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THE LUNAR SABBATH THEORY

Some proponents of the lunar Sabbath theory use the following argument in support of their idea. The argument is based on a paragraph appearing in the 1883 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook on p.66. This is what it states:

"Those who disbelieve in the seventh-day Sabbath bring against it numerous objections, all of which are readily answered with the exception of one, –THE CROSS. this is the great, unanswerable objection to the Bible Sabbath."

Source: <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/YB/YB1883.pdf#view=fit>

Lunar Sabbath promoters interpret this statement in the following way:

"In 1883, the Seventh-day Adventist Church admitted that the crucifixion date discrepancy was the one unanswerable objection to worshiping on Saturday, they did not know how to resolve it."

Source: http://www.thecreatorscalendar.com/art_unanswer.html

The assumption made in the above quote is very clear. It is *assumed* that "the cross" spoken of is referring to "the crucifixion", but this is not stated in the Yearbook at all.

The argument is built on this *assumed* conclusion.

Is such a conclusion correct? What did the pioneers really mean by that statement? What does "the cross" refer to? Is the Lunar Sabbath theory the only way to resolve this?

The answer to these questions, and this "objection", is really very simple. The cross spoken of is the cross of *obedience* **not** the cross on which Christ died! Anyone familiar with the writing style of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers will readily recognize this fact. Let us look at a few sample statements that will demonstrate this fact clearly.

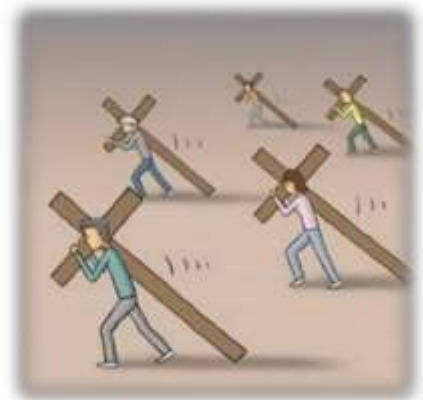
The Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us that "cross" does not always refer to the crucifixion. Notice the following:

*Matthew 10:38 And he that taketh not **his** cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

*Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take **up his cross**, and follow me.*

Any Bible student knows that the cross spoken of here is the cross of *obedience* and *self denial*. The word "cross"

is used by Christ as a symbol for the self sacrifice that will be required by his followers. *This* is the unanswerable objection to the Sabbath (i.e. The fact that it involves a cross). It is unanswerable



because the answer for it lies in the decision of each person. Will they obey by taking up the cross or will they refuse to do so?

Notice how this is further confirmed from the Spirit of Prophecy:



*“The true followers of Christ do not wait for truth to become popular. **Being convinced of their duty, they deliberately accept the cross, and thus remove the greatest obstacle to the reception of truth,—the only argument which its advocates have never been able to refute.** It is weak, inefficient world-servers that think it praiseworthy to have no principle in religious things. We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God. To men of principle, faith, and daring, is the world indebted for its great reforms. By such men must the work of reform for this time be carried forward.” {Ellen White, 4SP 293.2}*

How clear! The servant of the Lord makes it so plain that none need to be confused over the matter. Notice how similar the thought expressed in the above quote is to the quote from the yearbook. Thus it is made abundantly plain that the false reading of the statement in the yearbook is based on an *assumption*. But wait, there is even more evidence.

Ellen White and the cross of obedience

*“Men who neglect to heed the calls of the Spirit and word of God, **because obedience involves a cross**, will lose their souls. When the books are opened, and every man's work and the motives that prompted him are scrutinized by the Judge of all the earth, they will see what a loss they have sustained. We should ever cherish the fear of the Lord and realize that, individually, we are standing before the Lord of hosts, and no thought, no word, no act in connection with the work of God, should savor of selfishness or of indifference.” {Ellen White, 5T 720.2}*

*“How is the world treating the law of God? Everywhere men are working against the divine precepts. **In their desire to evade the cross bearing attendant on obedience**, even the churches are taking sides with the great apostate in claiming that the law of God has been changed or abrogated. Men in their blindness boast of wonderful progress and enlightenment; but the heavenly watchers see the earth filled with corruption and violence. Because of sin the atmosphere of our world has become as the atmosphere of a pesthouse.” {Ellen White, 6T 10.2}*

Notice that Ellen White, as a Seventh-day Adventist pioneer, made use of the word “cross” in connection with *obedience* to the law of God. This is in perfect harmony with what Christ declared. Failure to recognize this meaning for “cross” can lead many to false conclusions.

