

The Detrimental Effects of Immaterialism upon Reasonable Thinking

Description

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by Trent Wilde

In discipline and repetition we have an opportunity for our minds to grasp a hold of the truth. So, we ask the question, "What has been the focus of this message for the past six months?" Priesthood and Temple! Yes, you have been called to be builders and priests. Think on this; contemplate this truth. Have you responded as did those newly returned exiles in the days of Haggai? Think on this. What say you? Do your actions testify to your belief, or is there an idea in your mind which has caused you to view reality as a fiction and fiction as a reality? Again, you have been called into priesthood! You have been called to build a spiritual temple! Is this fact or fiction? How do you view these things? What is it which could cause you to see, but not perceive, and hear, but not know that it is so?

As you know, our Heavenly Family has been attempting to build Their spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5) for some time. This work of building Their people as a temple on earth is intimately connected with the work of the grand anti-typical sanctuary in Heaven as can be seen by reading Daniel 8. The enemy of souls has destroyed the truth of the Heavenly Tabernacle in the minds of the professed followers of Christ. Thus disconnected from Christ, Satan has been able to cause blindness to grow and sin to flourish in the church. As these sins increased and were recorded in the books of Heaven, the sanctuary became more and more polluted, and Christ has had to continue His anxiety stricken intercession crying, "My blood, Father, my blood, my blood, my blood" (EW 38). In this way, the devil has been able to touch even Heaven itself and the very Gods whom he used to serve.

Our Heavenly Family, though, had another plan. They sent Their Angel (Rev. 10)¹ to commence the restoration of all things, while They, at the same time, began to cleanse the Sanctuary above. Revelation 10 shows the restoration of all things to begin with the truths of the first angel's message, the second angel's message, the midnight cry, and the third angel's message. Thus at the end of the 2300 days came the restoration of the truth.² And what was this truth? Was it not the sanctuary truth? As the sanctuary was seen in vision, was there not also seen the ark containing the ten commandments (EW 42)? And as these truths were being restored, did not our Heavenly Family also restore the truth of the personhood of the Father and the Son (EW54)? All these truths are the foundation of our faith as Seventh-day Adventists. These are the truths which have made us who we are as a people.

By the 1880s, there were many who were newly coming into the faith of the third angel's message. Those who came in at that time did not have the experience of the disappointment and of the years which followed in the settling of the vital points of truth connected with the message, nor did they see the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through Ellen White in confirming these truths. The condition of things had become a wilderness of theory, and the truth was taken for granted. Pride and striving for supremacy were gaining ground among those who would be leaders of the church, and the unique truths were no longer being taught as they once were. The church turned back from following Christ her leader and steadily retreated toward worldliness (5T 217). Our Heavenly Family then sent a message which was to wake the sleeping people, to moisten the dry bones, and to bring life to those dead in trespasses and sins. This message of righteousness by faith, brought in 1888, was pitifully ridiculed, despised, and rejected.

This true story becomes sadder still when we follow the history of those through whom the message came. Jones and Waggoner, along with Kellogg (who had also been sent of Heaven to accomplish a great work),

went astray from the faith. Later, others, such as A.F. Ballenger, departed from the faith, accepting falsehood in place of truth. This same folly has been practiced from ancient times, and it has been repeated and repeated, and it will be repeated yet. Let us see what it was that caused these men to fall away:

Let us all cling to the established truth of the sanctuary. Those who are so shortsighted that they will begin to do the work that some others have been doing in advocating *the sentiments contained in Living Temple*, are departing from the living God in *spiritualistic, satanic experiences* that will not do the souls who receive them any good. They are departing from the faith, seeking to tear down *the foundation of truth*. The men who have lost their hold on *the truths of the sanctuary question* as they have been presented by men who have been under the Holy Spirit's guidance, had better pray more and talk less. I testify in the name of the Lord that Elder Ballenger is led by satanic agencies and *spiritualistic*, invisible leaders. Those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will turn away from these seducing spirits.³

The Lord would have us at this time bring in the testimony written by those who are now dead, to speak in behalf of heavenly things. The Holy Spirit has given instruction for us in these last days. We are to repeat the testimonies that God has given His people, the testimonies that present clear conceptions of the truths of *the sanctuary* and that show the relation of Christ to the truths of *the sanctuary* so clearly brought to view.

If we are the Lord's appointed messengers, we shall not spring up with new ideas and theories to contradict the message that God has given through His servants since 1844. At that time many sought the Lord with heart and soul and voice. The men whom God raised up were diligent searchers of the Scriptures. And those who today claim to have light, and who contradict the teaching of God's ordained messengers who were working under the Holy Spirit's guidance, those who get up new theories which remove *the pillars of our faith*, are not doing the will of God, but are bringing in fallacies of their own invention, which, if received, will cut the church away from the anchorage of truth and set them drifting, drifting, to where they will receive any sophistries that may arise. *These will be similar to that which Dr. J. H. Kellogg, under Satan's special guidance, has been working for years.*⁴

The attacks of the devil in shutting out the light of justification by faith as brought in 1888 and in carrying away the messengers who bore that message, consisted in the subtle deceptions of *spiritualistic* sophistry. In this message, we have learned that spiritualism is much more than communicating with demons fronting as dead relatives. We have learned that spiritualism is simply the belief in the immaterial, or, to put it another way, the idea that there is a non-physical reality. Thomas McElwain, in his book *Adventism and Ellen White, A Phenomenon of Religious Materialism*, rightly summarizes the early Adventist use of the term "spiritualism" in this way,

The term spiritualism or spiritualizing theology is used in relation to materialism or materialist theology, as any system of theology that appeals to the existence of the immaterial, denying the basic premises of materialism;⁵

A review of early Adventist literature bears this out, as can be seen by reading the writings of the pioneers themselves.⁶ What they taught on the subject of spiritualism versus materialism as it relates to the sanctuary are immovable truths — old landmarks. Consider the following statements:

Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith *concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ*, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.⁷

You [Kellogg] are not definitely clear on the *personality of God, which is everything to us as a people. You have virtually destroyed the Lord God Himself.*⁸

Here the truth is clearly defined. The belief in spiritualistic ideas, the belief in immateriality, virtually destroys God Himself. This will be seen to be true when considering what immateriality really is. The truth though, is that

immateriality cannot really itself be defined. It can only be defined as to what it is not. The immaterial is not material. It is the absence of anything and everything that we can possibly name or conceive of. There is no objective distinguishing between the immaterial and the non-existent, there is only a difference in saying some say that the immaterial is real, but none would dare say the same thing concerning the non-existent.

How do we know what is real and what is not? What is the difference between imagining a thing and a thing really existing? Well, let's see. If you imagine a bird landing in your hand, that is different from a bird actually landing in your hand, right? What is the difference? Is it not that one was merely conceptual whereas the other is actually a part of the physical world? Similarly, those of you who have been studying this message for some time have probably heard the question asked, "Why is such and such a thing true?" For instance, if I say, "You are reading these words right now," is it true? Well, yes, of course. Why is it true? Is it not because it is actually what is happening in the material world? These undeniable facts leave us with the truth that materialism is indeed how we know the difference between what is real (true) and what is not.

In fact, without materialism, there is no way of knowing what is true and what is not. Most Christians believe in what is called *substance dualism*, which is the belief that the universe is made up of two fundamental substances—the material and the immaterial. God, angels, heaven, hell, souls, spirits, etc. are said to be immaterial, while everything that we experience with the natural senses is said to be material. God Himself is conceived of as a great mind which is present in all places since he is not limited to space or time. What does this dualistic view mean in terms of discerning between what is real and what is not? With this thinking, what is real cannot be determined based off of whether it exists in the material world or not, for it is held that immaterial things exist. Since the mind is conceived of as immaterial, and what is immaterial is held to be real, then how does one distinguish between imaginings and reality? What justification would there be for not holding everything we conceive of as being true?

