

# Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

Vol. 10, No.4

Straight and Narrow

April 2001

## PASTOR BOB'S CONFESSION NEEDED: A BEREAN ATTITUDE

By Bob Habenicht

In the spirit of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) I have begun to search the Scriptures to see for myself if what I have been taught squares with the Word. It is not that I have not studied my Bible through the years, but, as a teacher and pastor, I have felt that the press of duties justified my use of shortcuts. So, I read volumes of the church's literature, thinking I was doing well, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," "and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:17, 14)

After all, we have many scholars among us far more able than I, who have taken the time to study things out and put their findings on paper to bless the rest of us. I assumed our Godly leaders would not publish these studies for us if they were not in agreement with the Bible.

In the eighties, however, it gradually dawned on me that one must be selective of the authors one used. If one is not selective (in what one believes), confusion results. Choices had to be made because, for several years, Adventists had been battling over what kind of nature Jesus had when He was born of Mary. Many of our theologians were insisting that Jesus had at that time *assumed a perfect, unfallen*, human nature. That would have made His nature just like Adam's *before* he sinned.

Others were saying, "No! No! No! That is new theology. We as a people have never believed that! The only difference between that and Catholicism is that Catholics say Jesus had an *unfallen* nature because *Mary had never sinned*. Jesus could not possibly condemn sin in the flesh if He did not have a fleshly (fallen) nature." Eventually church publications stated that Adventism was large enough to permit belief in either point of view. How could that be so? Certainly a doctrinal position that required taking sides could be settled by careful Bible study. One of the points of view had to be wrong! Further, allowing error equal standing with truth practically guaranteed error would one day gain the ascendancy.

The assertion that it did not make any difference which view of the human nature of Christ I chose was unbelievable. It seemed to be designed to take the heat off those who were promoting the viewpoint that Jesus had taken the *pre-fall nature* of Adam rather than the *post-fall nature* inherited from him by Abraham, David, and the rest of us. Which side was right? Was the side that was wrong bringing in the "omega of apostasy" that we had been warned would come, or was the "omega" already here, undetected? If

## Digital Video Tape Project

The digital tape project featuring the series, "The Good News About God" is catching on like fire in the stubble. The next two messages in the series about the Godhead are on the Father and Son relationship and the death of Christ. Lord willing, they will be ready by next month.

We do have a new video message by Pastor David Clayton entitled: "God's Administration." This Bible-based study clearly shows the result of hierarchical church government. It is a "must see" for those who are home churching.

We are thankful to our Father to announce that we have acquired a video signal converter so we can produce not only NTSC tapes but PAL tapes as well for use in many countries around the world. Our videos are also available in audio cassette format as well.

*Editor*

### Also in this issue:

- The Devil's Trinity — A. Stump . . . . . p. 11  
A Reply ... — M. Tierney . . . . . p. 13  
Youth's Corner — E. G. White . . . . . p. 15  
Camp Meeting — A. Stump . . . . . p. 16

the “Omega” were here already, might not the people who were wrong in the partisan conflict regarding the human nature of Christ be adding to, or trying to strengthen, the “Omega” position? It certainly seemed to be that large an issue, and perusal of the ministerial course (Emmanuel Missionary College 1955) had not prepared me for such involved questions. Permit me to backtrack to the early sixties.

In the Michigan Conference I was given as many cases of *Questions on Doctrines* as I could use. I got a VW Beetle full, enough to supply each of my members that would take one, and had sufficient to present a hard cover book to each of my many “Ingathering” business donors. It was this book, published in 1957, that had underhandedly introduced the pre-fall human nature of Jesus as the “representative” SDA point of view. (See *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 9.) It concealed the fact that for Adventists this was a new theological position that had not been accepted by vote.

There were two hints that all were not pleased with the new book, but these did not assume any significance to me for many years. The first had been mentioned in a Michigan Conference pastor’s meeting of a well known scholar, then retired and, it was said, in decline, who was miffed because he had not been consulted during the preparation of *Questions on Doctrine*. We were told he was sending letters to the churches, making a big issue of a minor matter over which he disagreed with the authors. The issue (the pre-fall human nature of Jesus) was not discussed, nor the scholar (M. L. Andreason) named. We pastors were advised to ignore the matter, since it was so *trite* that people of good sense would not want to be bothered with it.

The other hint that all was not well with *Questions on Doctrine* was when one of my elders casually asked me some questions about the nature of Christ that were beyond my

knowledge and experience in the Word. He quickly sensed my discomfort, perceived that I was blissfully ignorant on the matter, and let it drop. Such is the sometimes ill advised consideration church members have for their pastors. Nearly forty years passed before I was able to again visit this dear octogenarian brother. He did not remember the above incident, but he remembered well Elder Andreason’s *Letters to the Churches*, and the blessings they brought him. How I would have liked to have been on that mailing list.

That I did not understand the issue was my fault though. I have eyes to read what the Spirit of Christ says to the churches. (Repeated seven times in Revelation, chapters two and three.) I just was not searching the Word for myself. I was caught up in the efficient use of shortcuts and let the press of duties rob me of many chances to learn things all heaven was anxious for mankind to comprehend.

In the eighties, Adventist officialdom used that clever tactic mentioned above: “It really does not make any difference which view of the human nature of Jesus one holds,” they had said. This had opened my eyes to a deep doctrinal division that had been festering for years, and of which, to my shame, I had been completely unaware. I dislike admitting it, but I would probably still be in that dull state of mind had not some Berean-minded brethren risked slander to stand for truth as they saw it. I might still be thinking that apostasy in the church had begun over a symptomatic issue such as jewelry.

Now I understood that “Creeping Compromise” had deeper roots than I had imagined. To be teaching that the apostle Paul’s intentionally redundant phrase, “he also himself likewise took part of the same,” in Hebrews 2:14, meant that Jesus had taken an *unfallen* human nature, was beyond belief. Neither could I accept that it did not make any difference which way I believed. Nor was it any easier

to admit that for thirty years I had been a part of this problem, instead of being a part of its solution. I had distributed *Questions on Doctrine* when I should have been opposing the errors it contained. Even more serious admissions were just ahead.

About this time we received a complimentary subscription to *Our Firm Foundation*. What a blessing that was. It fed our souls. It increased our knowledge of the Word, and our confidence in it. We found there a group of authors we thought were consistent in their usage of the Bible. We also appreciated “Adventists Affirm,” with its group of authors trying to hold back the drift of our church-ship from its moors. We now thought we had the advantage that our church elder had enjoyed thirty years earlier. We were on mailing lists that gave us a clearer view of what was going on behind the scenes.

*ISSUES: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*, was published by the church leadership in 1992 in an attempt to discredit those who were still insisting that Jesus had indeed inherited a fallen human nature from Mary. Of course we did not accept its premise that the human nature of Christ was unresolvable. (*Issues*, p.109) However, a question raised on page 39 was most perplexing. “Are the modern defenders of so-called historic Adventism really prepared to return to a non-Trinitarian position?” I wondered, “Just what does that involve?” I underlined it and recorded the passage with other notes at the back of the book to jog my memory. But sorry Berean that I was, did no more to resolve the question. I had failed the Berean test again.

Students of Adventist church history know that the church was nearly torn apart by a doctrinal crisis during the first decade of the twentieth century. Pantheistic notions of the personality of God had been championed by the world-renowned Adventist physician, Dr. John Harvey

Kellogg. He skillfully used selected statements from the writings of E.G. White to buttress his own writings, and thus convinced many church leaders to look favorably toward his unbiblical views of God. However, Mrs. White was still on the scene. She protested the misuse of her writings, and vigorously entered the fray to defeat Dr. Kellogg's unbiblical speculations about the personality and nature of God. Kellogg lost the theological battle. The church lost some of its prominent leaders and much property.

