



# THE “DAILY” CONTROVERSY

IN THE EARLY 1900s, a controversy arose within the Adventist church regarding the interpretation of the Hebrew word “tamid” (translated as “daily” in the King James Version) as found in the book of Daniel, chapter 8.

There was the traditional view which found its roots in the Millerite movement and was advocated by some of the early pioneers of the Adventist Church, such as Uriah Smith and others. They held that the “daily” referred to paganism, which was “taken away” to make way for the “abomination of desolation” (Roman Catholicism).

The new view, championed by figures like Percy T. Magan, WW Prescott, AG Daniels, and AT Jones, emphasized

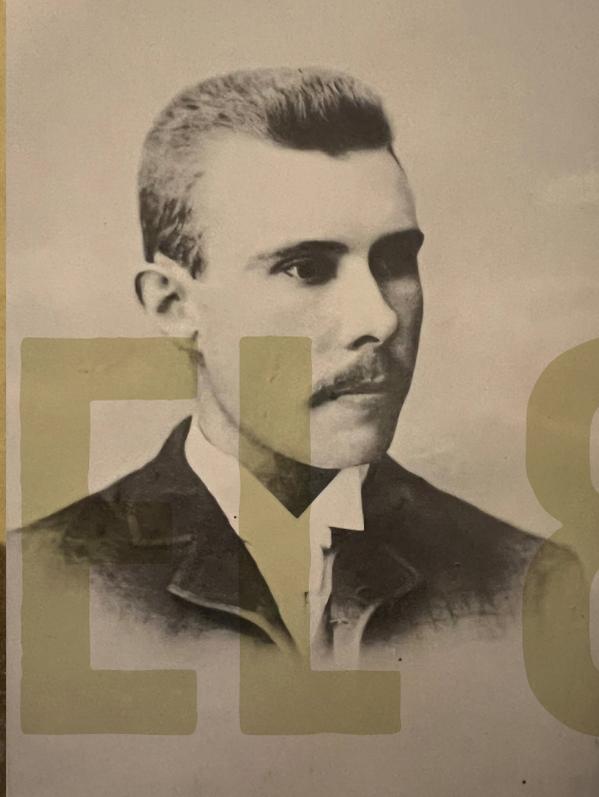
that the “daily” referred to the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary that was “cast down” and counterfeited by the Roman Catholic Church, replacing the true mediation of Christ in heaven with the papacy’s system of salvation by works and the mass. AT Jones dedicated a book to the topic called *The Consecrated Way*. The last half of the book was dedicated to sharing this new view

Needless to say, “the daily” controversy stirred some feathers. The two

**By Jeff Reich**



▲ Uriah Smith



▲ Percy Magan

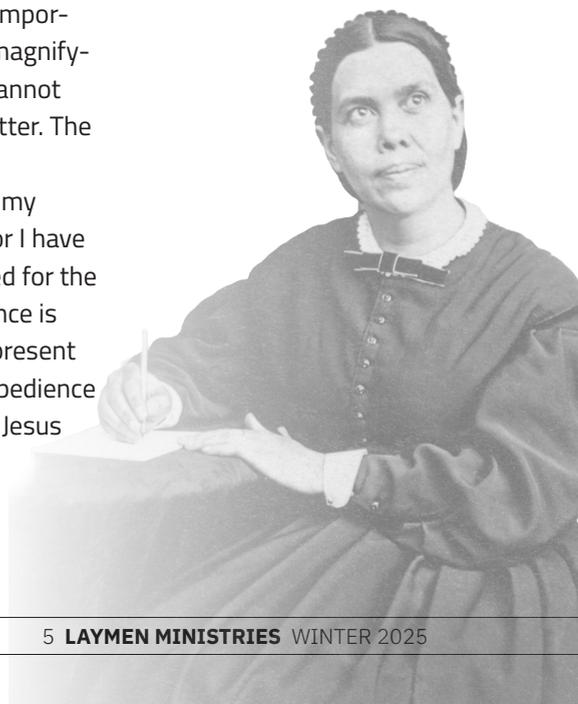
# DAILY

camps started debating and arguing amongst themselves, sometimes in public meetings, and even let it spread to Church periodicals. To say the least, the subject became divisive in nature. Ellen White, another church founder and pioneer of the Adventist Church, saw what was happening and took a levelheaded approach to the whole matter. Here is what she wrote:

“I have words to speak to my brethren east and west, north and south. I request that my writings shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. I entreat of Elders H, I, J, and others of our leading brethren, that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their views of ‘the daily.’

