

Supplement to "The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times."

MELBOURNE, NOVEMBER 1, 1889.

MR. HAMMOND

—AND THE—

Australian Christian Standard.

A ONE-SIDED AFFAIR.

In the November issue of the *Australian Christian Standard* there appears the following editorial note:—

"We have received a letter from Mr. Curtis, of the Seventh-day Adventists, in which he says: 'Now to your question. You (*Standard*) say, 'We have not the slightest doubt that, in the absence of Bro. Hammond, some other opponent can be found in our ranks to meet Mr. Curtis. What does Mr. Curtis say?' I reply: 'I have nothing to say that I have not already said.'" The reply of Mr. Curtis is brief, and ours is equally so. It is, 'We have nothing to add to what we have previously said.'"

A brief rehearsal of the circumstances which have led to this note are as follows: A little over a year ago, Brother G. Foster, of Hobart, visited some friends of the "Disciple" faith at the house of Mr. Henshelwood, and was accompanied by Elder W. D. Curtis, a minister of the S. D. Adventist denomination. During the evening, the conversation was vigorously conducted by Mr. Hammond, who at one time came out with what was regarded as a challenge to a discussion; but upon the speaker being questioned, Bro. Foster and Curtis understood that such an intention was disclaimed, and no further notice was taken of this show of bravado toward a guest and a friend. It has been since asserted, both in print and private talk, that the challenge was *bona fide* and unqualified.

Beginning with the November, 1888, No. of the *Standard*, there appeared in that journal a series of articles by W. Hammond, entitled, "The Sabbath Question—Both Sides," and purporting to be a conversation between a "Christian," and a Seventh-day Adventist. As we are well aware, the impression was quite generally conveyed that the discussion was a genuine one. The poor "Adventist" really became an object of tender pity, and was finally battered out of all recognition, and appeared as a convert to his triumphant victor. The articles open with the following: "Adventist (who keeps Saturday, meets a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ)," this innuendo is unworthy of a Christian. The fact is well known, and cannot be denied by this self-styled "Christian," that our Lord kept "Saturday." The editors of the *Standard* allowed this, and much of the same deceptive nature, to pass unqualified, carrying the impression that our work is un-Christian and Jewish in its nature. Nor have we ever seen anything in that journal calculated to undeceive its readers as to the real nature of those articles. It displays a lack of candor not to be looked for in a people whose desire is to learn and speak the truth.

After several months had passed by, and many who

are readers of the *Standard* had expressed their surprise at the stupidity and pusillanimity of this man-of-straw whom Mr. Hammond had branded "Adventist," and whom the readers of that journal had been led to believe was a genuine representative of our cause, the BIBLE ECHO gave notice that "both sides," of this battle were being fought by Mr. Hammond; and suggested that it would possess more interest if a live S. D. A. were called upon to present one side. This brought out a letter from W. Hammond, in which he claimed that there was a standing challenge for a discussion, referring to the circumstance at Mr. Henshelwood's house, and that "I not only challenged Mr. Curtis to a public debate of the Sabbath question, but also asked him to get their whole conference, that was then in session, to meet me on that question. I assured Mr. Curtis that my time was not occupied, and therefore I would be glad to meet him, or them, at any place, and on any day or hour, he or they might name," and he adds, "I will, however, now repeat my challenge to Mr. Curtis, or the whole body of S. D. Adventists, to meet me at their headquarters in Auckland, for any number of nights between the 5th and 22nd of July, 1889." That there was a vital difference in the terms of these manifestations of courage is apparent to all, especially when we consider that Bro. Curtis was in Adelaide, and the letter was dated June 20. In the meantime, he held a meeting in his own church at Auckland, which he reported through the *Standard*, where he thoroughly threshed out the Bible Sabbath, and valorously triumphed over the truth, though some of our people were actually present, and they were so thoroughly cowed (or disgusted), that they would not reply, though he begged them to exhibit the folly of attempting it. In his reply, Elder Curtis accepted his challenge as Mr. H. claimed he had first given it and pretended to repeat it. That is, he declined to go to Auckland or to Fiji, but chose Melbourne as the place, and the time to be at Mr. H.'s earliest convenience. The reply to this acceptance was, that if he, Mr. Hammond, ever returned to the colonies, he would be most happy to meet Mr. Curtis. The *Standard* evidently felt the effect of the sudden subsidence of their champion's valour, and after intimating that Mr. H. had gone or was going to England (instead of Fiji), added that some other opponent could probably be found to meet Mr. Curtis, and asking Mr. Curtis what he had to say. Elder C. replied with a letter setting forth the unfair course pursued in the matter, and of this letter, the *Standard* publishes *one sentence* of his reply. "We give the greater portion of it, as follows:—

To the Editor of the A. C. Standard.