[Clarifying reminder: Mrs. E.G. White (1827 to 1915) was one of the principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She is believed by most Adventists, this writer included, to have had the prophetic gift. The church has been blessed, in many areas, by insights into scriptural themes that she received while in vision. Most Adventists refer to her simply, and fondly, as "Mrs. White," or "Sister White."]

Mrs. White referred to the Kellogg controversy as the "alpha of deadly heresies." (See *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 200.) Traumatic as that was, she was much more concerned about a far more deceptive error which she referred to as "the omega." She predicted it would soon follow the "alpha," especially after she was gone. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and omega is the last. Used idiomatically, "omega" implies summation, finality, greatest development, culmination. So, as used by the prophetess, the Kellogg "alpha" false teaching about God was soon to be followed by a more deceptive "omega," the last, the summary, the greatest, deception about God. Well, her analogy made sense. Jesus referred to himself as the "Alpha and the Omega," "the first and the last," and/or "the beginning and the end," in six different verses in the book of Revelation. These references about Himself are scattered from the first through the last chapter. These

statements all apply to truth about Himself as God. It follows logically, then, that the omega of deadly heresies would thus apply to errors, to the most deceptive of lies, about God.

Surely we had been given enough clues about the "omega," the fullness, the embodiment, of all the errors to be foisted upon the Remnant Church, to be able to figure out what it was. Following are some more of those clues:

"The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure." (*Ibid.*, pp. 204, 205)

The omega would "be of a most startling nature." (*Ibid.*, p. 197) It would be so deceptive the messenger trembled for God's people.

But just what was that "omega?" To my knowledge no one had really come right out and said what it was. Should it not be possible to figure that out by now, especially with all the clues that had been given? Could the Catholic and Evangelical doctrine that Jesus had taken an unfallen human nature be it? Some of us had thought perhaps it might be, but in some ways it did not seem to fit what was known about the "omega." For example, it did not soon follow either

the "alpha of deadly heresies," or the prophetess's death.

Thanks to "The good old *Review*," (*R&H*) the dormant question regarding the *Issues* challenge to "the modern defenders of so-called historic Adventism to return to a non-Trinitarian position," (*Issues*, p. 39) suddenly took front burner status. The *Review's* lead article of the April 22, 1999, issue employed identical cover and article title spreads asking, "Heresy or Hopeful Sign?" (Referred to hereafter as "Heresy") The not so subtle subtitle was, "How early Adventists struggled with the truth about the Trinity." There was much about this article that reminded me of the journalistic style of the *Issues* book. It was obvious that someone was questioning the church's belief regarding the Trinity, that unsettling waves were being made, and that this article had been written both to maintain the official position, and to do damage control.

I wondered, "Have I been sleeping at my post all this time? Why haven't any of my trusted authors sounded an alarm? What are we missing?" *Notice that I was still depending somewhat on others, the "good guy" authors I had found to be trustworthy, but was beginning, albeit subconsciously, to take personal responsibility for checking things out.* I was gradually sensing my need of a Berean attitude.

At the first reading of the "Heresy" article I did not know enough about the subject to fault many of the points made, but the necessity of careful study was urged by the following glaring statements.

1. "... it is not so surprising that some teachings assumed by most Christians were rather late in receiving attention from this small but rapidly growing Christian denomination." ("Heresy," p.9)

Adventism's founders had understood, over 150 years ago, that the group the "Heresy" author had referred to as "most Christians,"

Jesus had designated “Babylon,” (i.e. confusion) in Revelation 14:8. Why should that group of churches, at this late date, be used as Adventism’s standard? To show how logical it was for Adventists to take so long to finally get around to dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity, the above author, on the same page, utilized the following chronological progression of reforms in doctrinal and lifestyle understandings: 1. The investigative judgment. 2. The Sabbath. 3. Giving up pork, and then, forty years later, 4. Giving up oysters. Each of these reforms had taken Adventism’s founders further and further from the churches they had left. Only after the last of these reforms, (after giving up oysters) did some of their successors begin to agitate for the acceptance of the Trinity.

What could be greater than a change in whom a church worships? I certainly was not aware that such a change had been made. I had thought Adventism’s founders, with prophetic guidance within the first few years laid a firm foundation that was not to be moved. An angel told Sister White, “Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these [the three angels’] messages. (*Early Writings*, p. 258, 1858) This last-mentioned change in Adventist beliefs had embraced the one doctrine, held in common by Catholics and Evangelicals alike, both in the days of the founders and in ours. Jesus Himself calls these churches “Babylon.” Was it not illogical, suspect even, to tout such a change as a reform? Changing whom one worships would seem to be moving foundations, wouldn’t it?

2. “Ellen White’s testimony, by calling attention to scriptures whose significance had been overlooked, created a paradigm shift that couldn’t be overlooked.” (“Heresy,” p. 11.)

No scriptural examples were given, yet she had pointed to “the Bible and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all

reforms.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 595) If the Bible is not plain enough, even to enable us to figure out Whom we are to worship, then what is the point of even reading it?

3. “The Fundamental Beliefs can and will be refined as further insights clarify old truths or as new situations necessitate new explanations to the world of what the Bible teaches and Seventh-day Adventists believe.” (“Heresy,” p. 13).

This is the last, the summary sentence, of the article. Notice what the “Heresy” author, a professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, a very articulate man, has said in this carefully crafted summary sentence. Perceived situations “can and will” be used to justify the necessity of “new explanations to the world, of what the Bible teaches and Seventh-day Adventists believe,” regarding our “Fundamental Beliefs.” If situational ethics are unscriptural, what about situational doctrine?

The word “refined,” as used in the summary sentence can mean *subtlety*, which includes the following in its definition: “elusive, not immediately obvious, clever, Characterized by craft or slyness; devious. Operating in a hidden and usually injurious way; insidious.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary* definition for “subtle.”) This describes precisely the methods used in bringing about the reversal in the “historic” Adventist position regarding the human nature of our Saviour. The situation presented as necessitating that, then new, explanation “to the world of what ... Seventh-day Adventists believe” was the perceived opportunity to remove from the denomination the stigma of being classified, by the Evangelicals, as a cult.

This subtle reversal regarding the human nature of Christ, praised as a reform, had also made Adventists

more like the churches around them. The very same churches that Jesus calls “Babylon.” Jesus bids His followers to use the same term in giving the three angels’ messages, (Revelation 14:6-12) and they will obey, once they admit the truthfulness of their Lord’s diagnosis of their condition, (proud, worldly, selfish, blind, wretched, and miserable, and spiritually poor, and naked) and take the cure (repentance). Take a break, and prayerfully read Revelation 3:14-22. While this message applies primarily to the Adventist hierarchy, woe to the laity who mirror their errant leader’s symptoms, and do not take the prescribed cure!

4a. “Whatever may have been Ellen White’s original beliefs, she never expressed anti-Trinitarian views in her writings, and she eventually led Adventists to reconsider and accept a Biblical concept of the Trinity, as we shall see later.” (“Heresy,” p. 10)

4b. “She never wrote an article directly confronting wrong views about the Godhead. But she published in the *Desire of Ages* and elsewhere statements that couldn’t be explained away and that were destined eventually to change the view of the church.” (“Heresy,” p. 12)

I noticed that the statement “She never wrote an article directly confronting wrong views about the Godhead,” overlooked the whole Kellogg controversy, which she had called the “alpha of deadly heresies.” What else had been overlooked? Here we were dealing with a subject that also involved Godhead worship issues, The Immutable Law of God, and The Three Angels’ Messages, at least, and probably the rest of the pillars of our faith, if thoroughly understood. Was this another case of “refining” a doctrine? (Please review the note under the “Heresy” quote number three, above.)