Here is the truth—immateriality is non-existence. In fact, we cannot even conceive of the thought of immateriality, all we can do is try not to think of anything. Herein lies the primary subject of this article—how does immaterialism affect one's thinking? Ellen White was correct; to believe in the immaterial virtually destroys God, for it makes Him nothing.⁹ More than that, it destroys any and all justification and ability to discern between what is real and what is not real, what is true and what is not true. Materialism is the foundation of truth; to destroy it, is to destroy all. The assertion that the immaterial is real is the assertion that the non-existent exists, in the very idea of it. It is, at its core, the declaration of that which is not true as being true and is therefore the idea of a lie itself.

It is *the lie* which was introduced by the arch deceiver, it was *the lie* that led the antediluvian world astray, it was *the lie* that established Babylon, that controlled Pharaoh, that held up the religions of the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Greeks. It was *the lie* which took the form of Plato's transcendentalism and which came into Judaism via hellenization and corrupted the true faith of the Messiah and took the form of Christianity. *The lie* is responsible for the dark ages and for every other wicked catastrophe which has reared its ugly head to demolish all that is good, whole, and pure. *The lie* is what led astray Jones, Waggoner, and Kellogg. *The lie* is what has polluted the sanctuary, destroyed the priesthood, and so long delayed the building of the spiritual house.

Branches, you have recently been called to enter into priesthood and to build the temple of Yahweh. If you have not been filled with love and zeal for the truth, and exchanged your thoughts for the thoughts of our Heavenly Family, know that *the lie* has a hold on you.

How will truth re-enter? How will reason and love take the day? Exercise your will; stretch your minds to comprehend the truth. Receive correction, let your mind be molded according to the divine similitude!

Here is materialism—the truth is the truth. If materialism is true, there is only one fundamental substance and only one reality. What is fundamental to reality cannot be destroyed, for to destroy it would be to destroy reality itself. Since matter cannot be destroyed,¹⁰ it is demonstrated to be the foundation. What does this mean? It means that things simply are what they are. If a circle is a circle, it is simply a circle—not a square.

This is what some know as the law of non-contradiction. It simply means that two contradictory claims cannot be true at the same time, in the same sense. A thing cannot be a certain way, and yet not that same certain way. No one truth can conflict with itself or with any other truth. There is only reality; there may be contrary claims to that reality, but reality is consistent within itself. This is the foundation of all logic and reason. With immaterialism, there is no reason for reason and no grounds for sense.

For a practical illustration of the law of non-contradiction, we offer the following example: If you say you believe the Branch message, and the Branch message teaches you that to believe it is to take in Christ's words (John 6:35, 63) and to abide in him (John 15:5-7) and that in him is no sin (1 John 3:5), and yet you sin, then can it really be true that you believe it? Both cannot be true can they? If you find yourself in sin and yet claiming to believe the message, then let it be evidence to you that your mind is still running in the way of immaterialism.

Many who have heard the truth of materialism as has been put forth in this message, have seen it to be true and acknowledged it as such (in fact, none have dared to openly deny it), yet few have evidenced the workings of the truth of materialism upon their way of thinking. *The truth* needs to be settled into, both intellectually and spiritually. What does it mean to settle into the truth? It means to actually let it be what it is. And for it to be what it is, is for it to stand without contradiction, for as we have learned, reality (truth) cannot have contradiction. Therefore, settling into the truth intimately involves the casting out of falsehood and every false way of thinking. It establishes reason upon the throne of the mind.

One principle which materialism establishes in the mind is the right way of thinking about thinking itself – the right way of coming to conclusions as to what we believe and why. So, let's say that someone makes a claim about something. If that claim is true, it must be true in the material world. If we are to hold it to be true then, should we not require material evidence?

Unfortunately, those of us who have been influenced by immaterialism have formed the habit of coming to particular beliefs based off of something other than material evidence. Often, we believe something simply because it supports, or seems to support, our other, more foundational, beliefs. Any evidence which seems to conflict with our foundational beliefs we tend to ignore, give it little weight, or find a way to interpret it in some way which harmonizes with our beliefs, even if that interpretation is inconsistent with the facts, or is a skewing of the idea itself. This mode of thinking is based in immaterialism as it practically makes our imaginings, or beliefs, to be as esteemed, or even more esteemed than material reality. This way of reasoning will never lead one to the truth.

This matter of how we come to our beliefs touches on every aspect of life and is therefore vitally important to comprehend. We are told to be "close, critical thinkers" (LLM 428). Therefore, whatever the truth may be, it is *that* which we want to accept, and we want to accept it because it is truth. It is the truth which sanctifies, or educates, us (John 17:17), and we must experience the truth ourselves, having it close and not at a distance – it must be truly experienced (1 John 1:1). We must become intimately connected with, and aware of, reality. Therefore, we must obtain knowledge, not by hearsay or by our own impulses, but by observation and experimentation.

Train and discipline the mind by study, by observation, by reflection.^{[11](#)}

As his [God's] representatives and witnesses, we need to come to a full understanding of the saving truth which we must know by an *experimental* knowledge.^{[12](#)}

I saw that there is not one in twenty who knows what *experimental* religion is.^{[13](#)}

A correct knowledge of God is not a hearsay report, but an intelligent, *experimental* knowledge.^{[14](#)}

We can be assured that we shall receive the Holy Spirit if we individually try the *experiment* of testing God's word.^{[15](#)}

*Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. What we need is experimental religion. How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and his love? The psalmist tells us not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but Taste and see that the Lord is good. Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.*¹⁶

Experience is said to be the best teacher. *Genuine* experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. *Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws.*

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There has not been a *fair trial by actual experiment* and thorough *investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action.* Experience which is opposed to natural law, which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature, *is not to be relied upon.* Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But *there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause.* There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon.¹⁷

Our so-called experience is not to be relied upon. Our past beliefs are not to be relied upon. Let us not try to confirm our biases. Let us not start with a conclusion and then endeavor to prove it true. Let us look at material reality and let it govern our beliefs. If we would know the truth, we must require empirical evidence.

Since we have all been conditioned to think immaterially, we have all accepted beliefs which are not based in reality. These unfounded beliefs must be rooted out. In the messages of truth which our Heavenly Family has sent, They have sought to remove these errors, but we have been slow to learn. When Heaven corrects an idea, a habit, or some cherished view, most are unwilling to part with their idol. Some are willing to give up certain positions, but other ideas, they are unwilling to be separated from. They give Heaven permission to reprove them on points which are not of special interest or importance to them, but they hold other areas as untouchable, even by the hand (message) of God.

God leads his people on step by step. He brings them up to different points which are calculated to manifest what is in the heart. *Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next.* At every advanced point the heart is tested, and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to the straight work of God, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, or be spued out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel, "God will bring his work closer and closer to test them, and prove every one of his people." Some are willing to receive one point, but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, *because they find it strikes directly at some cherished idol.* Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. *They prize something higher than the truth,* and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols, and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If they will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride and evil passions, the angels of God have their charge, "They are joined to their idols, let them alone," and they pass on to their work, leaving them with their evil traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will be fitted by the latter rain for translation.¹⁸

The principles we are speaking of need to be thoroughly understood, received, and experienced. Those who fail to do this will soon fall away from the truth. I know of no better way to communicate the light which our Heavenly Family has given me on this subject than to present examples of the employment of this immaterialistic way of thinking so as to make manifest its true character. If we speak of these things in general terms and one fails to digest the truth, they will either not apply these principles in such a way to change their

thinking, or they will only apply them selectively.

