa. 8:20. 4th. Because the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is these is liberty. 2 Cor. 3:17. 5th. Because we respect not the person of men, but condescend to high and low. Rom. 12:16 James 2:5-9. 6th. Because we are working and praying to realize that promise: "All are one in Christ." Gal. 3:27-28. 7th. Because we plead for freedom in Christ for each and every one. Free to think, to believe and act as the word and Spirit of God shall direct. Ex. 5:1. All of this is in harmony with the teaching of sister White. From the Church Officers Gazette, No. 2, Vol. 3, page 5, Feb. 1916, we quote the following:

Freedom in Thought, "Ye were now turned, and had done right in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbor." Jer. 34:15.

"What should man do? What should we not allow?" "Allow no one to be brain for you, allow no one to do your thinking, your investigating and your praying. This is the instruction that we need to take to heart today." Special Tes-

timonies on Education, page 193. "What belongs to every individual?" "There are rights which belong to every individual. We have an individuality and an identity that is our own. No man can submerge his identity into that of any other. All must act for themselves according to the dictates of their own conscience." Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers, No. 9, page 59.

"Many minds are in bondage through laziness, others through fear of men, others through admiration of the ability of some individuals, others through superstition and still others through the lack of individual accountability. During the centuries that have gone, men have lost much because of this bondage; and at the present they are losing much from the same evil. In the world there are but few who think for themselves."

It is the privilege of all men to be free from fear of their fellowmen. Isa 8:12, 13; 51:12 13.

It is not the mission of the Banner to wage war upon any church. Nevertheless it is but fair that we make known our position, as well as giving reasons for such position.

While we feel that we have the right to enjoy the same religious freedom which is enjoyed by our white brethren, we do not agree with the spirit of striving against, and fighting one another.

Our father Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right, then I will go to the left."— Gen. 13:8-9.

It will be clearly seen, that in order for freedom to be enjoyed, by both Abraham and Lot, a separation was necessary. And further, Abraham, God's chosen, did the suggesting, while it fell to brother Lot to do the separating. Now which of the two men was the

most guilty? Which of the two did God cast off forever? Did God reprove Abraham for the suggestion which he made? Did He condemn Lot for separating, which was done for the peace and welfare of all concerned? Did God not care for and bless Abraham, 'tho, Abraham thought a separating between he and Lot was for the best? And did not He continue His blessings upon Lot, 'tho he separated? Certainly He did. Abraham did not forget God, neither did Lot forsake His commandments. 'Tho they disagreed on the policy of caring for the flocks they were in harmony concerning the doctrines and commandments of God. Abraham loved Lot, and Lot had the greatest respect for Abraham. Our father Abraham would not allow hatred to reign in his heart just because, Lot chose to separate and go where he might enjoy greater freedom. Neither should our white brethren become envious at us because we want more freedom and liberty in our religious worship.

Lot loved the Lord and obeyed His voice and when the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah invited the wrath of God upon them, God would not permit it to fall until Lot was safely outside of its walls.

Again Luke wrote of the great apostle Paul and his helpers: "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them who departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus." Acts 15:35-41.

While it was never God's

plan that such things should exist, nevertheless, they do, but we need not allow them to separate us from God. We regret very much to see these walls of prejudice. We remember about twenty-five years ago, when we were all one. We also know when our brethren commenced using the mortar, with which they built these walls.

Sister White says: "These walls of prejudice will tumble down of themselves as did the walls of Jericho, when Christians obeyed the Word of God which enjoined on them supreme love to their neighbors." Testimonies, S. W. page 54. Our white brethren have done just what the Testimoines forbid. Listen again at what God says through sister White, "we, (the white people) should be careful not to strengthen prejudice that ought to have died just as soon as Christ redeemed the soul from the bondage of sin." Id 12. And again God speaks through sister White to our white brethren, "We have no time to build up walls of distinction between the white and black races. The white people who embrace the truth in the Southern field, if **CONVERTED TO GOD**, will discern the fact that the plan of redemption embraces every soul that God has created. The walls of sectarianism and caste and race will fall down when the **TRUE MISSIONARY SPIRIT ENTERS THE HEARTS OF MEN**. Prejudice is melted away by the love of God." Id. page 76.

Brethren, is this not a wall? Listen, "Opportunities are continually presenting themselves in the Southern States, and many **WISE CHRISTIAN COLORED MEN WILL BE CALLED TO THE WORK, BUT FOR SEVERAL REASONS WHITE MEN MUST BE CHOSEN AS LEADERS**. Colored people **MUST** not urge that they be placed on an equality with white people."

Pray, let me ask, why is it that these walls of prejudice are so high, and still growing higher, in the North, South, East and West? And at the

same time, so many Seventh-day Adventists professing the religion of Jesus Christ, and claim to be walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord?