This move to Trinitarian theology appeared to have been an “Omega

Class” turnaround of the entire church, because the author had clearly stated that, until the turn of the century, there was a “tide of anti-Trinitarian theology among Adventists.” He also verified that the foundations for the above reversal were being laid just as the alpha apostasy came to full bloom, and was rejected. (See “Heresy,” p. 11.)

If falling in line with the Trinitarian theology of the mainline churches were the predicted “Omega,” it is not surprising that Mrs. White “trembled for our people.” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 203) What could have been more deceptive than to have her “lesser light” writings be utilized, as both lever and pivot point, to force the change as to whom Adventists worship?

It would be hard to admit that we had been wrong for so long. I was finding that to be the case, yet why should I have been so surprised at how I felt? Had not one third of the angels, living in the very presence of the Father, entertained wrong ideas about Him, and about His Son, and spurned Their tender entreaties? In their stubbornness, their pride of opinion, those angels unconsciously changed gods. If I were wrong, I had best admit it! Why share the future of those fallen angels?

Well, maybe I was wrong in my assessment of the “Heresy” article. Maybe this Trinity question was not, after all, the faith destroying “omega” Adventists had been warned against. There was no maybe, though, as to whether or not I needed to take personal responsibility for finding out the truth about whom I was to worship. That was long over due.

There were two reasons why I began my Berean quest in the writings of the end time messenger. As was seen in quotes 2, 4a and 4b, just above, it was she who was alleged to have provided the rationale for forcing the Church’s acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity. The second reason is that Mrs. White, having

passed to her rest, could no longer protest the misuse of her writings to prove the new point of view, as she had done with Dr. Kellogg’s attempted misapplications.

The first chapter of her book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, entitled, “Why Was Sin Permitted,” yielded the following crystal clear statements that directly contradict the “never expressed anti-Trinitarian views” assertion, quoted above. (“Heresy,” p. 10)

“The *Sovereign of the universe* was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an *associate—a co-worker* who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.’ John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the *only being* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34—emphasis supplied)

“There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him who, *next to Christ*, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. (*Ibid.*, p. 35—emphasis supplied)

“... though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. ... And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was *the prerogative of Christ alone*. (*Ibid.* - emphasis supplied)

“*The King of the universe* summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true *position of His Son*, ... The Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled

*both*. ... Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that *none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes*, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.” (*Ibid.*, p.36—emphasis supplied)

Please read the whole chapter in order to appreciate how much more powerful these passages are when read in their context. It is as plain as can be that the Father is the Godhead, for it is He who is described as “The *Sovereign of the universe*,” and as “The *King of the universe*.” He shares everything with His only begotten Son, “... the only being *in all the universe* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 493) The Sovereign Father’s only begotten Son is his “co-worker” and “associate.” These nouns are singular, so, to this point, we have two divine Beings described.

Now! “*Sin originated with him, who next to Christ, had been most honored of God, and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven*.” Lucifer, the “father of lies,” he who would “be like the most High,” (Isaiah 14:14) at whatever price, had been at one time third in command in Heaven.

It must be admitted that this *sampling* of straightforward statements, from just one chapter of the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, is much more than strongly anti-Trinitarian. The fact that Lucifer is a created being, yet “next to Christ,” and third in command, *precludes even the possibility* of the existence of more than two divine Beings.

Obviously, the “Heresy” author was being less than forthright when he stated that Mrs. White “... never expressed anti-Trinitarian views in her writings.” (“Heresy,” p. 10) Further, that she would have purposefully made “a seven-word comment that would turn the tide of anti-Trinitarian theology among

Adventists” (“Heresy,” p. 11), would require great intellectual agility to accept, especially if one were to remember that she herself said, “God will have a people on the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 595)

That there was “the tide of anti-Trinitarian theology among Adventists” at the beginning of the past century was enlightening though. What we have today must be newer theology. Below is that tide-turning seven-word comment, underlined in its context, as it appeared in *Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897, the year before *Desire of Ages* was published. This may well be where the *Desire of Ages* compiler found it.

“In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour.” (*Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897-emphasis supplied)

If this quotation even hints of a Trinity, Mrs. White would be directly contradicting the sampling of very clear statements that we just read, statements describing the Godhead as a sovereign Father, a Father who shares all His attributes and power with His only begotten Son. Mrs. White would not do that! She obviously was beautifully describing, with all the fervor at her disposal, the unimaginable gift of eternal life. Jesus inherited His eternal life from His Father (Hebrews 1:5 John 5:26). We did not inherit that kind of life, but Jesus is anxious to share His inheritance, that very same eternal life, with us, as a gift!

The usage Adventist theologians have made of the above “seven-word comment” seems to be covered by the definition of the word “refine,” under quote number three, above.

The most charitable explanation possible of the “Heresy” author’s use

of that “seven-word comment” is to treat it as a prime example of doing what nearly all of us have been guilty of doing, myself included. We have been reading with our Trinitarian glasses (our preconceptions, which may be misconceptions) in order to make revelation coincide with what we have been, and are being, taught. In academia this is called “Reasoning from the desired conclusion.” This way of thinking is a perilous mistake that ought to be shunned, since the conclusions reached not only remain unproven, they are almost always incorrect.

Sometimes we absorb misinformation because we just do not search the Scriptures for ourselves. We have more faith in a pastor’s ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth than we do in our own. Besides, we pay him to do it for us, don’t we! We forget that the situation is exactly the same between ministerial students and their teachers. If ~~we~~ do not carefully evaluate what we hear or read, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we lose our Berean safety net, and may be easily led astray from the top down.

Gradually, I realized that a belief in the Trinity, that is consistent, requires one to believe that Jesus is not really a son, because, if He were, He could not be equal with the Father, “the most high God,” in every respect. In other words, the Father is not really a father, and His only begotten Son is not really a son, because He could not have been begotten without having had a beginning sometime in eternity past. Is it any wonder Jesus calls this “confusion,” (English for “Babylon”) and why He is one day forced to sorrowfully say to such, “I know you not whence ye are: depart from me.” (Luke 13:27)

That the concept, “Jesus is not really an only begotten Son,” is precisely what the “Heresy” author was trying to prove, is shown by his additional comments on the same, “tide-turning” seven words. Note

well: “Christ didn’t ultimately derive His life from the Father,” and that by using these seven words Mrs. White had “asserted His full deity [sic - as opposed to partial deity, I suppose] and equality with the Father.” (“Heresy” p. 11) It does matter to you that this contradicts the plainest statements about Jesus, the only begotten Son, inheriting His name from, and being “appointed heir of all things” by his Father, doesn’t it? (Hebrews 1:5, 2) It does to me, also!

So, to be like the churches around them, some of the SDA leadership and theologians stealthily led their church to embrace the Trinity, “... the central doctrine of the Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the church.” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16) It had been the refusal of the three nations (horns) of Daniel 7, to accept the then-new theology, that the Son was not a begotten Son, that had occasioned their being plucked up, annihilated, by the little horn with a mouth speaking great “words against the most High” God. (Daniel, chapter 7, describing prophetically the emergence of the Papacy.) How many millions died then, and during the Dark Ages of Papal supremacy following the destruction of the East Goths in 538 AD, only the final judgment will reveal.