What is required of us is a radical change in thinking. Since this immaterialistic thinking effects every area of life, we will be going through examples from a variety of fields of knowledge, but by no means are the examples and fields we mention here the only ones affected. Our hope in going through these examples is that the general principle will be highlighted and that each of you can take these principles and apply them to all areas. Our purpose is not to dwell for long on any of these subjects or to make special advocacy of any point in particular. Rather, our goal is to highlight the principle of how we come to conclusions as to what we will believe.

Health

There are numerous contrary theories in the field of health. How should we decide what to believe? Some have had bad experiences with mainstream medical doctors or treatments and so decide that mainstream medicine is bad. Others have political views that either demand or cohere with negative views of the medical field. Still others, because of religious or spiritual inclinations, take on a view of health which conforms to their metaphysical beliefs. Are any of these methods of formulating beliefs an expression of right thinking? The straight answer is no, and here is why: None of these views address physical reality and come to conclusions about causal relations between various substances by means of critical examination of empirical data. Instead, they all depend on individual "experience" or personal preference.

Most religious people, including Adventists, Davidians, and Branches, have adopted "spiritual" views of health because we have been led to believe that that is in harmony with our religion or our overall world-view. Many have accepted unsubstantiated practices such as homeopathy, acupuncture, and so-called energy healing. These practices are rooted in immaterial ideas, as can be readily seen by an examination of their history and underlying principles, and should therefore be entirely avoided. What is important in relation to this discussion, though, is to understand your own thought process as to why you used to (or still do) accept these theories.

What we really need to do is to carefully conduct experiments and reason from cause to effect. When we are unable to do this ourselves, we ought to consult the best available information. Please consider the following statement from Victor Houteff, which we exhort all who profess to believe in the Inspiration of the Rod message to take very seriously:

Now at the outset of our study let us note what the *Testimonies to the Church* say on the subject of health reform. Here are the statements, "Our workers should use their knowledge of the laws of life and health. They should study from cause to effect. *Read the best authors on these subjects, and obey religiously that which your reason tells you is truth.*" *Councils on Health*, p. 566, and here are the conditions upon which they are made. The command to inquire from *the best health authorities* is a positive declaration to health seekers that Sister White's knowledge of food values and their effect upon the human machine did not originate with her and not with Heaven, but with *the best health authorities in her day*. Since we therefore take the part of her writings that originated with her as inspired, we are definitely charged by Heaven Itself to inquire from the "best health authorities" *in our day* as she did in her day if we care for our health. And what ever their findings be *that* is what we must believe, and their recommendations we must accept and obey in preference to their recommendations of her day, for in her day knowledge on the subject had just begun. Anything short of this, therefore, is direct violation against Inspiration's appeal as it is against the individual's health interest. The great question that now arises is not so much what she teaches on diet as it is to know *who the best health authorities are and what they teach*. Who are they? *Certainly not those who label their products, writing and professional practices Health, Nature, Drugless, and so on. These are not health authorities at all*, and most of them are in the field to sell either their profession or their so-called *health product*. Then, too, these professionally shrewd, studiously [downing](#) ¹⁹ *all popular products and professions*, for they well know that their only opportunity to sell something to the public depends on making people prejudiced against and fearful of the products and professions of all others. They know that in no other way their so-called

health and cure stands a chance at all. So, they spend years in studying how to frighten the public *from the well known markets and professional places*, and how to drive them to their own *so-called health shops* and places of professional services. And as there are multitudes of people who are ever looking for something new and better, many thoughtlessly flock to these *unapproved places* where they in time discover that they have swallowed a *quack's bait*, sinker, hook and line. At last they find themselves hanging on a fish pole as it were with empty pockets and with inflamed stomachs.²⁰

Have those from whom you have received your health education labeled their products, writing, and professional practices "Health," "Nature," "Drugless," and so on? Have they downed the "popular products and professions" and the "well known markets and professional places"? If so, then you, along with so many of us, have been educated by pseudoscientific minds who are not true health authorities at all.

Who are the true health authorities then? True authority lies not in position, in reputation, or in number of adherents; rather, it lies solely in truth.²¹ Since truth is the material reality, then the true authorities must be those who present reality as it really is. The only way to know the nature and function of material reality is by material evidence. Therefore, whoever speaks the truth concerning the material reality of any given health issue and supports that truth with sound material evidence, is a true health authority.

This brings to view, perhaps more than ever before, the need for true scientific inquiry. From this point forward, when we hear claims, let us question and consider the evidence. This we must do whether the claims come from those in the mainstream medical field or proponents of alternative medicine. For example, many in the alternative health field speak in opposition to vaccines, whereas the majority of those in the mainstream medical field speak very favorably about vaccines. The questions at hand are, "How shall we go about examining the claims?" and "What are the underlying principles by which I have operated in order to come to my present belief?"

Just to be clear, we are using the example of vaccines to illustrate the principles at hand, not to advocate one position or another on vaccines. The vaccination issue is also a good example because it is one in which people are very emotionally invested and concerning which people have very strong beliefs. The principle is that whatever the truth of vaccines may be, whether they are good or bad, it cannot be determined by hearsay, individual experiences, or biases, whether medical, political, spiritual, or otherwise. The principle is that, "That which many term experience is not experience at all." Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws. Experience is knowledge derived from experiment.²²

A little more specificity concerning this vaccine issue will help to highlight the principle all the more. In truth, there are many contrary reports concerning vaccines. Some say they contain aborted fetal tissue, others say they do not. Some say vaccines are injected directly into the blood stream, others say they are not. Some say they contain mercury, some say they do not. In order to find the truth and in order to be of the most benefit, both to ourselves and to others, we must be careful not to accept any of these proposed ideas simply because it agrees with our perspective. For example, someone may strongly believe that vaccines are safe and so they will say, "Of course vaccines do not have aborted fetal tissue in them." On the flip side, another one may be strongly opposed to vaccines and hear it said that vaccines have aborted fetal tissue and believe that it is true because it promotes the idea that vaccines are bad. Let's just say that vaccines really are bad, but that they do not contain fetal tissue - would saying that they do contain such tissue really help? Well, what if some medical doctor who knew for certain that there was not fetal tissue in vaccines heard you say there was? He could easily disprove the claim and then cast a shadow on the whole case against vaccines.

The fact of the matter is that there are hundreds of large-scale scientific experiments which have been conducted, and those who have conducted them have said that they demonstrate the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Should we not examine their evidence with unbiased minds? After all, if it is not true, it won't

stand the test of reality so we really have nothing to lose so long as our focus is truth. Let's say that it turned out that material reality dictates that vaccines are safe and effective, does this mean that we should all go and start vaccinating ourselves and our children? Well, not necessarily. Even if the vaccines in general are safe and effective, one would still have to be aware of any particular vaccine and know that its ingredients are safe and in harmony with Heaven's laws. Not only that, but if it is possible to achieve the same immunity to viruses by other methods than vaccines, such as right healthful living, then we should by all means promote that as the right way instead of vaccines. Whatever the truth is though, let us find it out and zealously promote that, even if it means we must have a radical change of paradigm and have to completely change the beliefs to which we most tightly hold.

What we are talking about is removing our biases and preconceived notions *on every issue*. We must learn to not decide what we will believe based on feeling, but rather, on reality. We must not shrink back from an open and honest investigation of controversial issues. We must come to understand and to abide by the principles of truth, logic, and experimental investigation. If one vaccine is proven safe and effective it does not mean that the rest are as well. Likewise, if one is proven to be unsafe and ineffective, it does not mean that the rest are as well. Principles, oh beloved principles! Let us forever settle into them. Let us judge everything on its own right. When becoming Adventists, or Davidians, or Branches, we learned that we could not come to the truth by believing those preaching against those messages, we had to investigate them on their own right to see if they are true. Let us apply that same principle to all health claims as well as all the other claims in any field of knowledge. It all comes down to whether or not we are willing to deal with reality on its own terms or if we prefer to believe the theories which we adopted while our minds were overrun by immaterialistic thinking.