“It has been presented to me that this is not a subject of vital importance. I am instructed that our brethren are making a mistake in magnifying the importance of the difference in the views that are held. I cannot consent that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter. The true meaning of ‘the daily’ is not to be made a test question.

“I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their arguments regarding this question [‘the daily’]; for I have had no instruction on the point under discussion, and I see no need for the controversy. Regarding this matter under present conditions, silence is eloquence. The work that the Lord has given us at this time is to present to the people the true light in regard to the testing questions of obedience and salvation—the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” 1 Selected Messages, p.164-165



She ends by sharing the most important daily controversy: "Our brethren should understand that self needs to be humbled and brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. The Lord calls upon those of us who have had great light **to be converted daily.**" *1 Selected Messages* p. 165.

Please understand she was not saying that we shouldn't defend the truth, but that we should choose our battles wisely and that "how" we defend the truth is just as important as the truth itself. She encouraged us that "one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers *was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character* and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 48.

All too often people share speculative ideas and then turn those ideas into a testing truth. Controversy in a church is nothing new and even dates back to the disciples themselves disagreeing and arguing over issues. Jim Webb, our director in the Philippines, has reminded me repeatedly, "Jeff, we are in the people business and whenever there are people there are problems. But we must never forget that we are all damaged goods." Those words will stick with me to the day I die. So, let us not lose focus on the real issues.

### NEW LIGHT – OLD PROBLEMS

I remember one time we had some people come to our home for a biblical weekend retreat. On Sabbath

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▲ AG Daniels



▲ AT Jones

afternoon one gentleman sat down beside me and said, "Jeff, I'd like to share something with you personally." He started explaining to me about dual applications of various prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation. In my heart, I felt like it was off but it was interesting to listen to.

When he was done, I said, "You've put a lot of time and effort into studying these prophecies." He humbly replied, "Yes, I have invested months of research into trying to understand these prophecies."

Then I asked him this one simple question, "How has the study of these prophecies helped you in your character development? How has it helped you in your marriage situation, in your relationship with your wife?" I knew that he was dealing with a lot of personal issues at home and he and his wife had separated several times. He hung his head and said, "Yeah, I get your point." Sometimes it seems like we dive into something that we deem is important and overlook things that are more important.

## HOSTILE THEOLOGY

While running a ministry like Laymen Ministries we have had a lot of interesting experiences over the years. One time a guy showed up at our church and started dominating the Sabbath school class discussion. He often glanced at me when he was talking to see if I was agreeing or disagreeing with what he was sharing.

After church, he cornered me in the back of the sanctuary and started sharing with me the fact that God had given him new light about the Godhead, that the Holy Spirit was a female – Mother God as he put it. He said the Lord instructed him to come and share these "truths" with me so I could share it with everybody on our mailing list. He became quite angry and raised his voice when I wasn't receptive to what he was sharing. For some reason, he thought this was the light that was going to go around the world heralding the second coming of Christ. Needless to say, I had my doubts. I noticed a couple of church members lingering around the church, keeping their eye on the situation in case they had to step in and intervene for my safety.

Years ago our Ministry decided it was not going to be sidetracked in the many controversies that happen in the Church. We have a mission and that is "outreach"

and sharing the Three angel's Messages. Satan can sidetrack us from the real issues.

Yes, sometimes there are things that people feel are really important and are somehow vital to our salvation. I have seen people get red in the face and wag their finger at another person, trying to convince them of the "right" understanding of a theological issue. If the other person doesn't accept the view, they are going to be lost. The whole time the person passionately sharing the new light is missing the most critical thing about being a Christian, letting the Holy Spirit work in our lives, having Christ in our hearts molding our characters to be more like his. As Jesus said "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross DAILY**, and follow me."—Luke 9:23.

The apostle Paul reminded us, "I die **DAILY**." —1 Cor. 15:31

"**Let Christ be DAILY** made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word— a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to recreate other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God."— *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 129.

Yes, we all have a "daily controversy." We must daily surrender our will to God so that daily He will be in our hearts and be manifested in our lives. That is the true "daily controversy."

"We need the religion of Jesus Christ DAILY; for everything we do or say comes under the notice of God."

—Signs of the Times, Vol. 2, p. 525. 