This bloodily enforced Trinity doctrine is the cement that binds the ecumenical movement together. Now the SDA leadership is pleased to be associating itself with it. The title of the World Council of Churches book, *So Much In Common*, tells it all, and it was co-authored by Adventism’s resident ecumenicist, B. B. Beach. This verifies that Adventist’s belief in the Trinity now is similar enough to that of the WCC membership to make them acceptable to it as a sister church. Remember! A church that lessons the distance to Rome “... is a backsliding church.” (*Signs of the Times*,” February 19, 1894)

Please do not sigh and ask yourself, “Is this really a salvational issue?” It most certainly is! “Why?” you ask. The landmarks have been moved. The foundations are being smashed. If one still worships a Trinity he has actually disqualified himself from giving the principal part of the three angels’ messages. This has to be true for anyone who knows neither whom to worship, nor whom he is worshipping. Follow on, fellow Berean candidate. When one searches the Word for oneself, the Comforter sees to it that his Word shines “more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18)

Seventh-day Adventism’s founders pointed to the Bible as their charter, rather than to the decisions of councils, or to the writings of a new prophetess. In Revelation 14:7, especially, they saw a mandate. The verse was, and still is, understood as a call to a dying world to pay attention to the urgency of understanding the judgment hour message. It is a day of reckoning, when God’s pardon is no longer available. It includes Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary, to resolve the sin problem in general, and more importantly, to us, the resolution of that sin problem in our lives, so God can save us. This verse also teaches the Sabbath of the Creator. That is a lot to pack into just one verse, yet this is only its lesser part. If together, we can take off our Trinitarian glasses for another look at this information-packed verse, we will see that all that has been detailed above are only its secondary applications.

Let’s take a closer look: “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.” (Revelation 14:7 first part) This has to be speaking of the Father. If the judgment were not His, He could not give it to His Son, as both John (5:22) and Matthew (11:27) quote Jesus as stating was the case.

Now the second part of Revelation 14:7: “And worship him who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the

fountains of waters.” This identifies the Son, the Agent of the Father, in the creation of all things. He then instituted the Sabbath to memorialize His creative power, including the most complicated of all, the creation of new hearts in those who answer His knock. (Exodus 31:13) This necessitates the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

Do you see it? Whom we are to worship is the primary focus of this verse. Who? The Father and His only begotten Son, that is who! Jesus says that life eternal is based upon this knowledge! “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3) “The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted.” (EGW, in *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 7, 1898)

It was Jesus Himself who said, from heaven, that He had received the above message from His Father, to pass on to John, who was to write it out for us. (Revelation 1:1) Typical of the many times Jesus gave the Father as the source for all He said while here on earth, in the flesh, is John 12:49. Listen! “For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”

Those who worship any being other than the Father and the Son are in the class that need the warning our Father wants someone to give to Babylon. He has so many children in danger there, worshipping in vain, being taught “for doctrines the commandments of men.” Adventists need it first if they are going to give the message!

That Adventists, as a church, are at present disqualified from giving the most important part of the three angels’ messages needs to be emphasized again. For example, how can it be said, with a loud voice, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” if we are cherishing Rome’s central doctrine, and worshipping the false god she raised

up over the bodies of millions more faithful than we have been? Those endowed with power to give the final messages are “undefiled” with the “whore’s” doctrines. We must repent “... and anoint our eyes with eye salve, that we might see.” (Revelation 3:18) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:5) This is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27) This is the “everlasting gospel.”

It is Jesus who is knocking at my heart’s door, and yours. He has promised to come in, and stay, if only we will let Him in. It is His spirit, His mind, that seeks entrance, that He might dwell within. What company could be more delightful, more helpful, or more comforting in battle with evil, than Jesus? It is even better than having Jesus, in person, living with us. Jesus Himself said so. “It is expedient for you that I go to my Father.” (John 16:7-15) Now His omnipresent spirit can be within His friends, everywhere. Within is so much closer than with. Further, this is the same spirit that the Father has, so there is plenty to go around. How do I know that? “... for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him.” (John 3:34)

The Father and His Son have proven that They will do anything that is honest, cost what it may, to save me. He who was once Heaven’s third in command has never done, nor can he ever do, anything honorable for me. Why, oh why, have I ever honored him? What a sorry Berean I have been!! Can you relate to this?

The discovery that I, and most of my fellow church members, deserve the evaluation, “... wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17), is attested to by the following considerations: 1. Most of us have been so gullible that we have accepted the erroneous interpretations of scripture, necessary to support belief in the Trinity, without so much as a blink of the eye; 2. We, ourselves, have been teaching this bloodstained error to others,

decade after decade; 3. Even so, we have all the while been expecting, momentarily, to be imbued with the Latter Rain power of the Spirit.

Infinite odds accompany this dream. The “Latter Rain” power is promised only to those who are not defiled with the false doctrines of the great whore. (See Revelation 14, especially verse 4.) This most certainly would include her “central doctrine,” the Trinity of her contriving. Keep thinking: Could anyone defiled with Rome’s central doctrine receive the “latter rain,” or be included in the “hundred forty and four thousand”?

Let us review our situation from another perspective. We can readily see that corporate Adventism has added an extra being to those commanded to be worshipped by the first angel. We do not understand very well why the second angel says that “Babylon is fallen,” because we no longer know what is wrong with Babylon’s god. If we are still Trinitarians, we are powerless, yes, impotent, to give the “Third Angels’ Message.” Keep thinking: Is it possible that the “latter rain” power, necessary to give these messages, could be endowed by that being Rome elevated to equality with the Father?

Consider the implications of this small sample of a great number of related questions that have troubled thousands of Adventists for many years. 1. Why did Adventist leadership present a gold medallion to the Pope? 2. Why are papal representatives invited to, and lauded at General Conference sessions? 3. Why is the papal flag paraded across the stage at G.C. sessions as if it were, in God’s sight, a legitimate nation? 4. What has happened in Adventism that its leadership now boasts, and truthfully, that among all churches, only the Catholic Church is more hierarchical? (See E.E.O.C. vs. P.P.P.A.) Keep thinking: Is the “latter rain” power going to be

poured out on the majority in the church? Why not?

There must be no equivocation. If we are worshipping that third being the Papacy elevated by force of arms to equality with the Father, in order to establish its Trinity, “the central doctrine of the Catholic faith,” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p.16) we are honoring the beast himself. Satan does not mind if we do so ignorantly. He is satisfied that we are out of the battle, impotent to give God’s last warning messages to a doomed world.

There is still hope, since “the mark of the Beast” has not yet been given. As the time for the mark to be given arrives, however, we may confidently expect a band of Seventh-day Adventist theologians and administrators will trot out “new explanations to the world of what the Bible teaches and what Seventh-day Adventist’s believe,” thus further refining our Fundamental Beliefs “as new situations necessitate.” (Refer again to quote number three, from page 13 of the “Heresy” article, where it says that this “can and will” be done, and the comment under it on page 4 of this article.)

The question needs to be asked: “If I cannot trust all of our theologians and administrators to desist from reasoning from their desired conclusions, how will I ever know what is truth?” To give my answer to this vital question is the purpose of my confession. I had to admit that I had been far too trusting. Also, that I had covered the neglect of my personal responsibility for finding out what God had to say to me, with a pious-appearing cloak of loyalty to the church. That is a poor substitute for loyalty to Jesus.

Perhaps you, too, will have to make some similar confessions before there will be any hope for you, so make them, and begin enjoying the light of truth, the light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

All of the above is intended to point up the need for a Bible study plan that will keep us in the Father’s lighted path, and lay wide open Lucifer’s darkest schemes. If the plan can be concisely stated, thoroughly understood, and systematically followed, we will no longer be led around like sheep. Following is my attempt to verbalize such a plan. Ideas for improving the statement are welcome.

## THE BEREAN SEARCH PLAN

The Bible, rightly understood, does not contradict itself. It cannot, for it is the Word of God. This demands a prayerful, careful, patient, searching of the Word, comparing scripture with scripture, until a clear answer to our query comes into focus. Occasionally, the best that can be done, at the time, is an understanding based on the weight of evidence. Our safety net is the acknowledgment that a correct conclusion must not, and will not, contradict any part of God’s Word, for his Word is truth! (John 17:17) All questions will not, and need not, be immediately resolved. We should bask in the assurance that it is our heavenly Father’s pleasure to reveal to His children whatever they most need.

