

CHAPTER 1

Klieg Light on Truth

It was chapel time at Glendale Union Academy. The principal had just begun his remarks when the back door of the chapel was flung open, and the school business manager hurried down the aisle waving a telegram. Quickly taking it, the principal silently read its message. The chapel became as still as death as he began to read aloud into the mike, “By orders of the State all Seventh-day Adventist schools must immediately be closed and—“

He was interrupted by a loud knocking at the side doors. Without waiting for an answer soldiers entered and guarded each exit. Principal and faculty were quickly escorted off the rostrum, and two stern officials took their place. One by one, several students were called forward and interrogated.

“Are you a Seventh-day Adventist?” one official asked a young woman.

“Yes,” she replied.

“Why?” he asked.

“Because my conscience tells me it is right.”

“Do you believe all the stuff they teach you here?” he continued, a trace of sarcasm in his voice.

“Yes, I do,” she said.

“Can you prove it from the Bible?” the official inquired.

“I-I don’t know,” she faltered.

“Show me why you are a Seventh-day Adventist,” her stern interrogator commanded, handing her a Bible. “I-I don’t-I-I can’t,” she stammered.

At a nod from the questioner, a soldier took her and hustled her out the door. A young man was called to the platform.

“Why do you keep Saturday for the Sabbath?” the official asked.

“Because the Bible says I should” was the nervous reply.

“Where?” the official countered, thrusting a Bible into the student’s hands.

Finding the fourth commandment, the young man began to read, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep—”

“Just a minute,” interrupted the official, “that was for the Jews. Prove it from the New Testament.”

READY TO ANSWER

The young man hesitated, began to say something, then just stood there. At a nod from the interrogator a soldier escorted him out.

Another student was called up. Then another. Then still another. One by one they were examined. One by one they failed to give a clear, logical reason for their faith.

The ringing of the bell brought us back to the present. The soldiers had been medical cadet trainees. The whole program had been designed to make us feel our need of a better knowledge of the Scriptures.

Focus on Truth

According to prophecy the attention of the whole world will soon be riveted on Seventh-day Adventists and what they believe. Each passing day makes more urgent the apostle's command "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."¹

In the final crisis the whole world will be the stage. Truth, and every Christian who fights for truth, will be "made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."² Like the powerful beam of klieg light focused on an actor as he moves about a stage being filmed, the glare of public notice will be upon everyone who defends the truth.

Standing Alone

"It does not seem possible to us now," wrote Mrs. White years ago, "that any should have to stand alone; but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith. Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate."⁸

"It does not seem possible"-not when this was written. But now with Sunday laws declared constitutional by the Supreme Court, with the tremendous drive from Rome for unity, with the Pope having urged the intervention of the powers of the state to enforce Sunday sacredness-now not only is it possible but the stage is set for it to happen suddenly and unexpectedly.

"Stand alone"-without the strength of companionship. Interrogated-alone. Ridiculed-alone. Perhaps imprisoned-alone.

READY TO ANSWER

“Brought before councils and before thousands”-before unfriendly councils, before scornful thousands. By television it could be millions. By Telstar it could be hundreds of millions. What an opportunity to witness for truth!

“Each one will have to give the reason of his faith”-reasons that must be clear and logical. They are, if you know them. But you can’t wait in idleness and carelessness, supposing that when the critical moment comes the Holy Spirit will perform a miracle. The Holy Spirit will bring back only that which you have earnestly studied.

“Then will come the severest criticism”-your reasons will be subjected to criticism, severe, withering criticism. Will you be able to give convincing answers, reflecting the quiet certainty that comes from a confident knowledge of truth?

Scrutiny on Every Position

“Upon every position that has been taken for the truth”-not just upon the Sabbath, though that will be the key issue. Not just upon spiritism and the state of the dead, though these will be key issues too. But upon every position-the investigative judgment, the Spirit of Prophecy, a literal Creation, and every other belief that we hold.

