



# **Speaking as a Dragon Today? A Protestant Response**

Nicholas P. Miller, JD, PhD  
Andrews university

# Lamblike Beast that Speaks as a Dragon

- Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. Rev. 13:1
- When did our pioneers view America speaking as a dragon?



# American Relative Greatness – Republicanism and Protestantism.

- In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, **Republicanism** stood for representative government, the rule of law, checks and balances, separation of powers and **Protestantism**, the rights of conscience and other civil freedoms.
- “The Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. **These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity.**” Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, 441.
- What would violate these things? Sunday laws, only? Separation of powers, checks & balances, judicial independence, freedom of the press.

Uriah Smith, “The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 23 June 1853, 8.

- With two horns like a lamb a beast arose—  
So with two leading forms a power has risen,  
two fundamental principles, than which  
In all the earth none can be found more mild,

More lamb-like in their outward form and name.  
A land of freedom, pillared on the broad  
And open basis of equality;  
A land reposing ‘neath the gentle sway  
of civil and religious liberty.

Uriah Smith, “The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 23 June 1853, 8.

Lamb-like in form, is there no dragon-voice  
Heard in our land? No notes that harshly grate  
Upon the ear of mercy, love and truth?

And put humanity to open shame?

Let the united cry of millions tell-

Millions that groan beneath oppression's rod,  
Beneath the sin-forged chains of slavery,

Robbed of their rights, to brutes degraded down,

And soul and body bound to other's will

Let their united cries, and tears, and groans,

That daily rise, and call aloud on Heaven

# Smith, “The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy”

For vengeance, answer; let the slave reply.  
O land of boasted freedom! Thou hast given  
The lie to all thy loud professions, first,  
of justice, liberty and equal rights;

And thou hast set a foul and heinous blot  
upon the sacred page of liberty;  
And whilst thou trafficest in souls of men,  
Thou hurl'st defiance, proud, in face of Heaven  
Soon to be answered with avenging doom.

ALONZO T. JONES, URIAH SMITH.  
ADVENT REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD.  
MAY 16, 1899 – “Present Truth”

On the occasion of the Spanish/American War and American military action in the Philippines

- “We have always said, and it is the truth, that these two horns represent the two great principles that from the beginning characterized this nation; namely, Protestantism and republicanism. Then this beast, in spite of these lamblike principles, speaks "as a dragon," and becomes oppressive, cruel, and persecuting. This shows apostasy from the principles which at first are the characteristics of the nation. For several years we said much, never half enough, about the apostasy of the nation from its fundamental principle of Protestantism. But very little has been said about the apostasy of the nation from its fundamental principle of republicanism. Yet this is a truth, as really as is the other.”

# Present Truth – 1899 – Jones & Smith

- “JUST NOW, the fact pointed out in that truth is being worked out before the eyes of all people: and for months past it has been so. This apostasy is going steadily on in the presence of all. All people are interested in, and are discussing daily, the national movements that mark this apostasy. But how many of them see it in the word of God? How many of them see it in the prophecy? How many of them know that there is any word of God in prophecy on the subject?

Yea, how many Seventh-day Adventists are telling them of this, and showing them the word of the prophecy? Yet Seventh-day Adventists are here for that very purpose. Seventh-day Adventists profess to know these things: our very profession proclaims that we know these things. Are you telling the people? Are you pointing out to them the true significance of the things which they all see passing as the days go by?”



# Protestantism & Republicanism are part of our prophetic message.

- “Under the influence of the threefold union [apostate Protestantism, a renewed Roman medieval church, and spiritualism], our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and Republican government . . . Then we shall know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan, and that the end is near. ChS 160;
- “This national apostasy is the signal for national ruin.” LDE 133-134

# Present Truth in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

- Is it possible for Adventists in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century to overlook crucial, prophetic elements of our message because we focus only on half of the message? That we are so focused on Protestantism, religious freedom, that we overlook other fundamental assaults on human rights through the violation of basic principles of Protestantism?
- Already happened in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Germany saw the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. Anti-godless communists, anti-Catholic priests, pro-family, vegetarian, teetotaler, gave Adventist soldiers Saturday mornings off to attend church. That didn't fit in with our standard view of last day events. What could be wrong? Sad story that saw us praise Hitler in our publications, enroll in his army, and turn over the Jews when we were asked.
- But we wouldn't make the same kind of mistake again, would we?