The same law binds the gift of prophecy. This demands that any apparent contradiction is the result of some misunderstanding. Such an impasse is not to cause us to doubt, but is to challenge us to look for more specific passages, or, that failing, the weight of evidence to resolve it. We are not free to pick and choose in order to justify belief in a pre-selected conclusion!

The Bible is to be given precedence, not because Ellen White was an “inferior” prophet, but because she, as only one, is bound by the aggregate of all the authors included in it, just as all the Bible’s authors are bound to agree with each other. A



Berean would accept her own words when she says that her writings are a “lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light [the Bible].” (*Review & Herald*, January 20, 1903) Further, the Berean believes that “God will have a people on the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 595)

Isaiah 8:20 is the heart of the Berean Search Plan: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

One needs to be acutely conscious of the danger posed by pride of opinion or preconceived ideas, either of which can result in putting a “slant,” or a “spin,” on a passage in order to force it to fit our understanding or purpose. This is reasoning from the desired conclusion, which, in this case, has far worse consequences than a wrong answer. It is arrogantly telling God what His Word means. God forbid! May we, instead, prayerfully ask Him to teach us what it means. It is time that the practice of informing God what interpretation of His Word we intend to enforce upon His people be discontinued. We have already seen the inevitable result of this option in the liquidation of those whose consciences would not allow them to accept the Trinity, that outrageous “central doctrine of the Catholic faith.” (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p.16) Adventist leadership has, until now, also chosen the hierarchical path, rather than the path of repentance that leads to becoming a servant of Christ and His church. That makes having a Berean attitude all the more relevant.

Have you ever wondered, fellow Berean, why the churches are weak, and ready to die? Listen!

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut

Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’ Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and he can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another.” (*Review & Herald*, August 26, 1890—emphasis supplied)

Just now, pause and reflect. Note how forcibly this applies to us as individual members of these churches. Nothing is going to change for the better until we understand this. It is Jesus, Himself, who is the Comforter and Guide. He was made perfect through suffering, and through living without sin in a fallen human nature. Thus He became the perfect Advocate, or Comforter, or Intercessor. How much, how very much, we and our loved ones need this knowledge. [Get Allen Stump’s “must read” book, *The Foundation of our Faith*, to learn how the above three underlined words are related in the Greek. Study over 500 verses that re-enforce the new, to me, Berean discoveries you are reading about here. Comparisons, like 2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Peter 1:9-11, tell who the Holy Ghost is. Learn the historical facts about how the Catholic version of the Trinity developed, and how it was surreptitiously brought into Adventism 1200 years later, and much more.]

The following quote compares a group of worshipers who were attentive, as to what affected their salvation, with “the careless multitude” that worships complacently. Especially notice the source of the spirit each group received. It is a life-or-death matter.

“Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, ‘My Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace. I turned to

look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, ‘Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children.” (*Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56) Something to ponder: Could Jesus breathe out another’s breath, or spirit?

What does a person do when it begins to dawn on him that he may be wrong about a major point of faith that he holds in common with most everyone he loves, knows, and has confidence in? This budding Berean can tell you that he trembles, that is what, while he digs deeper, half hoping that his former understanding was correct after all. Why did not one of my champions, one of the authors that had been so true to the Word until now, see what I was discovering, and write about it? That would give me some confidence, I thought, but I soon saw the irony of my wish. This was an anti-Berean attitude. This was the reason I was having to confess that I have been living in a spiritual twilight zone all my life. Here, in a “nutshell,” is the solution of my, maybe our, problem.

Trustworthy confidence comes only from doing one’s own comparing of scripture with scripture.

We all know that God always has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. I was anxious to be numbered among them in giving the three angels’ messages, along with a multitude that, hopefully, will include you. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could also have a part in giving the fourth angel’s message? We would know for certain, then, that “we are nearing home.”

While I was digging deeper, several of my champions, authors who

had been true to the Word until now, men who had stoutly defended the “he also himself likewise took part of the same,” fallen human nature of Jesus, weighed in on what I was now sure was the enemy’s position. They actually defended the Trinitarian view. I concluded that they, most likely, had not read the “Heresy” article, since their defense of the Trinity did not address many issues raised there. (Many facets of it are not covered here, either.) I was quite sure though that these dear champions, unlike the “Heresy” author, did not understand that the Trinity package included denial, both of the literal fatherhood of the Father and the pre-incarnation sonship of Jesus. They were not yet aware that, in this area, they were reasoning from their forgone conclusions. They still had their Trinitarian glasses on, which allowed them to interpret certain E.G. White statements in a way that make her appear to contradict both the Bible and herself. Let’s pray for these champions, and for a multitude of new ones, to quickly warn our own church, and then the world.

What kind of friend was I, being so slow to try to help them? I should be shouting the good news I was discovering. Was not the battle the LORD’S? He could help me wield a pen in his cause!

It hurts to admit that one is a coward. It hurts to see the strong hands of one’s friends faltering, about to drop the torch of truth they have held aloft so long. It hurts to realize that nearly all of us, including some of God’s champions, have ignored a challenge like that thrown down to “historic Adventism” in the *Issues* book. It hurts to see “Creeping Compromise” breaking into a gallop, and to admit it is because we have been listening to the wrong spirit. Yes, it hurts to admit that we have been wrong, or negligent, or blind, or ordinary gullible sheeple.

We do not have to remain any of the above. In fact, we must not, if we

expect to fulfill God’s purpose for our lives. It is long past time that the “Remnant,” in all churches, accepted that *Issues* challenge to historic Adventism “to return to a non-Trinitarian position.” (*Issues*, p. 39) In fact, those Adventists that have not yet done that are withholding the essence of God’s final warning to the world, since they have not yet understood that the first angel’s message is strongly anti-Trinitarian, and that the second, third, and fourth angels’ messages share its major anti-Trinitarian element.

The honor of our Father, and of His only begotten Son, and our honor as Their people, demands that we accept the *Issues* challenge. The “Heresy” article details well what is involved in that challenge, and is, in fact, a reiteration of it.

We must let our Father take our reins in His hands, as He will, if we adopt a Berean-type search plan. Let us join their noble clan. Like their Spirit-led teacher Paul, let us admit it if we have been wrong in our view of God. Let us join him in proclaiming, with every ounce of strength remaining, that it is the Father’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ Himself, who is “the author and finisher of our faith.”

God told Moses that after his death the people would “rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land ... and will forsake me, and break my covenant.” (Deuteronomy 31:16) The Bible is a record of the repeated shameful fulfillments of that prophecy, interspersed with thrilling times of revival. “When the fullness of time was come” for the appearance of the Messiah, Israel was again in darkness, not worshipping idols of wood or stone, but teaching for doctrines the traditions of men. Jesus directed a small group of Jews, whose understanding of their Scriptures had led them to be expecting the promised Messiah, to a clearer understanding of the “one God” and His

promised Son, as revealed in their writings. They became His disciples.

The crucifixion of Jesus three and one half years later devastated His followers, as it completely swept away their hope in the promised restoration of the kingdom of Israel. During the forty-day interval between the resurrection and His permanent return to heaven, (His ascension) Jesus was able to help His dear friends understand that it was impossible for their God to physically restore the Kingdom until He had a people with restored hearts to give it to. Preparing such a people was to be their work.