In Jesus Christ we should all be one, enjoying the same privileges in our religious services, with the middle wall of partition broken down between us.

It is amusing to note the flimsy apology which many of our Negro ministers attempt to make in justifying many of our white brethren who are leaders in discriminating and who are also building up walls of prejudice between the white and black members of the S. D. A. denomination of which "walls" Sister White says: "will tumble down of themselves, as did the Walls of Jericho, when Christians obey the word of God."

Sister White made no such apologies, but she said, "I know that which I now speak will bring me into conflict. But I do not mean to live a coward, or die a coward leaving my work undone. It has become fashionable to look down upon the poor, and upon the colored race in particular. I am more and more surprised as I see those who claim to be children of God possessing so little of the sympathy and tenderness and love which actuated Christ. Would that every church, North and South, were imbued with the spirit of the Lord's teaching."

"While in St. Louis a year ago, (1890) I knelt in prayer, these words were presented to me as if written with a pen of fire: 'All ye are brethren.' The spirit and words of some in regards to members of the church at St. Louis and in other places were an offense to God. They were closing the door of their hearts to Jesus. Among those in St. Louis who believe the truth there are colored people who are true and faithful, precious in the sight of God of heaven, and they should have just as much respect as any of God's children."

'Who,' says Paul, maketh thee to differ?' "The God of the white man is the God of the black man. He loveth them

all, and maketh no difference between white and black." Test. from the Southern Work, page 4-6.

We are told that Christ linked Himself in brother-hood to all nationalities. He made no distinction between the white race and the black race.

Were the sins of distinction, discrimination and prejudice so covered with charity or love that sister White could not see them? Ans. No. Neither will charity or love so cover them that we cannot see them.

In an article which appeared in the December issue of the Gospel Herald entitled, "Leadership," we read the following:

"The devil will take every advantage to alienate hearts from those at the head of the work. He first puts it into the leaders' hearts, (meaning Negro leaders) and then they convey it to their flocks. (Meaning Negro flocks).

What are the results? A desire to separate from the body (meaning white people). want a separate conference, (meaning Negro conference) when we all are one in Christ Jesus. So those who allow the devil to deceive them into trying to improve this movement which has almost reached its completion, and starting another, will become a hindrance to the cause of God and lead souls from the truth.

Do a people necessarily desire to start a new movement because they wish and ask for fair play in the old movement? Such childish talk coming from our weak-kneed Negro ministers, especially those having absolutely no backbone, when it comes to standing before our white brethren, and laying before them the real needs of the Negro cause, is why we have had to endure so long with these detested Negro missions.

We say detested, we speak that which is true, for we know that every self-respecting Negro minister detests the Negro missions.

It should be borne in mind that the apostle Paul also says: "When I was a child, I spake

as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things," 1st. Cor. 13:11.

Any one except a thoughtless child can see that we, Negroes are as much separated from the body (our white brethren) being pushed aside in a little powerless Negro mission, as we possibly could be in a Negro conference. There is only one thread that holds the Negro to our white brethren, and that is the finance.

"Charity," or love, spoken of in 1st Cor. 13, will never come into the hearts of our Negro ministers sufficient to eliminate caucusing in the absence of our white brethren during the sessions of general meetings. In such caucus meetings all are expressing their dissatisfactions of the Negro missions. These caucus meetings are far more injurious to the movement and to the soul than is the plain statement to the white brethren that a Negro conference with Negro officers is both needed and wanted.

God forbid that any of us should do one thing to hinder the cause of God, but to advance it.

Our brethren who are at the head of the work should do all that can be done to show that they are impartial in its management. God speaks to our brethren through Sister White and says, "We are to love our neighbors as ourselves, and the colored people in the sight of God are our neighbor."

As an aid to cure these moral and spiritual diseases of discrimination, injustice, unfair play and prejudice we offer the following recipe:

Of unselfishness, three drachms;

Of the tincture of Good Cheer, one ounce;

Of Essence of Hearts-Ease, three drachms;

Of the Extract of the Rose of Sharon, four ounces;

Of the oil of Charity, three drachms, and no scruples;

Of the Infusion of Common Sense and Tact, one ounce;

Of the Spirit of Love, two ounces;

The mixture to be taken whenever there is the slightest

symptom of Selfishness, Meanness or I-am-better-than-you-ness.

—J. W. MANNS.

—x—

Stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right."

—x—

Mims—Mrs. Sarah Mims died in Savannah, Ga., March 2nd, 1921. In April, of 1912 she heard and accepted the Third Angel's message, remaining a loyal member until her death. The funeral service was conducted by the pastor, Eld. J. W. Manns. She is survived by her husband, sister, and one brother and other relatives.

—Mrs. L. L. J.

—x—

What Authority Has the Negro Membership In the S. D. A. Conference?