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century and rise of Nationalistic Christendom

- Nationalistic populism - a defense of the West's Christian heritage?
- Populist leaders in America and Europe purported to speak for the national heritage and "main stream" Christianity, and promise to return it to a position of influence and power.
- various European nationalist groups play their Christian identity against the non-Christian roots of many immigrant groups, especially Muslims.
- This is something we have heard about in our own country.



# Nationalistic Christendom

- Has more to do with medieval versions of Christianity – support of centralized power structures in both church and state,
- Unbelievers and non-Christians as civil enemies - dealt with by force; imprisonment, expulsion, travel ban at home or military action overseas.
- Modern versions of the inquisition or crusade and suppression of religious and ethnic minorities.



# After 500 Years of Protestantism: A Clash of Protestant Visions of America

In Charlottesville last year, there was a clash of differing views of America, both sides ostensibly represented by Protestant viewpoints.

One side that says America is best represented by a Christian tradition and culture, primarily from Northern European cultures and countries, and those who cannot adopt or adapt to these views and values should not come to, or perhaps even stay in, America.

The other says that America is best represented by the kind of Protestantism that extends tolerance and liberty to all religions and cultures, and that its values are best seen in its commitment to liberty and justice for all.

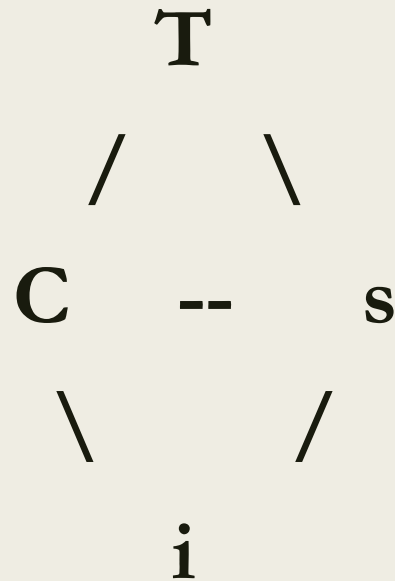
What does history tell us?

# WHAT IS THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS?

Human Dignity: The Connection Between Religious Freedom, and Social Justice

# Martin Luther & the Creation of the modern world

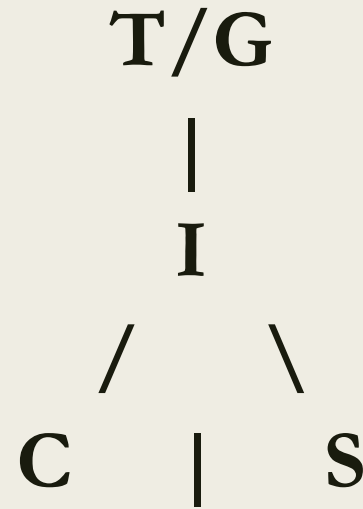
Medieval World View



\*T=Truth/God; C = Church

S=State; I=Individual

# Luther's Protestant Revolution



1. Conscience can really exist
2. Rights can exist
3. The church and the state exists for the individual, not vice versa



## Rights and Duties- Reciprocal Connection

Protestantism began to teach that the duties to God could not be interfered with by man. As they were a *duty* that existed between God and the individual, the individual had a *right not* to be interfered with by the state in the exercise of that duty. The *right* against the state grew out of the individual's *duty* towards God.