Once the disciples had removed their “Earthly Kingdom” glasses, they were able to understand and accept the message of personal submission to, and worship of, the Father, and His only begotten Son, as prerequisites to the establishment of the earthly kingdom. The disciples were saddened, though, as they understood that Jesus was about to permanently leave them. There were many, so many, things they still had not thoroughly understood, and so much they feared they would not remember even though Jesus had promised that He would bring all things to their remembrance. How could they ever manage to cope without Jesus?

In John chapter 14, we see Jesus addressing that fear when He promised the disciples He would send another Comforter from the Father to abide with them forever. Jesus, in His usual engaging manner, is speaking about Himself in the third person. Listen! “This Comforter is the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees, nor knows him, but you will, because he is living with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (See John, Chapter 14, especially verses 16-18, paraphrased)

When the fire fell on the disciples at Pentecost, the once-mysterious words of Jesus burst into their


consciousness. They knew it was the Spirit of their ascended Lord, for had He not told them that He would bring all things to their remembrance? And what was it they remembered? “You will know Him, for He is living with you, and shall be in you.”

The disciples lost their fear of men that day, and before night saw three thousand souls join the kingdom of heaven through baptism. That was just the beginning. Before many years had passed, their enemies were forced

to admit that they had turned the world upside down. And now the rest of the story, the part the world could not know, because it did not know Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit of Jesus Himself, dwelling in His disciples, and working through them, that had turned the world upside down.

It is true that Seventh-day Adventists, like our fellow Sabbath keepers nearly two thousand years ago, have reverted to teaching for doctrines the traditions of men. The good news is

that another period of revival has already begun. Where will we stand?

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when Champions are few, this will be our test.” (E.G. White - *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 136) May God Bless. 

(You may contact Pastor Bob by mail or phone at: 724 County Rd. 89, Bryant, AL 35958. (256) 597-3454)

---

## The Devil's Trinity by Allen Stump

Before me as I write is an article written by Elder Ralph Larson entitled, “The Devil’s Trinities” published in the February 2001 issue of *Landmarks* magazine. This article is a reply to an anti-Trinitarian booklet by Margaretha Tierney of Australia. The purpose of this study is to examine some points of Larson’s article.

Before I begin though, I would like to say that I have great respect and admiration for Elder Larson. I have been greatly blessed by much of his writing, having listened to his messages both on cassette tape and in person; even helping to officiate at a communion service with him, I have found him to be a deeply sincere and spiritual man. Most of Elder Larson’s material is very logically constructed and easy to follow.

### Flawed Logic

It was therefore with great surprise that I read the article “The Devil’s Trinities.” In this article, Elder Larson breaks from his usual clear logic and Scriptural teaching.

The main thrust of the article is that since most all false religions of the world have a concept of a “Trinity” (Islam is a major exception) then there must be a real “Trinity” that has been counterfeited. This logic is

flawed in several areas. To begin with, it is based on the idea that a wide-spread, false teaching implies it has a close, true counterpart. Worship is the exercise of religion. Nearly all pagan religions have some type of idols in their worship. Does that mean then that there is a true idol worship that Satan has counterfeited? Of course not! Concerning counterfeits Larson states:

Counterfeits are more effective when they are made in advance. And consider this question: Do counterfeiters put forth likenesses of things that do not exist? Have you ever seen, or heard of, a counterfeit four-dollar bill? Or a six, seven, or eight-dollar bill? Does not the existence of the counterfeit indicate the existence of the genuine?

What this logic further fails to comprehend is that the “trinity” is a counterfeit god, not a counterfeit “Trinity.”

### Conjectures

Larson uses only a few texts such as Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Job 11:4 in his article. None of these are used to prove a Trinity. He does quote several statements of Ellen White, one of which says:

Human talent and human conjecture have tried by searching to find out God.

Many have trodden this pathway. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out, in *conjectures regarding God*, but the effort will be fruitless; and the fact will remain that man, by searching, can not find out God. This problem has not been given us to solve. (*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 253—emphasis supplied.)

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, “conjecture” means, “1. Inference or judgment based on inconclusive or incomplete evidence; guesswork. 2. A statement, an opinion, or a conclusion based on guesswork.”

I believe that Ellen White was correct when she counseled us to avoid “guesswork” and stay with the plain statements of Scripture. Sadly, Elder Larson conjectures all through the article. For example, he asks the following question, “How can we be sure that there is a ‘Trinity’ in heaven and that Lucifer knew about it.” If one wants to be “sure” about anything *the Bible must be consulted*. However, the answer given is, “Because he set up a counterfeit of it in all of his false religions.” Instead of a “thus saith the Lord,” we are left with conjecture.

Another question asked by the author is, “In that position [next to Christ], would it have been possible for Lucifer to know about the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?” Part of the answer given is: “*It would have been impossible for*

him not to know about them.” (emphasis is Larson’s) Again, instead of a “thus saith the Lord” we are left with conjecture. In fact, the question is based on an answer to Lucifer’s position in heaven. The author asks, “What was Lucifer’s position in heaven?” An Ellen White statement is given. It reads in part:

Among the inhabitants of heaven, Satan, next to Christ, was at one time most honored of God, and highest in power and glory. (*Signs of the Times*, July 23, 1902)

Thankfully, while not giving a Bible text, Elder Larson does give an inspired statement. However, as we examine this statement and compare it with another statement we come to a clear understanding different from the author’s conjecture. In the above quoted statement, Satan is said to be next to Christ in honor, power and glory in heaven. Yet, Ellen White says that Christ “was next to God in the heavenly courts.” (*Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library*, Vol. 1, p. 114) The order clearly given is God first; Christ is second or next to God; and Lucifer is third, next to Christ. **If** the Holy Spirit were a separate being apart from God or Christ, where would his standing be? Only guesswork could tell exactly where, but we do not need guesswork to know that that position would have to be below Lucifer’s position!

Larson writes:

I have watched a class of highly educated graduate students spend an entire hour trying to work out a definition of the Godhead that would express clearly both the *unity* of the Godhead and the *individuality* of the Godhead. When they were finished they had nothing better to offer than the simple Bible affirmation that there are three divine beings, and that the three are one. (emphasis is Larson’s)

Unfortunately, Elder Larson never mentions one text to support his “simple Bible affirmation.” Larson continues by writing:

This combines *unity* and *individuality* in a way that no human mind can

explain, but it is the ‘given’ with which we have to do. Like the statement that a husband and wife are one, it is a truth as stated, but not explained. (emphasis is Larson’s)

“Given” as used in this context means, “Granted as a supposition; acknowledged or assumed.” (*American Heritage Dictionary*) Does God really expect us to base our faith on suppositions or as something we must assume without even one clear text? In this Larson follows the lead of the *Adventist Review*:

While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, *it is assumed* as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times. (*Adventist Review*, Vol. 158, No. 31, p. 4—undated, but published in July 1981)

The Bible says that faith comes not on assumptions, suppositions, or conjectures, but “by hearing the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) The Bible nowhere speaks of three in one or one in three. Instead, it speaks of one true God:

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.” (Mark 12:29)

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5)

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:6)

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” (James 2:19)

Larson states that “virtually all anti-Trinity writers drop their investigation at this point [that the Trinity is found in paganism], and act as if they have said all that there is to say on the subject. This is very far from the truth.” Larson’s last sentence is ironically correct, but what is far from the truth is not that “they have said all that there is to say on the subject,” but

rather his statement that “virtually all anti-Trinity writers drop their investigation at this point” is what is far from the truth. While I cannot speak for all the anti-Trinitarian writers Larson has read, he cannot accurately classify “virtually all” anti-trinitarian writers as he says. The truth is that of those who are writing and speaking out from within the umbrella of true “Historic Adventism,” I know of none who follow such a practice as Larson speaks of. In fact, they use the Bible more than any group I have ever seen!

