



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -

Matthew 15:9

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Who Will Rescue the Rescuers?

Tonight I sit at my computer searching through the writings of Mrs. White. I seek an "Ellen White says" that I was taught in my childhood and on into my adult years. Since I haven't yet located what I'm looking for I won't share with you what that might be. However, it is interesting to note that when searching for things she reportedly wrote or things that you want further guidance on or for whatever reason you are searching, you (well, me anyway) frequently find something off the given topic and it strikes your fancy enough that you get waylaid.

That's what happened to me. I found a comment that I decided to share with you. Here we go:

No man is qualified to stand in the sacred desk unless he has felt the transforming influence of the truth of God upon his own soul. Then, and not till then, can he by precept and example rightly represent the life of Christ. But many, in their labors, exalt themselves rather than their Master; and the people are converted to the minister instead of to Christ.

I am pained to know that some who preach the present truth today are really unconverted men. They are not connected with God. They have a head religion, but no conversion of the heart; and these are the very ones who are the most self-confident and self-sufficient; and this self-sufficiency will stand in the way of their gaining that experience which is essential to make them effective workers in the Lord's vineyard. I wish I could arouse those who claim to be

watchmen on the walls of Zion, to realize their responsibility. They should awake, and take a higher stand for God; for souls are perishing through their neglect. They must have that sincere devotion to God that will lead them to see as God sees, and take the words of warning from him and sound the alarm to those who are in peril. The Lord will not hide his truth from the faithful watchman. Those who do the will of God shall know of the doctrine. "The wise shall understand;" but "the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand." [Daniel 12:10.] – *Gospel Workers 27*

Notice the beginning of the second paragraph. She states that some preachers are unconverted men who aren't connected with God. But this wasn't all I found. Here's more:

The Master who has chosen him, who knows the hearts of all men, will give him utterance, that he may speak the words he ought to speak at the right time and with power. And those who become truly convicted of sin, and charmed with the Way, the Truth, and the Life, will find sufficient to do without extolling the ability of the minister. Christ and his love will be exalted above any human instrument. The man will be lost sight of, because Christ is magnified and is the theme of thought. Many are converted to the minister, and are not really converted to Christ. We marvel at the stupor that benumbs the spiritual senses. There is a lack of vital power. Lifeless prayers are offered, and testimonies are borne which fail to edify or strengthen the hearers. It becomes every minister of Christ to inquire the cause of this. – *Gospel Worker, 42*

In the paragraph above there is an indication that many people are following their pastor instead of their Creator. That can happen when the pastor doesn't really know the true God and does the job of presenting a gospel of the impostor or the wannabe god who is also known as the devil.

So, according to Mrs. White, many pastors are not converted. If they aren't converted then they are preaching a false gospel. Yet we are taught that the pastor is God's anointed and as such it is a sin to question him or his authority. But where did that teaching come from?

I'm reminded of a text in Galatians:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel

which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. – Galatians 1:6-12

In that text Paul stated that if someone, even if it be an angel from heaven, were to teach a message other than what he taught then we shouldn't listen to them for they are teaching a perverted gospel. Also notice that Paul claimed that he received the message he taught by a revelation from Jesus.

I'm reminded of a story where Paul was accused of speaking disrespectfully toward a church leader. He apologized for doing so but at the same time he was doing the work of leading the masses of people to follow the gospel from Jesus rather than the gospel from the church leaders. Let's see if we can find that passage:

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

Those who were standing near Paul said, "How dare you insult God's high priest!"

Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.' [a]"
– Acts 23:1-5

Paul stated that it was written to not speak evilly about the ruler of the people. Let's find that text. A reference is given.

"Do not blaspheme God [f] or curse the ruler of your people. –
Exodus 22:28

This command came from Exodus where God was giving them the rules they were to live by. Perhaps we should take a peek into the situation that was going on that led God to give them this rule.

For starters, that reference you see noted tells us that the translators suggest that the words “do not blaspheme God” might also be translated as “do not revile the judges.”

Going back to the history of the Israelites, remember that they were slaves for a very long time. And as slaves they were operating with a slaves mentality. They only knew that if they did something that was wrong then they were punished. If they did something that was right then they didn't get punished. This is the same way a very young child thinks. He tries to do things but finds that with some things he gets punished. When he gets punished enough then he knows to not do those things.

This is operating at level 1 on the moral inventory scale. God recognized that they were merely moral babies and needed to be handled the way a baby would be handled in order to enable them to grow to the next level of moral development.

Did Paul understand these stages of moral growth? I cannot know that. But this may well be where the teaching that we are to revere our pastors came from.

But why should we believe and follow a pastor's teaching just because he is teaching it? Where does it say that we should lay down our convictions and follow another person blindly? I don't think you'll find that in the Bible or in Mrs. White's writings. That kind of behavior leads to loss of autonomy. It is damaging to both the victim and the person who is demanding to be followed without question. It sears the conscience when these behaviors are not corrected.

But should we in any way attack the pastor as a person? No. All pastors are children of God and God loves them unconditionally. But should we warn our family, friends, and acquaintances that the pastor is teaching falsehoods? I believe we should. And lest any of you want to point the finger at me then let me lead you in doing so. I admit that I have been guilty of causing trouble for pastors. I made the mistake of confusing the pastors actions and teachings with the pastor as a person. And that was wrong. And for all the pastors that I have done that to you have my sincere apology. I know that I was wrong and I am able to love you as a person. However, I do not support your actions or messages that are contrary to the truth about God and his Character.

And Paul agreed with me in my stance against false doctrines. He did so in the text in Galatians that I quoted above.

From here I have a request for all my readers and that is that we spend a lot of time in prayer lifting to God the pastors who are in the position of shepherding God's flock. This is an awesome position to have. And I mean awesome in a not so pretty light. They are fallible humans just like the rest of us, yet people expect them to be living exemplary lives, never making a mistake, never saying a cross word, always preaching the sermon that "we" want to hear rather than what we "need" to hear. They are expected to be there for us 24/7 and place their own family and lives on the back burner. They are supposed to be supermen. But supermen they aren't. They are humans with all the loves, hates, flaws, etc... that we have. We should love them and respect them as people, but we shouldn't accept a false doctrine from them. It may be that they need to learn from us and a good start would be in how we treat them. And remember, I'm preaching to myself here as well as others who have been in some form a troublemaker for the pastor.

Like it or not, we're all in this together. Let's learn to love one-another, including those who believe things differently than what we believe, whether it be the truth or a falsehood. The Holy Spirit is able to impart to us the ability to love in that way but we must be submissive to him. God can make all kinds of what we think are impossible changes in us if we are submissive to him. And life is so much nicer on the greener side of the fence.

Well, will you look at that. It seems I have once again found my soapbox and managed to churn out 5 pages when only planning to say a few words. Oh well. I've come a long way from the timid person who was afraid to speak for fear of what people would think of me. It's so much nicer to be on the path of healing.

And with that I bid you good evening.

Love to all,

Hannah