John Locke, a Creator, and Rights

# Post-Modernism's autonomous individual

ttttttttt

|

i

/ \

c | S

1. Subjectivity of truth
2. Rights are dependent on skepticism
3. Religious people are a threat, therefore marginalized
4. Rights are based on a secular definition of the self

# History of the West: History of America

Medieval World

Protestant/Republicanism

Modern Liberal

500 - 1500s

1500s - 1860s

1870s to 9/11

Puffendorf/Cotton

Locke/Roger Williams

Bayle/John Mill

Puritan New England	Constitutional Founding	20 <sup>th</sup> Century America
<p style="text-align: center;">T/G   / \ C -- S   i</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">T/G   I / \ C   S</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ttttttttt   i / \ c   S</p>

# Ellen White, Rights & Duties

Christians have a duty, White asserted, to be concerned for the rights of all. “The Lord Jesus demands our acknowledgement of the rights of every man. Men’s social rights, and their rights as Christians, are to be taken into consideration.” (GW 123)

These rights existed in relationship with corresponding social and Christian duties.

# Ellen White, Rights & Social/Biblical Justice

Four Areas to Consider:

1. Slavery & Racism
2. Poverty & Economic Justice
3. Immigrants
4. Family and Marriage

# I. Slavery – Slave Laws

Even before the Civil War, White called for civil disobedience, the breaking of federal law, in order to protect the human rights of African Americans. “The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master,” she wrote, “we are not to obey.” (TC1, 201-202).

# I. Slavery & Racism – God’s Property

“the slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God’s workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own. When the laws of men conflict with the Word and law of God,” White wrote, “we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be.” (TC1, 201-202)

# I. Racism & Poverty - Restitution

Speaking of the newly freed blacks in the South, she said that the Lord demanded “restitution” from American Christians to “relieve the necessities of this field. . . . The Lord calls upon you to restore to His people the advantages of which they have so long been denied.” (SWk 155)



# Obligation to Former Slaves

“Are we not under even greater obligation to labor for the colored people than for those who have been more highly favored? Who is it that held these people in servitude? Who kept them in ignorance, and pursued a course to debase and brutalize them, forcing them to disregard the law of marriage, breaking up the family relation, tearing wife from husband, and husband from wife?

(cont)

# Obligation to Former Slaves

“If the race is [backward], who made them so? Is there not much due to them from the white people? After so great a wrong has been done them, should not an earnest effort be made to lift them up?” (SWk 14.4)

“The past is not dead. It is not even past.”

William Faulkner

## II. Poverty & Equality

“Without some restraint the power of the wealthy would become a monopoly, and the poor, though in every respect fully as worthy in God’s sight, would be regarded and treated as inferior to their more prosperous brethren. (cont)

## II. Poverty - Equality

“The sense of this oppression would arouse the passions of the poorer class. There would be a feeling of despair and desperation that would tend to demoralize society and open the door to crimes of every description. The regulations that God established were designed to *promote social equality.*” (PP 534)

## II. Poverty – Restorative v. Distributive Justice

If the principles of the economic laws of ancient Israel were applied today, they “would prevent the terrible evils that in all ages have resulted from the oppression of the rich toward the poor and the suspicion and hatred of the poor toward the rich.” Such laws “might hinder the amassing of great wealth and the indulgence of unbounded luxury,” but “they would prevent the consequent ignorance and degradation of tens of thousands.”  
(PP 536.2)

## II. Poor – Opportunity

And in words especially relevant to today's world, when the cities of America are filled with angry protestors, clashes between police and angry young men, and the flickering shadows of burning buildings, White said such laws would “bring a peaceful solution of those problems that now threaten to fill the world with anarchy and bloodshed.” (PP 536.2)

# III. Poor - Immigrants

- “In our own land thousands of foreigners—representatives of many nations, kindreds, and tongues—have settled. . . . The hand of God has been directing them to our shores that they might be brought under the enlightening influence of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and become partakers of the divine nature. How many among us have been stirred by the spirit of the Master to go forth and labor for this class of strangers who have been brought to our very doors through the providence of God, that his work might be hastened in the earth?” {MMis May 1, 1892, par. 2}

## IV. Family Rights

In discussing the increasingly common disrespect of older children, she wrote that:

*“Obligations are mutual. It is the duty of fathers and mothers to care for their children, but when the latter refuse to respect parental authority and to observe the rules of the family, they should be left to bear their own burdens in life.”* (ST February 9, 1882 Par. 11) (emphasis added.)