## A Lesson from History

Concerning the time frame of the acceptance of the Trinity, the article “The Devil’s Trinities” states:

“It cannot be denied that our pioneers, who came from different religious backgrounds, took *awhile* to learn this. They also took *awhile* to learn the truth about the Sabbath and unclean meats. But God sent light to them through His chosen messenger, Ellen White, which *gradually* cleared away the darkness.” (Emphasis supplied.)

This is a mixture of truth and error. The fact is, that while the pioneers came from different religious backgrounds, they never accepted the Trinity doctrine (unless you call the mid 20th century workers pioneers)! In fact, Stephen Haskell, a close associate of Ellen White and a staunch believer in her work wrote:

It was then, in those early councils, that Christ’s heart of love was touched; and the only begotten Son pledged His life to redeem man, should he yield and fall. Father and Son, surrounded by impenetrable glory, clasped hands. ***It was in appreciation of this offer, that upon Christ was bestowed creative power,*** and the everlasting covenant was made; henceforth Father and Son, with one mind, worked together to complete the work of creation. (*The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, p. 94—emphasis supplied)

*Continued on page 14*

# Reply to Ralph Larson's Article "The Devil's Trinities"

By Margaretha Tierney

Brother Larson is certainly correct in stating that the devil has counterfeited everything "God is or does," however, we need to remember that Satan is the Great Deceiver, and should expect him to be subtle, perhaps more than we imagine.

When he personates Christ, we are told it will be so overwhelming even the very elect could be deceived. If we sit back in complacency and say, "But it says 'if it were possible,' so they won't be deceived," we may not have seen the subtlety of Satan's deceptions. (Matthew 24:24)

After all, Laodiceans believe Jesus is in their midst, when in actual fact He is outside knocking on the door! (See Revelation 3:20; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 44; *Notebook Leaflets*, p. 99.)

Consider the following questions and answers, and see if there is not a possibility that Satan did not see a Trinity in heaven, but that it was a subtle plot to deceive you and me.

## **Of whom was Lucifer jealous?**

He was jealous of the Son of God. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 35, 36)

## **Why was he jealous of God's Son?**

He disputed the Son's supremacy, for He had greater glory and power than Lucifer. He coveted the honor the Father had bestowed upon His Son. And Christ was the only One who could enter into the counsels of God. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 34-36; *Desire of Ages*, p. 115; *Great Controversy*, p. 494; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 702; *Ministry of Healing*, p. 429)

## **What was Lucifer's aim?**

His aim was to be like the Most High and be worshipped; to rule the universe. (Isaiah 14:12-14; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 34-36; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 37)

## **Did Lucifer achieve his goal in heaven?**

No, he was cast out. (Revelation 12:9)

## **Whom did he succeed in deceiving, and have them obey him rather than God?**

Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3)

## **What is his plan for the whole world?**

His plan is that all the world shall worship the beast and his image. (Revelation 13:2, 4, 8, 16, 17)

## **Why would Satan make a counterfeit of God?**

To deceive human beings into worshipping a false god.

## **How could he deceive Christians into worshipping a false god?**

By having them believe they are worshipping the true God, when all along they are worshipping a counterfeit. (*Early Writings*, pp. 54-56, 261)

## **If Christians are worshipping a counterfeit god, whom are they in reality worshipping?**

Lucifer himself. (1 Corinthians 10:20; Deuteronomy 32:16, 17; *Signs of the Times*, February 8, 1883)

## **If God had said only the Son could enter the heavenly councils, who is the "third person" who claims to have entered the heavenly realm?**

Satan, claiming he knew the will of God. In the garden of Eden Eve answered the devil, "... of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it ... lest ye die." Immediately the answer came back, "Ye shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:3, 4)

## **Who was right: God or Satan?**

Eve lived for many years before she died. Yes, she died spiritually when she ate the fruit, but please note, there is a subtlety to Satan's answer. It was partly true and partly false, and yet it was a complete contradiction of the word of God.

## **When the Father and the Son clasped their hands in covenant promise, was a 'third person' present in the heavenly council?**

The Bible says "... the counsel of peace was between them both." (Zechariah 6:12, 13; *Desire of Ages*, pp. 790, 834; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63, 64; *Great Controversy*, pp. 415-417)

## **Is the Spirit involved in the plan of redemption?**

Of course, for "... without this, the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail ... It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's redeemer." (*Desire of Ages* p. 671)

## **But whose Spirit works within the human agent? Is it a "third person" who possesses no right to enter the councils of God? Or is it the very presence of God Himself in Spirit?**

Not another "being," but a very real "person" who is omnipresent and able to dwell in the hearts of His children. (2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 3:20; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Peter 1:21)


## Counterfeits are Subtle

In the year 2000, Pope John Paul II called the faithful to take part in the Jubilee “phase of celebration,” the aim of which was “to give glory to the Trinity.” He said, “. . . the Jubilee celebration makes present in an anticipatory way the goal and fulfillment of the life of each Christian and of the whole Church in the Triune God.” (John Paul II, *The Third Millennium*, pp. 78, 79)

As Ecumenism reached its height, the majority of Christians joined in the chorus, “Blessed art thou O triune God.” Although there are variations of the trinity teaching among the denominations, the principle stands supreme: “God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons.” (27 *Fundamentals of Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 23)

When the Papal and apostate Protestant powers pass a Sunday law, will the great mass of earth’s inhabitants—who “worship the beast and his image”—be bowing before the gods of Babylon?

On that day, when “the king” commands all kindred, tongues and nations to bow before the golden image, will you be kneeling with your face to the ground? Or will you be standing tall with the few who courageously declare their faith, “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king, but if not, be it known unto thee O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” (Daniel 3:17, 18) Only the faithful remnant will walk unhurt with the Son of God in the fiery furnace.

Now is the time of preparation. Study and pray, for the God we *worship* today will be the One we will *obey* when the great test is upon us. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15) 

*(Sister Tierney writes from Australia. You may contact her at P. O. Box 378, Ararat, Victoria 3377, Australia. Her e-mail address is: decesion@netconnect.com.au)*

---

### “The Devil’s Trinity” continued from page 12

This statement, published in 1905 while Ellen White was still alive and well, is not a Trinitarian statement by any shade of the meaning! In fact, Haskell got involved in the issue of the “daily,” not because he thought it was worth a “hill of beans,” but because he believed that some were teaching a view contrary to Sister White’s expressed position. Haskell was so trusted that he was given the task of preaching Sister White’s funeral.

Now while it is true that some of the pioneers did not at first keep the Sabbath and were pork eaters, the truth is that they came to the Sabbath truth very quickly and the question of unclean foods was resolved while the great majority of those who started the movement were alive and quite well. Further, while health reform is important and has its place, to compare its acceptance in this context with the acceptance of the doctrine of God is not justifiable. However, for sake of reasoning, let us do just that.

God corrected the misunderstandings of the pioneers on the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and unclean foods among other things. A look at the history of the matter reveals that the corrections were made in relationship to the importance of the doctrines. First the sanctuary truth (1844), then the Sabbath (1844-1845), and finally a proper understanding of health principles (1848-1863). Is it not strange that God would allow more than a half century to pass before He supposedly corrected the Adventists on the most fundamental doctrine of all the Bible? It is more than strange, it is unreasonable and not in accordance with the God of the Bible.

## Courage in the Lord


In the closing of his article Larson states:

Is there a ray of light through the confused and confusing theories and arguments [anti-Trinitarian teachings] that are now besetting the Historic Adventist people? I think there is. When

the devil gives a great deal of time and attention to a movement among God’s people, I think that it is pretty clear indication that those people are doing something right.

Courage in the Lord.