"DEAR SIR,—Your editorial attached to Mr. Hammond's letter *re* my accepting his challenge to debate the Sabbath and Sunday question, which appeared in the last number of the *Standard*, demands a reply from me; and I take great pleasure in answering the question you raised.

"You say, 'It appears to us that Mr. Curtis . . . is . . . disposed to crow somewhat lustily.' Let us look at facts as they exist, and then every unbiased reader can judge for himself from whence the crowing comes. Mr. Hammond, after longing for a discussion for ten long months, comes out with a challenge, in which he says, 'I . . . challenge . . . Mr. Curtis, or the whole body of Seventh-day Adventists, to meet me,' etc. This, my dear sir, is pure bravado.

I promptly accepted his challenge. But, five days before said challenge appeared in your paper, 'the bird had flown.' But hark! from (Wellington, N. Z.) across the sea, nearly two thousand miles from his designated opponent, comes a glowing description of a wonderful (?) triumph (?) over the Adventists of Auckland. Hear him: 'Surely, some or all of your followers there ought to be able to meet me, and give a Bible reason for keeping the old Hebrew Sabbath. But, no. I lectured on the "Sabbath Question," several of your leading members present; but they were as silent as death. I begged them to meet me in their own place of worship, and we would take the Bible and look up the subject, and see what it said about the day we ought to keep. But no, sir, not one of them dare do that.' Now, Mr. Editor, it appears to me, and I believe to yourself as well, from the above statements, that Mr. Hammond is 'disposed to crow somewhat lustily.'

"Mr. Hammond continues, 'If I return to the colonies, it will be a great privilege for me to meet you in a public discussion on the "Sabbath Question."' Your note intimates that he has, or will shortly, depart for England. Query, Why, in view of Mr. Hammond's sweeping challenge, could not his trip to England be postponed until the consummation of the debate? or, if the call was so urgent as to admit of no delay, why, 'at the eleventh hour' of his stay in the colonies, did he issue it?

"I am not surprised that you feel anxious to divert the attention of your readers from the 'lust' crowing of your champion.

"Now to your question. You say, 'We have not the slightest doubt that, in the absence of Bro. Hammond, some other opponent worthy of his steel can be found in our ranks to meet Mr. Curtis. What does Mr. Curtis say?' I reply, I have nothing to say that I have not already said. If you will take the trouble to turn to the July number of the *Standard*, you will notice that in my first letter to that journal, I made the following statement: 'S. D. Adventists present Bible facts concerning the Sabbath as well as every other point of our faith, and it is highly improbable that they would challenge others to prove their positions incorrect; you will certainly give them credit for having better judgment than to challenge their opponents to prove a negative. While their position and work form a barrier to their becoming the challenging party, yet they do not shrink from a defense of their views, even in a discussion, when that is necessary.' Again, in the September issue of the same paper, I used the following language: 'We are, and ever have been, ready to defend what we believe and practice.'

"The above statements define our position in regard to discussions; and whenever you have a desire to discuss the Sabbath and Sunday question with Adventists, or to put forward any in your 'ranks' for the same purpose, you may know where to find us, and how to reach us.

"Hoping that my answer to your query is sufficiently clear, I am, sir, very respectfully, yours, &c.,

W. D. CURTIS.

Glen Osmond Rd. Parkside, Adelaide, Oct. 25, 1889."

This is too small a matter to take up so much space, only we feel that it is but just that we should call attention to the course which has been pursued in suppressing the facts which would have placed the matter before the people. In doing this, we are not inviting a discussion. But by a show of false courage on the part of Mr. Hammond, and a one-sided presentation of the case, many wrong impressions have been created. These we wish to correct, and then we have done all we aspire to in a matter which is not at all agreeable to our tastes.