## IV. Family Rights - Temperance

“The home of a drunkard,” she wrote, “tells the sad story of the evil wrought by the use of strong drink. Wretchedness and destitution reign, and often the wife and children suffer from cold and hunger.” But despite of this invasion of the family unit, “the *liquor traffic is legalized*. Heaven sees it all. God keeps a record of the men *robbed* of their reason, and the homes made wretched, by the use of alcohol.” (RH June 15, 1905, par. 15)

## IV. Family Rights - Temperance

For these reasons, Ellen White involved herself in the nation-wide movement for laws prohibiting the sale and consumption of alcohol. She went as far as preaching that Adventists should go and vote for such laws and those supporting them, even if the elections were held on Sabbath. (3 BIO 159)

## IV. Family Right's - Marriage

“Intimately connected with these laws [of Revolutionary France] affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage— . . . the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society—to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in and cast loose at pleasure... . (GC 270.1)

## IV. Family Right's - Marriage

“If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful, or permanent in domestic life . . . they could not have invented a more effectual plan than the degradation of marriage.” (GC 270.1)

## IV. Family & Marriage – Gay Marriage

Decriminalizing homosexual behavior in civil society seems consistent with the freedom that God extends humanity to make moral, or immoral choices. But that is a far cry from insisting that alternate sexual units have some “right” to demand from the state and all other citizens full recognition and support of this behavior as a positive public good, and as a place to raise children.

# Today's Issues of Biblical Justice

- 1. Family, marriage, gender & sexuality – the other institution from Eden.
  - Christian institutions and businesses – marriage, gender, & sexuality standards.
  - Christian professionals and licensing – social workers, counselors, psychologists
  - Basic freedoms to speech, religion, and association – California, Mass, etc.
  - What to do? Get on mailing list of Christian family and marriage organizations, work with other people of faith to preserve faith-based gender & sexuality standards. National Organization for Marriage.

# Today's Issues of Biblical Justice

- 2. Military & Weapons – Christian nationalism
  - We are not a pacifist church, but we are one with a proud conscientious objector heritage. Joining a non-draft military makes refusing to carry weapons and keep the Sabbath practically impossible.
  - The Bible allows for self-defense, and has a just war theory. But ever since the sermon on the Mount, early Christians chose to aid, save, and support life, and not take it.
  - Church statement on forbidding the sale of automatic and semi-automatic assault weapons to civilians. Not anti-gun, but anti weapons of mass destruction.
  - General Conference statement opposing sale and possession assault weapons by civilians.