Physics

Due to the lack of information most people have about physics, when we hear a view presented concerning it or its implications, we tend to judge the view by our biases, or, by what we already believe. If a theist hears someone present a view concerning physics that seems to disagree with how he perceives God, he will likely reject that view solely on that basis, without further investigation. Likewise, if there is a view presented which claims to prove the existence of God, he will be very likely to accept that view, regardless of whether or not it is true, and especially if its primary advocates are of his same faith.

Most religious groups promote a spiritualistic view of metaphysics, which states that fundamental reality at minimum includes some sort of non-material "stuff." Since most believe God to be non-material, these views of metaphysics are adopted and cherished. Such is the case also with views of quantum mechanics. Ideas are put forward, which are in principle no different from the spiritualism of oriental religions or the animal magnetism of Franz Mesmer, but are described in such a way as to sound scientific. Words and phrases such as vibrational, quantum, energy fields, energetic frequency, probability waves, and so on, have been used to make the same old spiritualistic doctrines sound scientific. True experiments are misrepresented and false experiments are conducted. But because some of these theories claim to prove the existence of God or of a "spiritual realm" or some other supernatural or mysterious force, they are accepted by those with a "supernatural" perspective. All this, in spite of the fact that these views are based on misrepresentation and wishful thinking, and not on the actual facts of the material universe.

We need to beware of accepting mysticism put forward in the guise of science. We need to check the facts and see what the physical universe is really like and how it functions by means of ground-up investigation "by simply observing and seeing what facts emerge.

Archaeology

As with the other fields of knowledge, many come to their belief of archaeological theories by means other than material science. People with spiritual views tend to view things in the distant past as being mystical or supernatural, or to have come about by mystical or supernatural means. Others believe that ancient peoples had to have had power tools, laser technology, extra-terrestrial involvement, or other sorts of highly advanced

technology in order to build things like the pyramids or stonehenge. Claims are put forward concerning different structures and artifacts from the ancient world of which the general public has little to no knowledge. When hearing fantastic claims, people often accept them simply because they are fantastic and fit in with their overall belief system, despite the fact that there have been very reasonable explanations put forth by archaeological specialists as to how these things could have been built using very primitive technologies.

The principle is that we should not accept someone's claims just because it happens to fit with our beliefs. In fact, when a claim is advocated in favor of a true belief, and then the claim is proven false, the result is a reproach against the truth. We'll give one specific example to illustrate this point. We feel not only the freedom, but also the duty to cite this particular example due to the fact that the primary advocate of this claim was a Seventh-day Adventist whose doctrines are promoted by certain circles of Seventh-day Adventists and other Sabbath keeping groups.

The claims to which we refer are those of Ron Wyatt, who, in addition to claiming to have found Noah's ark, and certain biblical sites, also claimed to have found the ark of the covenant upon which he claimed was the blood of Jesus. His claim is that the blood of Jesus does not have the 46 chromosomes normally contained in human cells, but that it contains 23 chromosomes from his mother and one from his Heavenly Father. These claims, if true, are thought by many to be proof of the historicity of the Bible and proof of Jesus, and they are accepted for that reason. But what are the evidences for the truth of these claims? Do they stand up to material reality? Do they stand up to the light of scripture?

We do not hesitate to declare that the Christ which Ron Wyatt taught is not the Christ of scripture, nor the Christ of reality. The Messiah of Nazareth had the same blood as you and I (Heb. 2:14). The teaching that Christ's human nature was somehow different from ours is the teaching of anti-christ (1 John 4:3) and is no less detrimental than the doctrine of Rome.

All are to judge for themselves, but do not judge by your opinion or your "experience" or by your desire for a thing to be true. That is the method of a mind which has been stripped of reason by the illusion of immaterialism. Rather, judge by "a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits." Judge by reality.

The results of Wyatt's claims stand as a lesson to us as to what will be the results if we hold on to any unfounded ideas, thinking they are evidence for the truth. Archaeologists and historians shake their heads, those from other religions mock, and level-headed Adventists are ashamed. There are not a few who have used Wyatt as an example for how religion destroys coherent thinking. Anti-Adventists use his unfounded theories as a reproach against the Advent movement and a reason to reject the three angels' messages. Woe to all who by unfounded theories keep some back from the truth. Let us enter into thorough self-examination that we may cast aside all false ideas and thus not be a source of darkness and perpetuate death, but be a source of light and impart life to others.

History

History is yet another area where people believe unfounded theories for no other reason than their biases. Again, this method is thoroughly immaterial as it disregards the need for empirical evidence, which disregard is a direct result from an immaterialistic view of reality. The examples we are going to consider in this section are ones in which people's view of history has been skewed by their theology. This comes about when people adopt a theology which has no true foundation in reality. And when they hold up that theology as being more valued or more "true" than reality, they choose immateriality over materialism, they choose a lie over the truth. This sort of theology is really only a theoretical idea, based off of private interpretation, which is the manifestation of immateriality in the mind of a professed follower of God.

One such ideology which has arisen is that of British Israelitism which teaches that the ten lost tribes of Israel migrated to Western Europe and, in effect, became the British Empire, along with other of the Anglo peoples. This idea has been thoroughly disproven by history, linguistics, and significantly, by genetics. In spite of this,

there are many, mostly of Western European ethnicity, who hold to this view. And Why? Well, because theology is considered to be the deciding factor as to what constitutes truth rather than reality itself.

There are others who hold that the true Israelites are the blacks in America and that the recognizable Jews of today, particularly the Ashkenazi Jews, are not truly of the lineage of Jacob. This too has been disproven by history and genetics, and yet it is still held to by many because it fits their ideology.

Both of these theories, and many others, are based off of idealistic and theologically motivated views of history, as well as common misconceptions concerning the relationship between ethnicity and parentage.²³ The fact of the matter is that lineage and ethnicity are two very different things. Both Brits and Black Americans are primarily from lineages other than Israelite lineages and Ashkenazi Jews are just as much Jews as Sephardic Jews or other non-disputed Jewish populations, as has been proven by DNA.

To disregard these empirical facts in favor of a cherished ideology would indeed be to discard reason and place oneself on the ground of immateriality. Favoring cherished ideas over material facts is the root of dogmatism, the history of which has proven to be utterly detrimental to the whole of the human race.

Politics

The same principles we have discussed thus far apply also, of course, to politics. Many Adventists, due to awareness of certain abuses by governments, such as Sunday legislation and other acts which prohibit religious liberty, have started down a line of thinking which conforms to an anti-government perspective. Many, and perhaps most, in the Branch movement have been influenced by this perspective among Adventists as well as by other anti-government perspectives in the world.

Theories are held to which can neither be proven nor disproven. We have tended to accept theories which charge governments or certain people or groups in government with very serious crimes, and this has been done without a thorough knowledge of the facts of the circumstance. We hear common ideas such as "9/11 was an inside job," "Zionists are ruling the world," "Muslims are taking over the government," and many many more theories, and have come to accept them. But why? Are we truly aware of the facts? Have we considered the other side of the story? Or, do we only read something from a conspiratorial website or watch an anti-government documentary and accept whatever they put forth as evidence because it agrees with our ideology? What is worse is that many then take this information, which they have not critically examined or independently verified, and pass it on to others as fact!