*“**They did not wish to obey; for obedience involved a cross.** So today many refuse to put their will on the side of God's will. They refuse to conform their lives to the great standard of righteousness.” {Ellen White, RH, May 28, 1901 par. 5}*



*“If the Majesty of heaven came to this world, and endured a life of humiliation and a death of shame, **why should we shrink back because obedience involves a cross?** {Ellen White, UL 325.4}*

*“**What constitutes the cross?** The requirements of Jesus, that cut directly across human devisings, human indulgence of appetite, human calculations, human practices and habits.” {Ellen White, 20MR 104.3}*

The cross of obedience and the Sabbath

Now let us notice how the cross of obedience is applied to the Sabbath commandment. This plainly explains what is meant by the statement in the yearbook.

*“**The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is a heavy cross for every one who accepts the truth.** Many who can see that our doctrines are sustained by the Scriptures, shrink from accepting them, because they do not wish to be peculiar, or because **by obedience to the truth** they would be cut off from their means of support.” {Ellen White, GW92 306.2}*

How plain! Let the reader now go back to the start of this article and read again the quote from the yearbook and it will be seen in its true light. The objection is nothing more than the unwillingness to *obey*.

*“**The keeping of the commandments of God involves a cross. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment lies in the pathway of all those who would be faithful, obedient children of the Lord.** Many excuse themselves from **obedience** to this holy precept, saying, "It is not convenient for me to keep this commandment. It will interfere with my business." Does God ask you if it is convenient for you to keep his commandments?” {Ellen White, RH, June 9, 1891 par. 5}*

The Pioneers

Not only Ellen White, but many other pioneers used the same language in applying “the cross” to obedience and not just to the crucifixion of Christ. We need to familiarize ourselves with their writings more lest we be misled.

*“**There is but one objection to the Sabbath which we have been unable to remove. It is one which we shall never try to remove, and that is - THE CROSS. All others we will answer satisfactorily to any candid mind. But whosoever would make up his mind to live out the religion of Jesus Christ, must make up his mind to bear the cross also: for a religion without a cross will lead anywhere but to heaven.** We would say, then, Agitate the truth throughout the community. Stir up investigation. Urge upon them an examination of these questions; and confine them to the Bible, which they profess to follow as the true source of light and truth. - ED.” {James White, Review and Herald, February 7, 1856.}*

There is really no need to find a clearer statement. James White here plainly explains what the yearbook statement means. There is no need for us to guess at all. Dear reader, the evidence is so plain there is no need to be deceived. All we ask is that people do their homework before building theories on *assumed* conclusions. The fact is there is no objection to the true Sabbath (not the lunar Sabbath) that can be put forth from the Bible. The unanswerable objection lies in the unwillingness of the person to *obey*.

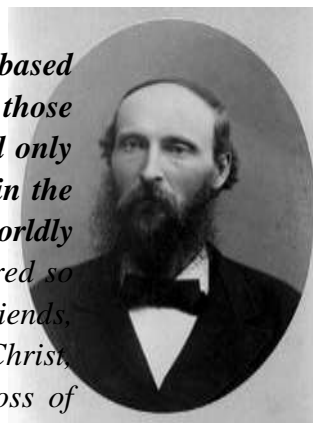
We could stop here for the evidence provided adequately refutes the conclusion of the lunar Sabbath theory. Yet, for the sake of perfect clarity on this question (as it seems to have agitated and confused many) we will examine just a few more passages to ensure that our nail is fastened securely. The statements are plain enough with no need for comments.

*“There are some here who have read nearly all our books on the Sabbath question, and who seem to be convinced of the truthfulness of our position; but still they hesitate; and the question come home to us, **What more can we do? Again and again we look over the list of our publications, but fail to find the book that will remove the last and greatest objection to the Sabbath question.** If any one could present us with the desired book we think it would accomplish more in bringing people to decide for the truth than all the other books together: **the title of such a book would be, The Cross Removed.**”*

*But we may well despair of ever removing this great objection from the minds of our fellow-men; for it lies directly across the narrow path that leads to eternal life: and while some have labored to remove it, others choose to pass around and climb up some other way. But Jesus has given his disciples instructions in regard to this point. He says [Matt.xvi,24], “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up **his cross** and follow me.”*

*Some think the cross greater than they can bear; but Jesus has said, “My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” **If we find the cross greater than we are able to bear alone, we have only to come to Jesus and ask for help, and he has promised to be a present help in every time of need.** He requires no more of us than we are able in his strength to perform. And to those who stand trembling I would say, **Go forward; take up the cross and follow Jesus.**” {James White, Review and Herald, April 29, 1862}*