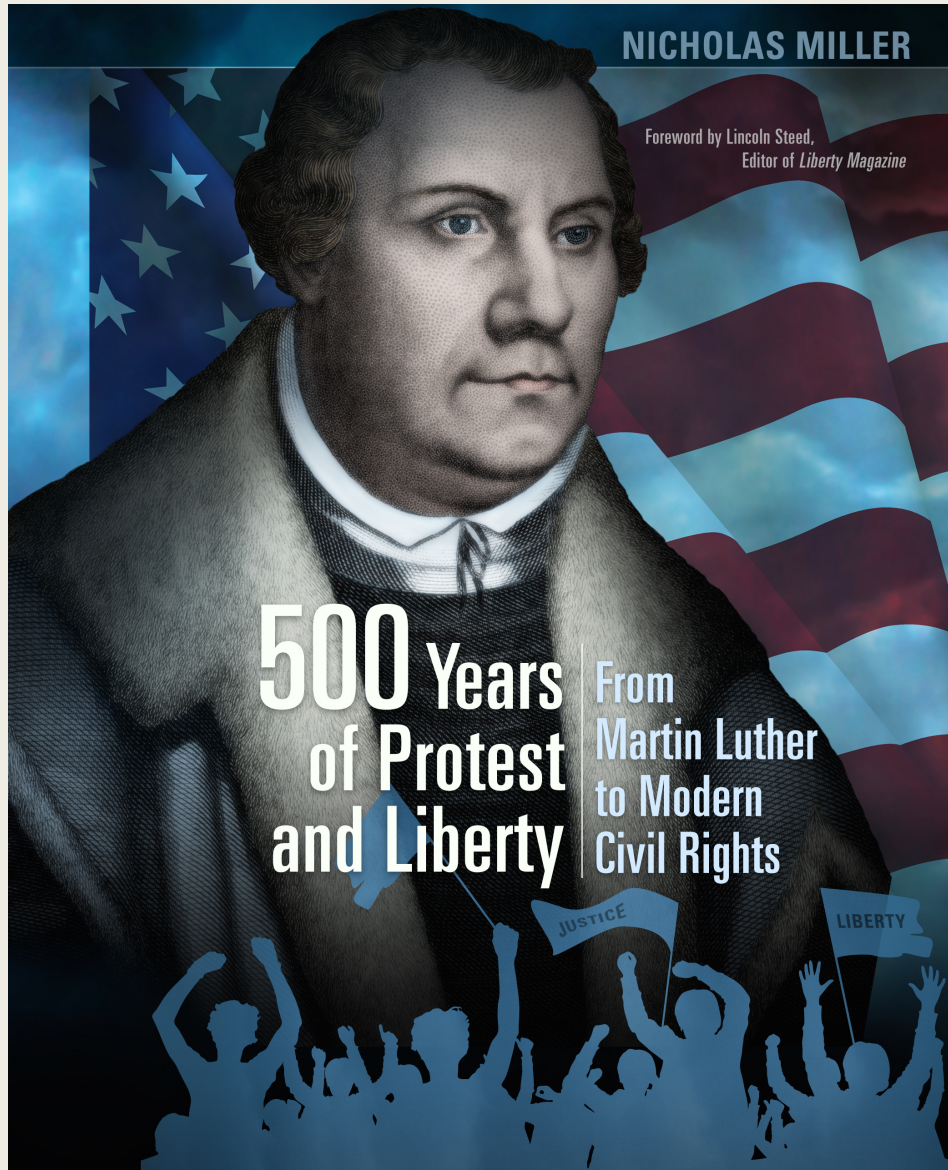
# Today's Issues of Biblical Justice

- 3. Immigration & Refugees – Two issues have gained the attention of the church recently, the DACA or “Dreamer’s” Act, which would protect young adults who were brought here as children. Bills are stuck in committee, but there is a discharge petition H. Res. 774, which would allow these bills to be considered by Congress. Co-sponsored by Democrats and Republicans.
  - Family separation instigated by the “zero tolerance” policy on immigration. Used to be that Asylum seekers would have their cases considered as family units. Now, arrests are made, and families split up. Hispanic young people created petition against this with help of Union leadership
  - ADRA has taken position to help refugees.  
<https://adra.org/refugees/>



# Today's Issues of Biblical Justice

- 4. Muslims – seek to build bridges to the Islamic community during a time that is becoming difficult for them.
  - Who is the Good Samaritan today?
  - Who is the Jew today?
  - Who needs good neighbors today?



Adventism needs to get its moral prophetic house in order. We are in danger of undermining our last day message of standing for biblical morality and truth if we are taken in by false political messiahs who misuse patriotic and moral arguments to further their own self-seeking and immoral agendas.

**Liberty500.com**  
**Bulk Sales available**