Once again, we have adopted these theories and ideologies while our minds were dominated by immaterialism. Should we hold to these ideas, then, as untouchable by our Heavenly Family? Can God not correct us on this point? Is there no chance that we have wrongly accepted political theories and perspectives? Our Heavenly Family requires us to unlearn our previous methods of acquiring knowledge and formulating beliefs. We must be rid of every bias. We must be "real people, logical thinkers" (2TG 24:23).

The truth of the matter is that as Branches, our Heavenly Family has not given us the time to devote to politics. We have truth to learn and a message to proclaim. We are dealing with the everlasting gospel! Let us realize that there is much that we thought we knew that we really don't know. Let us no longer publish political sentiments or anti-government propaganda, but instead publish the gospel of peace "justification by faith. If you can see that you have been in the wrong regarding these things, it will be for your own benefit to reform. More than that, you must realize that if you fail to reform both your behavior and your thinking in these lines, you will not only bring great trouble upon yourself but upon the whole Branch movement, and that, prematurely and unnecessarily. Please deeply contemplate the following selection from *The Testimonies for the Church*:

By some of our brethren many things have been spoken and written that are interpreted as expressing antagonism to government and law. It is a mistake thus to lay ourselves open to misunderstanding. It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. We should exercise great care lest we be understood as putting ourselves in

opposition to the civil authorities. It is true that our warfare is aggressive, but our weapons are to be those found in a plain â??Thus saith the Lord.â?• Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. We should not be turned aside to lines that will encourage controversy or arouse antagonism in those not of our faith.

We should not work in a manner that will mark us out as seeming to advocate treason. *We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order.* Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws. We are not required to defy authorities. There will come a time when, because of our advocacy of Bible truth, we shall be treated as traitors; but let not this time be hastened by unadvised movements that stir up animosity and strife.

The time will come when unguarded expressions of a denunciatory character, that have been carelessly spoken or written by our brethren, will be used by our enemies to condemn us. These will not be used merely to condemn those who made the statements, but will be charged upon the whole body of Adventists. Our accusers will say that on such and such a day one of our responsible men said thus and so against the administration of the laws of this government. Many will be astonished to see how many things have been cherished and remembered that will give point to the arguments of our adversaries. Many will be surprised to hear their own words strained into a meaning that they did not intend them to have. Then let our workers be careful to speak guardedly at all times and under all circumstances. Let all beware lest by reckless expressions they bring on a time of trouble before the great crisis which is to try menâ??s souls.

The less we make direct charges against authorities and powers, the greater work we shall be able to accomplish, both America and in foreign countries. Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world.

It is our work to magnify and exalt the law of God. The truth of Godâ??s holy word is to be made manifest. We are to hold up the Scriptures as the rule of life. In all modesty, in the spirit of grace, and in the love of God we are to point men to the fact that the Lord God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

In the name of the Lord we are to go forward, unfurling His banner, advocating His word. When the authorities command us not to do this work, when they forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, then it will be necessary for us to say as did the apostles: â??Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.â?• Acts 4:19, 20.

The truth is to be set forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. This alone can make our words effective. Only through the Spiritâ??s power will victory be gained and held. The human agent must be worked by the Spirit of God. The workers must be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. They must have divine wisdom, that nothing may be uttered which would stir up men to close our way. Through the inculcation of spiritual truth we are to prepare a people who shall be able, in meekness and fear, to give a reason for their faith before the highest authorities in our world.

We need to present the truth in its simplicity, to advocate practical godliness, and we should do this in the spirit of Christ. The manifestation of such a spirit will have the best influence upon our own souls, and it will have a convincing power upon others. Give the Lord opportunity to work through His own agents. Do not imagine that it will be possible for you to lay out plans for the future; let God be acknowledged as standing at the helm at all times and under every circumstance. He will work by means that will be suitable, and will maintain, increase, and build up His own people.

The Lordâ??s agents should have a sanctified zeal, a zeal that is wholly under His control. Stormy times will come rapidly enough upon us, and we should take no course of our own that will hasten them. Tribulation will come of a character that will drive to God all who wish to be His, and His alone. *Until tested and proved in the*

furnace of trial, we do not know ourselves, and it is not proper for us to measure the characters of others and to condemn those who have not yet had the light of the third angel's message.

If we wish men to be convinced that the truth we believe sanctifies the soul and transforms the character, let us not be continually charging them with vehement accusations. In this way we shall force them to the conclusion that the doctrine we profess cannot be the Christian doctrine, since it does not make us kind, courteous, and respectful. Christianity is not manifested in pugilistic accusations and condemnation.

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We should remember that the world will judge us by what we appear to be. Let those who are seeking to represent Christ be careful not to exhibit inconsistent features of character. Before we come fully to the front, let us see to it that the Holy Spirit is poured upon us from on high. When this is the case, we shall give a decided message, but it will be of a far less condemnatory character than that which some have been giving; and all who believe will be far more earnest for the salvation of our opponents. *Let God have the matter of condemning authorities and governments wholly in His own keeping.* In meekness and love let us as faithful sentinels defend the principles of truth as it is in Jesus.²⁴

Many Adventists have failed to heed the above counsel, as have many Davidians, and yes, even Branches. All Branches are now called to heed this counsel with exactness. If you have been sharing things on social media sites or in e-mail, or even in conversation with anyone which contains sentiments which could even be interpreted as anti-government, then for the sake of Heaven and for the sake of the Kingdom (and for your own sake), withdraw those statements, remove those posts, and cease to share things of like nature. Our Heavenly Family has given us a mission â?? They have given us a message to bear, and most Branches are not half as acquainted with the message as they should be. Heaven has not granted us the time to read, watch, listen to, or share these political theories. We must learn the truth and we must share the truth. People are dying for a lack of the knowledge of the gospel and it is that which we must give to them.

Philosophy

To illustrate how immaterialism affects one's way of thinking in regard to philosophy, we'll only consider one primary example, though it applies to every area of philosophical inquiry. What we will consider here is the philosophy of time.

The vast majority of people do not give much thought to what time is and how we should think about it. Resultantly, the ideas that most have concerning time are not acquired by the combining of experimentation and careful thought, but are instead acquired by a misapplication of a seemingly related, yet superficial, thought. For instance, most Christians believe that â??God created everythingâ?• and therefore, if someone asks, â??Did God create time?â?• they answer, â??Of course, God created everything.â?• It is usually simply left at that.²⁵ While the idea that God created time has its own immaterialistic implications, which we will mention here to some extent, our focus is actually on how the belief in the immaterial has influenced the thought process of the one who believes that God created time.

So, here is the truth of the mistaken idea of time in contrast with the truth of time itself:

First, it is important to mention that, in this context, we are not speaking of the measurement of time, but of time itself. Dictionary.com provides the following definition of time:

the system of those sequential relations that any event has to any other, as past, present, or future; indefinite and continuous duration regarded as that in which events succeed one another.²⁶

Time is indeed a system of sequential relations, an indefinite and continuous duration regarded as that in which events succeed one another. Succession (one thing following another) is how we know that time is real. Another way to put this is to distinguish between what is simultaneous and what is not simultaneous. Non-

simultaneity is proof of the existence of time since there is actually a sequential relation between two events. If we had complete simultaneity (if everything happened simultaneously) in the universe, we would have no proof of time, and even no time itself since there would be no "sequential relation."

So, let us start with the idea that God created time and follow its logical conclusions to see whether it is true, or even could be true.

If God created time, then God would have necessarily had to be in existence "before" creating time, correct? Otherwise he would not have been able to create it for a cause must precede an effect. Now since "before" is a temporal term, it really cannot be used in context. It would be better expressed by saying that God exists in a non-time outside of time.