(Continued from page 1)

untold blessings the three great religious beacons of reform have bequeathed to the Christian world, that has its millions yet to number and enjoy them. It is the same love of right and freedom of conscience and religious liberty that prompts us who have laid the foundation of our connection, Free Seventh day Adventists, some of which were cast out while others were compelled to withdraw from the original body.

(White Seventh-day Adventists Church). It is true, ours is not an effort or an attempt to reform in any of the doctrines as taught by Seventh-day Adventists, but it is to throw off undue religious restrictions, that Christianity does not sanction, and in which the original church, (White S. D. A.) have departed from the simple Christian rule. "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you and to have no respect of persons, and when she (White S. D. A.) began to tolerate respect of persons contrary to God's word. We believe we

have made a noble effort to secure for ourselves, and for all who shall follow, the religious privileges which we who are out could enjoy, nor which they who yet remain with them can enjoy. We are not unlike other Christians who have sought religious freedom, for our efforts to obtain this liberty have invoked unkind, unjust and decrying criticisms; from our colored as well as our white brethren of S. D. A.

The apostles of the Negro Methodist churches had to face the same criticisms; coming from their white brethren. But after a period of twenty years those white Methodist brethren had to confess, "We have cause to charge ourselves with too little attention to the colored people's spiritual interest." This noble confession on the part of the white Methodist brethren was made by the conference capacity assembled June 1821. This acknowledged the reasonableness of the Negro Methodist in separating from the white Methodist church. In treating the colored people with such gross contempt, the white Methodist further confessed that they treated them so; "As though the colored people were an inferior race or a class of beings, they have been treated with unwarranted neglect." While this was true among the Methodist, the same condition exists among the Seventh-day Adventists, notwithstanding they have the truth for this time, and the last message of warning that will ever be given to this world.

We set forth these facts because we are frequently asked, why we are separated from the original organization, and why we do not now, return to the organized body, and help finish the work? Don't you know, they ask, that you could do more good inside than outside the denomination? We simply reply to the above questions: We could not consistently return to the original organization, (White S. D. A.) while the Negro mission and other racial causes exist that drove us out, which they know still ex-

ist; namely, race prejudice, discrimination and Negro proscription. If we are ever united again, we will never be under a local government of any white Seventh-day Adventist organization, but we will be an integral part of the great body. We have concluded to enjoy the religious freedom as our white brethren. Intelligent colored ministers throughout the denomination are considering this proposition which all are up against.

The reason why there are not more of our colored brethren standing for freedom, is, they are wondering what will be the result if their white brethren cut them off from the pay-roll. Some dare put up the flimsy argument that we Negroes are not able to support ourselves. This is the same old argument that white Methodist put to Negroes more than a hundred years ago.

We ask how much worse could be our condition organized into Negro conferences, with Negro presidents and other officers, than what it is in the Negro mission under white leaders? Again they argue we have no Negro schools apart from the white conference, and with the white brethren we have the Oakwood School. But we ask, what great thing has Oakwood done for our race? It is to be admitted the school farm is doing more than past years, its curriculum is higher, you may get more courses than in former years. But after finishing all the courses offered, if one is not adapted to preaching, teaching, Bible work or a canvasser there is nothing he can do in the S. D. A. Denomination. It must be confessed that all of the Negro young people are no more adapted to preaching, teaching or doing Bible work than all of the white young people.

When Oakwood has turned out a Negro bookkeeper, secretary, stenographer or typist what position can the denomination offer these finished students. None, absolutely none, unless we had a Negro conference.

When our white young peo-

ple finish their training in the Seventh-day Adventist schools, they can find employment in the conference as secretaries, treasurers, bookkeepers, stenographers and other helpers that may be needed throughout the denomination. But what about our own Negro young people? What could be offered them, where must they go to find employment? Answer, to the world. And this is the only source from which they can be employed, until Negro conferences are organized. If the youth among white people should be saved to the denomination, the youth of the colored people should be saved as well.

The Things Lawful And The Things Not Expedient.

"All things are lawful unto me but all things are not expedient." 1 Cor. 6:12. These words of the apostle Paul are used by some of our white leaders to cover all kinds of unjust practices and discrimination against the colored brethren.

Twenty years ago when both white and colored brethren met for worship in the same building, it was shown that while this was lawful to be done, certain racial conditions made it not expedient. Thus you can see that while it was lawful for us to worship together it was expedient that we be segregated, hence, Negro churches apart from the whites, both North and South. When the need of Negro conferences is presented to our white brethren they say this is lawful, but it is expedient that our colored work remain just as it is, and that is under the exclusive control of our white brethren. This scripture is actually twisted to suit almost any plan which our white brethren may offer the Negro, though it may meet the protest of the colored brethren.

Now we believe God has used our white brethren to bring the truth to us just as He
(Concluded in next issue)

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