What Larson is clearly admitting here is that the anti-Trinitarian teaching is making deep and serious inroads into what he considers the “Historic Adventist people.” He is correct about that, but not because the devil is behind it or should get any credit, but rather because “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory” has sent His Spirit to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel who, when truth is presented, will gladly follow. “Courage in the Lord.”

I have not tried to give all the arguments in the study that are worthy of consideration. Time and space would not allow for that. But for more on this subject, please take time to read Sister Tierney’s response that begins on page 13. 

*Editor*

We are standing, as it were, upon the borders of the eternal world; and if there ever was a time when all should strive most earnestly to live a holy life, it is now. All sensual, carnal pleasures should be abandoned, and Satan find nothing in us to assail. The apostle prayed: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a prayer is this! It would not have been inspired of God and written in his holy word if it had been impossible for us to reach these high attainments; and yet how content and at ease we are in retaining very objectionable traits of character!

One class have come up without self-control; they have not bridled the temper or the tongue; and some of these claim to be Christ's followers, but they are not. Jesus has set them no such example. When they have the meekness and lowliness of the Saviour, they will not act out the promptings of the natural heart, for this is of Satan. Some are nervous, and if they begin to lose self-control in word or spirit under provocation, they are as much intoxicated with wrath as the inebriate is with liquor. They are unreasonable, and not easily persuaded or convinced. They are not sane; Satan for the time has full control. Every one of these exhibitions of wrath weakens the nervous system and the moral powers, and makes it difficult to restrain anger on another provocation. With this class there is only one remedy,—positive self-control under all circumstances. The effort to get into a favorable place, where self will not be annoyed, may succeed for a time; but Satan knows where to find these poor souls, and will assail them in their weak points again and again. They will be continually troubled so long as they think so much of self. They carry the heaviest load a mortal can lift, that is self, unsanctified and unsubdued. But there is hope for them. Let this life, so stormy with conflicts and worries, be brought into connection with Christ, and then self will no longer clamor for the supremacy.

Why life with many is such a hard struggle is because it is apart from Christ; through self-delusion the battle is waged blindly with circumstances. With many youth wrong feelings have been shown, and unchristian words have been spoken. At such times they should humble themselves, saying frankly, "I have

done wrong. Will you forgive me? For God has said we must not let the sun go down upon our wrath."

This is the only safe path toward overcoming. Many look at things on their darkest side; they magnify their supposed grievances, nurse their wrath, and are filled with revengeful, hateful feelings, when in truth they had no real cause for these feelings. Shall we cut ourselves loose from the rest of humanity, remaining solitary and alone, because everything in our association with others does not move smoothly? No, indeed; the change must take place in your own soul. Resist these wrong feelings, and you will experience a great change in your association with your fellowmen. Your good will, your unselfish acts, will not be to a favored few, but to all with whom you associate. Thus you will form friends and attachments that are dear and lasting; your own deeds will be reflected back on yourself.

Our relations to God and one another can never be severed. We may ignore them, not answering to the claims of one of them; yet we are really bound by them as long as time shall last. Souls must be saved, and we are to have a part in the great work. Let not the youth falter, but stand in defense of the truth.

If the truth of God be not deep-rooted in the heart, you cannot stand the test of temptation. There is only one power that can keep us steadfast under the most trying circumstances,—the grace of God in truth. The ungodly are lynx-eyed to mark every inconsistency, and prompt to pour contempt on the weak and halting ones. Let the youth make their mark high. Let them seek in humble prayer for that help which Christ has promised, that they may exert an influence upon others that they will not be ashamed to meet in the great day of final settlement and rewards. Those who have exemplified the loftiest Christian principles in every department of business and religious life will have the inexpressible advantage, for they will enter the paradise of God as conquerors. They loved Jesus here in this life, were constrained by his love to make the most of their God-given powers in improving every opportunity to win souls to Jesus Christ. Thus they built up their Redeemer's kingdom, and advanced his glory, and will receive the commendation, "Well done," from his divine lips. (Ellen G. White—*Youth's Instructor*, November 10, 1886)

# CAMP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WEST VIRGINIA CAMP MEETING

We are currently planning on having a camp meeting from July 17-21. The first meeting of the convocation will be Tuesday evening the 17th, with the meetings closing out the evening of the 21st.

Some of the scheduled speakers are Lynnford Beachy, Gary Richmond, David Clayton, Howard Williams and Bob Habenicht.

Brother Gary Richmond will also have some youth meetings sharing his insights on God's creation. We are also planning a daily meeting for the small children.

In an effort to help equip the saints for sharing "the message" we are planning three afternoon seminars.

Brother Willis Smith will conduct a seminar on in-home Bible studies. Brother Ben Vela will be conducting a seminar on medical missionary work. We also have a special brother of much experience and learning who is going to have a seminar on homiletics (the science of preaching).

There is no cost to attend the meetings or to camp here at Smyrna. However, please be on notice: This is a *camp* meeting and interest is already running very high. We expect the attendance to significantly increase over last year's camp meeting. The best camping spaces here at Smyrna will be available on a first come, first served basis. We do not have cabins or rooms available. Smyrna will have some tents and camping supplies for those who do not have and cannot afford to purchase them. However, the supply is limited so if you need to use a tent, camp stove, etc. please request early. Showers with hot and cold water will be available. While there is room for a limited number of RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained.

The closest motel in the area is the Pocahontas Motel (phone number: 304-436-2250). The owner has always been nice and helpful to us in the past. However, it is a small motel and space is limited. Other area accommodations are: Woody's Motel, (304) 732-6540; The Cow Shed, (304) 732-7000; Twin Falls State Park Resort, (304) 294-4000

Meals *will not* be provided. All will need to bring their own food and whatever equipment, such as camp stoves and coolers for the storage and preparation of their food, as they deem necessary. Due to fire safety considerations, no open fires will be allowed. Sister Gina Campbell will be bringing some supplies from her health food store. Gina is very reasonable with her prices. If you would like Gina to bring something specific for you, you may place an order ahead of time by calling her at: (901) 845-5859.

Parents will need to be responsible for their children at *all* times. Parents should not allow their children to roam about outside without supervision while they attend meetings.

Though this is a camp meeting, modest dress will be expected of all who wish to attend. Items such as short pants or short skirts and dresses, tank-top shirts, and clothing with un-Christlike pictures, symbols, or words are not acceptable. We ask those who attend to realize that they are guests and must act accordingly. Those who are not willing to respect the standards of the host church will be asked to leave.

Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, towels, flashlights, toiletries, insect repellent, modest casual and Sabbath clothes.


If you received an attendance reply card, please fill it out and return it if you are interested, so we will know best how to plan for the accommodations necessary.

Please bring a willing heart ready to fellowship, learn God's Word, and be drawn closer to Him.

## ARIZONA CAMP MEETING

Especially for those living in the western part of the United States we wish to announce that the Church at Wilhoit is planning their annual camp meeting for May 9-12, 2001. If you need more information, please call Richard Stratton at (520) 442-9278.

## CALIFORNIA CAMP MEETING

Just before going to press we have learned of a camp meeting being planned in the Grass Valley area of California that we wish to announce. Lord willing, the meetings will begin 2:00 p.m. June 15 and run through the evening of June 17. For more information please call Emil Maghiar at (931) 692-3325. 

---

**Old Paths** is a free monthly newsletter/study-paper published by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606 U. S. A. The paper is dedicated to the propagation and restoration of the principles of truth that God gave to the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. *Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.* This issue, with other gospel literature we publish, can be found at our web sites. The Urls are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.present-truth.net>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322.

Editor . . . . . Allen Stump—[editor@smyrna.org](mailto:editor@smyrna.org)  
Associate Editor . . . . . Lynnford Beachy—[berean@smyrna.org](mailto:berean@smyrna.org)