If that were true though, there could be no succession within that "non-time" existence, for once you have succession, you have proof that time exists. If there was no succession you cannot have one action following another, no, not even one thought following another. So, if God exists in a non-time, then he cannot have any succession of thought, which means that if he has thoughts at all, he is thinking them in absolute simultaneity. This means that there has never been, and could never be, any change in his thinking. He could not have any difference in his thoughts whatsoever "not today, a thousand years ago, or a billion years from now.

Now, if that were true, then we have three options. God is either thinking no thoughts in that non-time, some thoughts (but not all), or he is thinking all thoughts.

If God were thinking no thoughts, then he could have no personality and in fact could not be a person or a being at all, which would render the term "God" useless.

The second "possibility" is the idea of God thinking some thoughts but not all. Why would someone even believe this idea? Well, some may very well believe it due to seeing major problems with the other two options and are left with this. This option, though, has problems of its own. For instance, if God were only thinking some thoughts in his "non-time" experience, then he would have to enter into time in order to think the rest of his thoughts. If this were the case, then you would have a part of God "in time" and a part of God "outside of time." The part of God that is "outside of time" would not be able to comprehend what the part of God "inside of time" comprehends. More than that, the part of God that is "outside of time" would not even be able to comprehend when his other part "entered" into time, or know at which point "in time" he was, or know of any of his experiences or thoughts that he experienced "in time." But again, that would be no more information, knowledge, or thoughts than he had "outside of time." On top of all this, how could there be any possible communication or relation between that which is "in time" and that which is "outside of time." Because of the nonsensical notion of this option, people usually adopt the third "possibility."

The third option for the proponent of the idea that God is "outside of time" is that God is thinking *all* thoughts simultaneously in the non-time. That is, every single thought, including all thoughts that can be conceived of, as well as those that we cannot. If this were true, then it would mean that God is thinking every "possible" thought in relation to any and every given thing at one simultaneous "non-time." For instance, concerning the world, God is (in this theory) simultaneously thinking "I am about to create this world," "I am currently creating this world," and "I already have created this world." He would have to be, in this non-time of complete simultaneity, thinking "Such and such a person is about to exist," "is currently existing," and "no longer exists." Since these thoughts are all part of "all thoughts," then God would have to be thinking them in simultaneity, and God could never leave that simultaneity, for to do so, or to even have a thought to do so, would be an experience only possible "in time." Here we again have two options:

The first option is that the world, or the person, actually did not exist at one point and does exist at another, and will actually not exist again in the future. A practical example of this is to say that you as an individual actually do exist now and did not in the past. If this is true though, that would mean that not all of God's thoughts are

true, and in fact, he is totally self-deceived and would be totally unaware of when a thing actually does happen. This renders God totally useless and meaningless.

The second option is to say that all of God's thoughts are indeed true. But if this were so, one would have to say it is true that "I am about to exist," "I currently exist," and "I no longer exist." This thought necessitates the person, the world, and everything else, to be in existence before time existed, for in the "non-time" before time, God was thinking, "this person exists." This makes you and I and everything else just as eternal as God. If this is so, then all things always existed and God did not create anything. More than that though, it would also have to be simultaneously "true" that all things did not yet exist, and that all things no longer existed. This would be, in truth, saying that everything both exists and does not exist in the same context and in the same way. This is a direct self contradiction and if consistency matters at all, the theory is totally destroyed..

To expand on the implications of this even more if the second option is true (again, the second option is the thought that God is "outside of time," thinking all thoughts in simultaneity, and that all his thoughts are true) then, as stated before, God really didn't create anything, for we always existed, and did not exist, along side him. The only sense in which it could be said that we "exist" within this scenario is to exist in the "mind" of God. If this were so though, we would necessarily be part of God, for God would only be "mind." All things would be a part of God this is pantheism. Even Satan himself would only be another expression of the mind of God.

The moral implications of this are incredible. First, if one holds that God is good, then he would have to say that all things which happen (since it is all just a part of God) are good, whether it is stealing, lying, killing, or raping. On the other hand, one could just discard the idea of morality and say that all things are "morally neutral" or amoral. This would only be saying that nothing is good and nothing is bad. One could also say that that which we experience as bad actually is bad, and that which we experience as good actually is good, but in this case, God becomes the most twisted mind in the universe. Truly though, God would be the only mind in the universe. Basically, all this would mean is that God is a solipsist²⁷ and that we are all figments of his twisted imagination. Lastly, if one acknowledges how twisted all of this would make God, he may just conclude that God is evil.

Ultimately though, any of these options demand God to have no succession in thought, and, as we have seen, all of these options demand for God's thoughts to be utterly confused and totally non-sensical. Whether God thinks no thoughts, some thoughts, or all thoughts, he must be thinking them simultaneously if he is thinking them in a "non-time." Moreover, with all these thoughts taking place simultaneously, one has no means of distinguishing between thought and thought. How would we know that God isn't just thinking one big extremely intricate and confused thought? But if that is so, what justification do we have to call it a thought at all? Wouldn't everything just become one giant metaphysical blob of contrary existence? God has no room for personality in a universe such as this, rendering the term "God" useless. To still try to be a theist with construct would essentially just be labeling this confused blob of contrary existence "God." This would actually mean that there is no God and that existence is extremely contrary and confused.

Notice as well that immateriality is necessary in all of these vain philosophies. For God to be "outside of time" would mean that he could have no movement. Since thoughts are actually processes of a physical brain and since processes are only possible "in time" then the "thoughts" which God is proposed to think in the "non-time" are necessarily not physical. This is in harmony with the popular view anyway since it is believed that God is "beyond space and time." In other words, God is conceived of as being "consciousness," not a physical being. And since all things would necessarily only exist in the mind of God then all things would necessarily be immaterial.

As we have seen, the logical conclusions of all these theories are self contradictory. Also, we have seen that God could not exist if these theories were true. This all clearly demonstrates that it is impossible for an immaterial God to exist. It is impossible for a God who is "outside of time," or who created time, to exist. That God is indeed nothing.

Thankfully though, none of these vain philosophies could possibly be true. One of the reasons why we know this to be so is by the experience of time. If any of these possibilities are true and there is a non-time, the experience of time would have to be nothing more than an illusion. But the fact of the matter is that even the concept of an illusion depends on the existence of time, for one *becoming* deceived by an illusion is indeed an experience of "becoming," which is temporal. In other words, if non-time exists and if we experience time, that experience would necessarily be an illusion, but for one to be deceived by an illusion would require time. Therefore, the experience of time cannot be an illusion. The truth of this requires that time is real and therefore, could not have had a beginning because that would necessitate a "non-time" "before" time, but the "non-time" necessarily results in all the confused and vain philosophy we just went over.

So you see how holding to one belief, namely, the belief in an immaterial God (which is a form of immaterialism), necessarily results in holding a number of other very confusing and self-contradictory beliefs. These beliefs have many negative practical implications.²⁸ They actually destroy reason in the mind and cause one to hold what is real to be somewhat of a fiction and what is fictional to be somewhat of a reality. Most people simply do not think these things through and do not realize the implications of their own beliefs, nor how they affect the overall workings of their mind. But these beliefs do indeed affect the mind and actually, how one thinks about everything else.

Though we have only here covered one philosophical theory of time, and one example of how immaterialism affects one's thinking about philosophy, there are indeed many more. We will briefly mention another version of the philosophy of time in order to highlight the principles of truth all the more:

The big bang theory states that space, time, and matter all had their origin in the big bang "that the big bang is the point at which they all came into existence. What does this imply? Well, it implies that "before" the big bang, there was no matter and therefore, whatever it was that exploded in the big bang would necessarily have been some sort of immaterial "substance." This is just as much immaterialism as any other theory which proposes the existence of non-matter. Likewise, if the big bang was the point at which time came into existence, then "before" the big bang, there was only non-time. But if non-time was real then, it must necessarily be real now, for there would be no "time" for it to transition out of non-time or for there to be any change made to it at all. And, as we have already seen, the supposed existence of non-time necessitates that the non-time is one block of existence and that time is another block. The idea of a block universe of time necessitates that our experience of time is an illusion. But, as we have already seen, an illusion of time is an impossibility.