“We need, then, to study the word of God”-even though a hundred other things crowd in. Remember, “Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures, and who have received the love of the truth, will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive.”⁴

“That we may know”-for we must know. Our message comes “with much certainty,” declared Paul.⁵ “Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,” asks God, “that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth?”⁶

“Why do we believe?”-a searching question. Why? Why are you a Seventh-day Adventist? Why?

Fortify the Mind

Men’s minds are under attack. The enemy is beginning his last desperate effort to gain control of every mind. The attack-now often subtle and disguised-will soon break into fierce, open war. Foreseeing our day, Mrs. White wrote, “None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.”⁷

It sounds serious. It is. And the time to do something about it is now. “The day is at hand. For the lessons to be learned, the work to be

done, the transformation of character to be effected, the time remaining is but too brief a span.“⁸

This book has three purposes. First, to encourage you to focus your attention on the logic and certainty of truth, that you may become “rooted and built up ... and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught.“⁹ Second, to encourage you to embrace fully the Author of truth and to live in utter devotion to Him. Third, to help you become more efficient in clearly and logically explaining your faith. “Study, embrace, share” could well be our motto.

Suggested Plan of Study

We would like to suggest a plan that will help you fortify your mind with the truths discussed chapter by chapter. In each chapter pick out several of the most forceful texts on the subject. Look these up in your Bible and underline them. Then copy a half dozen of them onto three-by-five-inch cards that you can carry with you, and memorize a text a day. Review them each Sabbath until they become firmly stamped upon your memory.

As you follow this plan-think. Weigh evidences carefully, especially when we discuss such subjects as evolution. Let your mind expand in contemplation of the mighty truths that are found in God’s Word.

Don’t throw up your hands with the exclamation “But I don’t have time.” God has made provision for this. Remember that the Sabbath is a gift of time to you. This amounts to a gift of 52 days a year, or during the fourteen years between your sixteenth and thirtieth birthdays a total of about 730 days—two full years in which to learn of spiritual things!

In addition to this, we can surely find ten minutes a day for Bible memorization, just by carrying a three-by-five card and using odd moments. You will also find that the more you do this, the easier it becomes to memorize, and the more you will enjoy it.

Soon the whole world “will be divided into two great classes, -those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image.“¹⁰ It will be a fearful issue—and there will be no middle ground, no place for halfhearted religion.

It becomes increasingly urgent to prepare now. “The final movements will be rapid ones.“¹¹ At the last “the work will spread like fire in the stubble,“¹² and will be finished in a “much shorter time than many think possible.“¹³ An example of how this could be was seen some time ago in Europe when a youthful Christian had to give an answer for this faith because his conscience would not permit him to do any ordinary work on the Sabbath. His witness in an obscure

courtroom was picked up by the press, and carried to at least four continents, where millions read of his faith.

Let circumstances develop where scenes like this are multiplied, and the whole world could quickly be made aware of the issues of truth. In Ezekiel's vision "the bright light going among the living creatures with the swiftness of lightning represents the speed with which this work will finally go forward to completion."¹⁴

No Time for Delay

"With the swiftness of lightning"! The final test may not be something that can be seen coming weeks or months ahead. It may develop overnight, "with the swiftness of lightning."

It will be too late to prepare then, too late to learn the reasons for your faith, too late for character to be transformed. "Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble, or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless."¹⁵

In this space age man has become keenly aware of the importance of time. This country has spent 60 billion dollars on the development of an electrical warning systema system which at best could provide 900 seconds' warning in the event of enemy attack. Time has become urgently important, and even seconds are of incredible value.

"The time remaining is but too brief a span." God help us to use it well!

1. 1 Peter 3:15.
2. 1 Cor. 4:9.
3. Ellen G. White in Review and Herald, Dec. 18, 1888.
4. The Great Controversy, p. 625.
5. 1 Thess. 1:5. Weymouth (3d. ed.).
6. Prov. 22:20, 21.
7. Ibid., pp. 593, 594.
8. Education, p. 184.
9. Col. 2:7.
10. The Great Controversy, p. 450.
11. Testimonies, vol. 9. p. 11.
12. Selected Messages, book 1, p. 118.
13. Ellen G. White quoted in General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 294.
14. Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 754.
15. The Great Controversy, p. 620.