*“Dear Reader: **Every objection against the Sabbath that is based on want of information, can be answered by prayerful study; but those objections that grow out of a lack of consecration can be removed only by yielding to God in taking up the cross. The cross will appear in the form of inconvenience; in the loss of friends, reputation, and worldly pleasure.** But do not speak of inconvenience when Christ has suffered so much to save us; or of loss of friends, when you will lose no true friends, and when, in exchange for those you may lose, you will have God, Christ, and the Spirit of God as your special friends. Do not mention loss of reputation; for that is a dear and shameful reputation that is*



retained at the sacrifice of truth, and at the loss of honor that comes from God. Oh! do not talk of worldly pleasure. The pleasures of sin are vain, deceitful, and fleeting, and end in sorrow and woe. No earthly pleasures can compare with those of a life of holiness and obedience.” {ELD. D. T., Refutation of Forty-Four So-Called Objections Against the Ancient Sabbath, p. 68. 1887}

*“One brother was present with his companion who has been several years convinced that the **Sabbath** was binding, but had not kept it. With tears and an overflowing heart he bore testimony in the public congregation to the truth, confessed his neglect of obedience to the commands of God, and told us how this duty had at times rolled upon him as he attempted to call upon the name of the Lord. **He declared his determination by the help of the Lord to take up the cross and keep the commandment he had never kept.** He then exhorted the congregation with good effect. We learned from this brother that the inconsistent course of some who profess to believe in keeping the commandments of God had been a barrier in the way of himself and his companion.” {Uriah Smith, Review and Herald, July 2, 1857}*



*“We have so far progressed in our definition of a christian, that we have found it to mean one who unites with the faith of Jesus the love of God and obedience to his commandments. And the commandments are those which form the constitution of God's moral government. One thing more: What do these commandments require? You will allow us, reader, to refer to one which is more openly violated than any other. Its requirements runs as follows: **“Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: the seventh day is the Sabbath,”** etc. Ah! here is the rock of offence, here is the stone of stumbling, to the would-be christians of these*

last days. Any way to be a christian except by the way of the cross! Any way to show our love to God, except by obedience.” {Uriah Smith, Review and Herald, December 2, 1858}

*“The meeting was held in a school-house where all the brethren, save one, in that vicinity were present on the Sabbath, to commemorate the works of creation by keeping the Rest-day of Jehovah according to the fourth commandment. Several were out on the Sabbath, and more on First-day to hear the reasons of our faith, who listened with apparent interest. **Some acknowledged that every objection was removed but the cross. I expect them to remove that objection as soon as possible.** May the Lord help them to move out in obedience to all the commandments.” {James White, Review and Herald, September 5, 1854}*

*“Note from Bro. Sperry. DEAR BRO. SMITH: I have not been silent many weeks in the past because of no interest in this last great work. Where I have labored the Lord has blessed. Since the conference at Berkshire, I joined Bro. Evans at Wolcott, Vt., where he had had some meetings previous to the conference, and three embraced the truth. **During our meetings which continued over two Sabbaths, nine decided to obey God by keeping his holy Sabbath, and others see that we have the truth, but the one objection, the cross, lies in the way.**” {Uriah Smith, Review and Herald, November 17, 1859}*

Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.



The experience of one bearing the cross of obedience

*“From Bro Miller. Bro. White: I am one of those who, although not being where they can meet with others on **the Sabbath**, are still trying to keep the whole law, Alone, thus, with the noise of a busy world outside, **one is apt to feel the cross to be heavy**. Satan, ever on the alert to take advantage of our feelings, is, at such a time busy with our thoughts, trying to discourage us from continuing in the way of obedience; telling us to see how happy the people are to-day, and to-morrow going to their accustomed places of assembly; picturing in beautiful lines the pleasures we once felt in those services, and the enjoyment we had in the Sunday school with the children; suggesting that we might still feel thus if we would only quit the course we are following, and our odd ways, and be like other folks; whispering of worldly honors and ease in place of being alone. How at such times does the truth shine out brightly above all; conquering feeling, filling the soul with peace and joy, while we say to the tempter, Get thee behind me, away.” {Review and Herald, October 11, 1864}*

Conclusion

We have seen plain evidence from a number of Seventh-day Adventist pioneers as to what the objection of “the cross” really means regarding the Sabbath. It has nothing to do with the lunar Sabbath theory whatsoever. Let all be reminded which Sabbath was spoken of by all these pioneers. It is most alarming and sad that many are needlessly confused over this issue. We pray that the evidence here might help some soul to regain their footing on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. Don’t forget the solemn warning:



*“Then I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting." I asked who this company were. **The angel said, "These are they who have once kept the Sabbath and have given it up."** I heard them cry with a loud voice, "We have believed in Thy coming, and taught it with energy." And while they were speaking, their eyes would fall upon their garments and see the writing, and then they would wail aloud. I saw that they had drunk of the deep waters, and fouled the residue with their feet--**trodden the Sabbath underfoot**-- and that was why they were weighed in the balance and found wanting.” {Early Writings, 36.2}*

“Truth is truth, and will remain truth, and in the end will triumph gloriously.”

Ellen G. White