Moreover, time coming from non-time and matter coming from non-matter are both contrary to reason and only end up in self-contradiction. Indeed it is an impossibility for anything to come from non-time, since it is ceaselessly unchanging and can have no interaction or relation to anything else. Likewise, as we have seen, non-matter is non-existence, and so to say that matter came from non-matter is to say that existence came from non-existence. This is equivalent to saying that matter is derivative of non-matter, but a derivative of something must be composed of the original thing. And what is there to derive from non-existence? If there is any "thing" to derive from a supposed "immaterial" substance, it must necessarily also be immaterial, and so therefore, matter would be, in its fundamental essence, immaterial, which is a contradiction of terms. Taken all together, if the big bang theory were true, it would necessitate that both time and matter are illusions and it therefore removes any and all grounds for discerning between the real and the unreal and is thus thoroughly immaterialistic and therefore, untrue.

The fact of the matter, though, is that every experiment ever conducted, and indeed, every experience ever had, testifies to the fact that there is indeed such a thing as reality. Everything cannot possibly be illusion. I'm sure you are all familiar with the phrase, "I think, therefore I am." Not only this, but everything, including all experiments, testify to the fact that there is a difference between the real and the unreal. For example, if you imagine getting hit by a car, it does not damage you, whereas actually getting hit by a car does indeed cause damage. The proof of reality, the proof of materialism, is all around you. You yourself are part of that proof.

The belief in the immaterial impairs our judgment for discerning reality. It is this impairment which has led to the various philosophies we have discussed. A careful examination of the material world viewed through the lens of reason does not leave us with any of these theories, but instead, exposes their folly.

Theology

The field of knowledge under consideration in this section is that of theology. Before beginning, we want to quote again a statement from Ellen White that we have referred to earlier, but this time we will include more of her statement, as it pertains to religious, or theological matters:

Experience is said to be the best teacher. *Genuine* experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but *many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws.*

That which many term experience is not experience at all, it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action. Experience which is opposed to natural law, which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature, is not to be relied upon. Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause. There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon.

Erroneous habits and customs gird men and women as with iron bands, and they too often justify themselves in these customs by what they term experience. Many of the grossest habits are cherished under this plea. Many fail to reach that physical, mental, and moral development to which they might attain, because *they cling to an experience that is opposed to the plainest revealed facts.* Men and women whose wrong habits have destroyed their health, and broken down their constitution, will be found recommending their experience as safe for others to follow, when it is this very experience that has robbed them of health and vitality. When you seek to instruct them, *they defend their course by referring to their experience.*

Here is where we have met the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths, sustained by the word of God, may be brought before the mind; but the ear and the heart are closed, and *the all-convincing argument is, "my experience."* Some will say, "The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error." *My experience is clung to,* and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected.²⁹

Perhaps there is no greater example of what Ellen White is here talking about than the rejection of the truth of materialism by the professed religious world. Notice though, that Ellen White is highlighting the principle of how people erroneously come to their theological conclusions based off of something other than empirical data gained by experiment. People go off what they call experience, when it is not true experience at all. Again, this method of acquiring knowledge is founded upon immaterialism. More specifically, immaterialism has removed the need to determine what is real from material facts; it has, in fact, removed any and all means for truly discerning between what is real and what is not. What people are left with, then, to decide what they will believe and what they will not believe is their own biases which are formulated by their experiences. Reasonable thinking departs and emotion, preference, prejudice, and ignorance take over.

This, as we have seen before, is the root of dogma. Since what is considered true is no longer determined by what is evidenced from reality, but is instead determined by what is believed and by what one's theology is, the basis for authority also dramatically changes. Real authority is only found in the truth. When truth is defined by conclusions acquired because of biases, preferences, ignorance, etc. then authority is determined by who

dictates the conclusions. This is dogmatism. It is the idea that truth is what it is because a certain belief has declared it to be so and therefore those who decree the belief are the ones with authority. There have been not a few times when this dogmatism has resulted in maniacal tyrants murdering countless people simply because they believed something contrary to, or other than, the dogma. Dogmatism, though, is not always accompanied by tyrannical authority figures. Sometimes it is as simple as a person holding to a belief, and then when that belief is challenged, they become angry at the challenger, or withhold love from that person. This is just as much dogmatism as are the other examples, its consequences are just not carried out to the same extent. We must be rid of dogmatic ways of thinking and dogmatic theology.

Our first example of how immaterialism affects one's thinking in regard to theology is dealing with the doctrine of King James Onlyism. This doctrine takes on various forms, but basically states that the King James translation of the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative word of God and as such, it is the only one we should use, or at least, the only one we should really consider to be "the Bible." Most who hold to this belief are simply unaware of the history of the Bible, both in regard to the formulation of the various Christian canons, as well as in regard to the textual transmission of the various books that compose those canons.

The means of establishing this doctrine are riddled with logical fallacies such as assuming what you are trying to prove in order to prove it. For instance, many KJV Only advocates argue by comparing the King James Version side by side with other, typically modern, versions. When there is a difference it is said, "See, they have changed the word of God." The problem with that sort of reasoning is that it already assumes that the King James Version is the inspired, infallible word of God and then compares with other versions to prove the same point. When something is present in another translation that is not in the King James, it is viewed as an addition to the word of God and when something is absent in another translation that is present in the King James it is viewed as subtracting from the word of God. But how do we know that the reverse is not true? What if a different translation contains readings that are closer to the original text written by the original writer than what the King James contains? Also, could not one reason the exact same way if they were to start with another translation and assume it to be the "inspired, infallible word of God"?

The truth is that the belief in King James Onlyism cannot be arrived at by simply looking at the empirical data of the history of the Bible and the transmission of the text. This being so, it is only the immaterialistic assumption that our beliefs or ideas are as valuable as reality that could cause one to believe in KJV Onlyism.

Often in religious groups, and perhaps even especially in Adventist and Messianic congregations, there are teachers which present ideas which sound exciting or awe inspiring. People love the experience of hearing something new and profound. People love having a connection made which seems to establish some other belief, and which will "wow" them. People want to believe things like the idea that the garment of John the Baptist was the mantle that Elijah wore because they feel it forms a connection or is a cool idea. They think, "Wow! John came in the Spirit and power of Elijah and he even wore the mantle of Elijah himself!" thinking that it is some profound truth. But what is the evidence for this? And even if it were true, why should it be thought of as profound? Believing in these sorts of unfounded ideas will do nothing for a person other than dig them deeper in the pit of private interpretation and immaterialistic thinking, thus preventing them from hearing and accepting the truth and being saved from their sins.

Similarly, many adopt beliefs such as thinking Adam sinned at the age of 33 because that makes a "cool" connection with Jesus since he died at 33. Or that the Hebrew Bible is a code in which every seventh letter spells some special word like "torah" or "Yeshuah." Theories like these are totally unfounded, but people accept them anyways because it sounds good and conforms to their belief system. The Bible code makes the Bible sound like a supernatural book, and so people want to believe it, despite the fact that the claims are complete lies. Most simply do not check into these theories but blindly accept them as true thinking that that is faith. Unfortunately, the amount of private interpretation being promoted out there is so numerous that it would be impossible to convey how large of a problem this is. What people need to do is to understand the principles of truth so that they can become equipped with the tools needed to discern between fanciful ideas and truth.

Still another type of unfounded interpretation is the sort that seeks to prove true teachings by using misapplications of scripture. For example, someone might try to prove that in addition to the Divine Mother, there is also a Divine Daughter *because* the King James Bible uses the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Ghost." While it is true that the translator's choice of those two terms has roots in the controversy over the procession of the Spirit, and that the controversy of the procession of the Spirit has implications as to whether Christ's Spirit was the same as the Father's or was a separate Spirit, the fact of the matter is that the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Ghost" are from the same phrase in Greek and so to use them as proof of the Mother and Daughter is unfounded in reality.

Others may try and teach the truth that God has a body by citing passages such as Proverbs 21:1 which says, "The king's heart is in the hand of Yahweh, as the rivers of water." But is this really proof of Yahweh's physical hand? The passage is clearly speaking metaphorically, so why use it to teach the truth that Yahweh has physical hands, especially when there are other passages (Eze. 8:3) which teach the same truth by straightforward description? If we use passages to say what they are not really saying (even if we are teaching a truth), it creates an opportunity for those who wish to find hooks to hang their doubts upon to reject the truth due to seeing our misapplication.

Our last example is the rejection by some of the books *1-2 Enoch* and *Jubilees* on the basis that they teach that there are 364 days per year (1En. 82:6; Jub. 6:32) whereas *Genesis* 7-8 is supposed to teach that there are 360 days per year. Think on this for a moment – let us say that *Genesis* really does teach a 360 day year and *Enoch* really does teach a 364 day year? Should we then reject *Enoch*? Why should we reject the book that supposedly teaches contrary to reality over the one which teaches according to the way things actually are?³⁰ Moreover, if the book(s) of *Enoch* were really written by Enoch, the seventh from Adam as Jude says, then should we not test the writings of Moses by Enoch's writings, not the other way around? This is an example of how people will even reject claims which are in harmony with material reality over against claims which are contrary to material reality simply because their tradition causes them to believe it is true. This is how immaterialism affects the mind.

Not only does immaterialism cause us to accept views which are contrary to reality and reject those which are reality, but it also causes us to view claims as something other than what they really are. For example, many assume that *Genesis* 7-8 demands a 360 day year. Is this really true? Is this what *Genesis* demands? Or is that just an idea as to what *Genesis* is saying – is that just someone's private interpretation? In reality, what *Genesis* tells us is that there was a period of 150 days which spanned over 5 months (Gen. 7:11, 24; 8:3-4). This does let us know that the months were 30 days *on average*, but it does not tell us how many days each month actually had. Since months in Scripture are determined by the moon,³¹ and since lunar months can range anywhere from 27(rarely)-31 days, it is entirely possible that the number of days for each of those five months was something like 30-31-29-30-30 or some other similar configuration. Not only this, but what *Genesis* is referring to is the number of days in connection with the dates as set by the moon, not how many days are in a year, which is set by the sun. This is all just to say that by immaterialism ruling in the mind people fail to see what a passage is really saying and thereby enter into private interpretation. That private interpretation can then be set up in the person's mind as the meaning of the passage and then if a claim comes along which contradicts their misinterpretation, even if that claim is true according to reality, it will be rejected because of the false dichotomy between the two passages.

All of these examples highlight for us the importance of coming to understand reality as it truly is, not only with some things or some areas, but with all things and all areas. This can be accomplished only by a true education, which is a knowledge gained by thoughtful experimentation. Indeed,

Higher education is an experimental knowledge of the plan of salvation, and this knowledge is secured by earnest and diligent study of the Scriptures. Such an education will renew the mind and transform the character, restoring the image of God in the soul. It will fortify the mind against the deceptive whisperings of the adversary, and enable us to understand the voice of God. It will teach the learner to become a co-worker with Jesus Christ, to dispel the moral darkness about him, and bring light and knowledge to men. It is the simplicity of true godliness – our passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher school above.

There is no education to be gained higher than that given to the early disciples, and which is revealed to us through the word of God. To gain the higher education means to follow this word implicitly; it means to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to practice His virtues. It means to give up selfishness and to devote the life to the service of God. *Higher education calls for something greater, something more divine, than the knowledge to be obtained merely from books. It means a personal, experimental knowledge of Christ; it means emancipation from ideas, from habits and practices, that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness, and which are opposed to loyalty to God. It means to overcome stubbornness, pride, selfishness, worldly ambition, and unbelief. It is the message of deliverance from sin.*³²

If these souls would only *make the experiment*, taking their burden of sin to Jesus for his forgiveness, *they would understand what it means to be justified by faith*, and their testimony would be heard in the congregation, *â??The Saviour has cleansed us from all sin. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*³³

¹See *The Return of the Shekinah* by Doug Mitchell.

²See *The Shepherd*'s Rod, Vol. 2, pp. 130-133.

³MR760, p. 4 (1905)

⁴MR760, p. 14 (1905)

⁵*Adventism and Ellen White, A Phenomenon of Religious Materialism*, p. 12

⁶See pages 37 and 60 of this article.

⁷MR760, p. 9 (1905)

⁸Ellen White to Kellogg, *Letter 300*, 1903

⁹For more on this, see our video study [Did God Create Time?](#)

¹⁰While any composite structure of matter can be destroyed, matter itself cannot be.

¹¹*Review and Herald*, Nov. 13, 1883, par. 13

¹²*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 1, 1899, par. 5

¹³*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 496

¹⁴*Review and Herald*, July 20, 1897, par. 9

15*Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896, par. 1

16*Signs of the Times*, Jan. 11, 1883, par. 24

17*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 109

18*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 225

19All the sources that we have for this tract read "downing" though it probably would have been corrected to "down" if it had ever gone through due process of publication.

20*The Entering Wedge*, Part 2, pp. 15-17

21See our video [WTC4 Church Authority?](#)

22See quotes on page 8.

23In short, people commonly think that if people are of the same lineage they will be of the same ethnicity, but this is not true. For example, let's say a Native American man had children with a Native American woman, and their children inter-married strictly with other Native Americans and bore more children. Those children would be ethnically Native American and would be of his lineage. Let's say his first wife died and he married a Caucasian woman and bore children with her, who all intermarried and bore children strictly within Caucasian circles. Those children would still be of his lineage, but would be ethnically Caucasian. The same would apply if he took a third wife who was Black, or a fourth wife who was Asian.

24*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, pp. 394-397 (*Our Attitude Toward the Civil Authorities*)

25The idea that God created literally everything is somewhat misleading. For example, if one was to say, "God created everything, therefore God created truth," we would be left with the conclusion that there was a time in which God existed but truth did not (for He had not yet created it.) But if that were true then we would have a God without truth, which is only a lie. The fact is that "truth" and "reality" are synonyms and therefore for anything to exist, for anything to be real, is to be true. If God existed, then truth existed as well. In other words, if anything exists, truth exists, so it would not be necessary for God to create it.

26See the first definition at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/time?s=t>

27A solipsist is one who believes that the only person who exists is him or her self and that everything and everyone else is just a figment of their imagination.

28See our video [Did God Create Time?](#)

[29](#)*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, pp. 109-110

[30](#)Some may here think, "Wait a second, a year isn't 364 days long, it is 365.25 days long." This is true when calculating days according to sidereal time (the common modern method), which calculates a day by the rotation of the earth in relation to a distant fixed star. According to the Scriptures though, the day is measured by the earth's relation to the sun, not another star. A sidereal day is 4 minutes shorter than a true solar day. Those 4 minutes added up over the space of a year make a full day. What this means is that it takes 365.25 sidereal days to cover the same amount of time as 364 solar days.

[31](#)See Gen. 1:14; Ps. 104:19; Sir. 43:6; 1 En. 78:10, 12.

[32](#)*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 11

[33](#)*Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1688