

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

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Straight and Narrow

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The Holy Spirit Part 5 – The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

One of the least discussed, yet most important, Biblical doctrine is the sin against the Holy Spirit. The words of Jesus clearly educate us as to the significance of this teaching:

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matthew 12:31, 32)

What is this terrible sin against the Holy Spirit? Many call it “the unpardonable sin,” (a term not found in the Bible) because it is a sin that receives no forgiveness or pardon. Is the sin against the Holy Spirit something specific or just something of a general nature? *The Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for the second quarter of 2006 states:

We must be clear—no one particular act of violation of God’s law constitutes the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin is not a *single* offense or category of sin so heinous that it does not come with the pale of God’s pardoning love. (p. 141, Emphasis is in the original. All emphasis in the remainder of this article is supplied unless otherwise noted.)

The Usual Perspective

Perhaps to gain a perspective on this question, we might ask: What is the sin of Sabbath-breaking? Quickly we would answer that there are many ways that the Sabbath commandment could be broken and the same would be true of all of God’s commandments. The subject is not narrow in scope. In his book, *Crusade Sermons*, the late Elder Joe Crews of Amazing Facts listed three ways the unpardonable sin may be committed:

First of all, if we refuse to confess and forsake our sins, we will offend the spirit. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (**Proverbs 28:13**). That means if we are openly hostile to Christ and to His word, we become set in a mold and soon we no longer care about religion. Our heart becomes hard and determined to resist every tender impulse of God.

Prayer Requests

Last month Pastor Stump, Pastor Paul Agyeman from Ghana, and Brother Bruno Fischer from Germany attended the Liberated Church of God’s camp meeting in Nigeria. These sincere Sabbath-keeping Pentecostals are eager to learn more about the Bible and especially the three angel’s messages. Please keep all of these dear brothers and sisters in prayer. We hope to share a report of this trip next month. From a different part of the world, we are receiving reports of brethren being put out of their homes and of being threatened with job losses at an Adventist Hospital because of receiving the truth about God. Please join us in prayer for them.

Onycha Holt



Nigerian Children at Sabbath Meeting

Also in this issue:

The Image of God	p. 6
Bits and Pieces	p. 8
That Which a God of Love Hates . . .	p. 10
WV Camp Meeting	p. 11
Report from Peru	p. 11
God’s Sacred Way	p. 12
The Answers to Our Doubts	p. 16
Youth’s Corner	p. 20
No Fear	p. 21

SPECIAL NOTICE: Extra copies of this issue will be available upon request for sharing among Sabbath School members and interested parties.

The second way in which we can commit this sin is to persistently put off the warning of God's spirit. We may have good intentions about the future, but nevertheless we neglect the opportunity to repent and turn to God. This class is represented by Felix, who was deeply convicted of his sin, but he said, "Some more convenient season come and speak to me again." Most people do not realize that to neglect the truth means to reject the truth.

Now the third and most important way in which we can offend against the Holy Spirit is sinning against light. ... We must not forget that truth is progressive. At no one time has all the truth been revealed to any one person. We are led one step at a time in comprehending the will of God. As we accept the light of truth which has been shed upon our pathway, God will allow greater light to lead us further. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (**Psalm 119:105**). As these new rays of light are shed upon us, the Holy Spirit pleads with us to accept them and walk in all the truth. If we refuse to lay hold of that light, we shall be left behind in darkness. The longer we resist the voice which speaks to us, the easier it becomes to reject more light. Jesus said, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (**John 12:35**). In other words, truth that is not obeyed is soon taken from us. (*Crusade Sermons*, "The Unpardonable Sin," p. 2)

Elder Crews' thoughts parallel standard Adventist understanding. Crews rightly taught that the Holy Spirit will teach us (John 14:26), guide us (John 16:13), and reprove us (John 16:7, 8). Crews stated: "As long as the Spirit is permitted to do these things for us, we may be sure that we have not committed the unpardonable sin." (*Ibid.*, p. 1) These thoughts of Elder Crews, and of most other evangelists, express a "state" that a sinner may be in as a result of resisting the Spirit of God. They do not define a specific sin that once committed is recognized by God as the unpardonable sin, a particular sin that once committed forever pulls a curtain between the Holy Spirit and the sinner. Is there a specific sin that separates the sinner from Christ forever? The Bible has the answer.

Jesus' Identity was Clearly Revealed

The nature and character of Jesus' work was foretold in the Scriptures. A knowledge of the Scriptures would have revealed Christ and His mission to the priests, Pharisees, and scribes. These leaders who claimed to be the spiritual guardians of sacred truths prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures. The rejection of Christ's miracle in healing the blind man in John 9 reveals the depths the Pharisees went in rejecting the Light from heaven. The healed man was given opportunity to testify concerning the miracle he received and the One Who performed it; yet, after repeated questioning and conclusive evidence, the Pharisees would still not acknowledge what they knew to be true. The record states:

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John 9:39-41)

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus taught that "If they hear not Moses and the prophets [The Scriptures], neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31) Jesus further stated: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me." (John 5:39 RV) According to the Greek, this text may be translated either as a simple statement, "Ye search the Scriptures," or as a command, "Search the Scriptures." The former fits the context best. (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 955. Also John 5:39 is quoted in the command form in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 211.)

The Father also testified of Jesus: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17. See also Matthew 17:5.)

Not only did the leaders and the people have the Scriptures to declare unto them the identity of Jesus, but even the unclean spirits knew and acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.* (Mark 1:21-24. See also Mark 3:10-11, Matthew 8:28-29, and *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 208.)

The witness of the demons was not a private testimony! The reference from Mark chapter 1 stated that it occurred in the synagogue at Capernaum. Mark 3:10 states that "many" were thronging beside Him. When Jesus healed the demoniacs as recorded in Matthew 8, there were at least two who saw and heard what had happened for the Scriptures state that "they" (plural) went to the city to tell what had occurred. (v. 33) Thus the people were without excuse as to the identity of Jesus.

The Evidence Rejected by the Jewish Rulers

The laymen of Judea accepted the evidence that Jesus was the Son of God; yet, with all this evidence, the Pharisees accused Jesus of being an agent of Satan! It was the laymen that proclaimed Jesus to be "the son of David," a well-known term for the Messiah. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the common people shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David." (Matthew 21:9) "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch

that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. *And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*" (Matthew 12:22-24)

The Pharisees called the Saviour of the world a co-worker with Beelzebub! Yet they were not alone in their sin. The scribes were equally guilty. These men of learning who were to be the interpreters of the law, the leading theologians, also declared that Christ was of the devil. "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." (Mark 3:22) Notice that it was not the common scribes from the local synagogue, but those from Jerusalem, (Conference Headquarters) that accused Jesus.

In refuting the charge that His work was of Satan, Jesus gave an explanation of, and a dire warning concerning, the unpardonable sin. The context of Jesus' speech must not be overlooked.

And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. (Matthew 12:25-31)

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. (Mark 3:28-30)

The Specific Sin Against the Holy Spirit

The sin against the Holy Spirit is committed when one *knowingly and deliberately attributes the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan*. Despite the comments from the teacher's edition of the quarterly quoted earlier which says there is no specific sin against the Holy Spirit, the regular edition of the quarterly comes close to the Biblical understanding of this issue. In the lesson for June 12 we read:

However, by refusing to admit Christ's divinity, and by actively opposing Him, these men had placed themselves in such a position that they were forced to explain His works on some other grounds than divine and, hence, assigned to

Satan the work of God. They thereby closed their minds to the evidence of the Holy Spirit. (p. 98)

The Apostle John speaks of the unpardonable sin in his first epistle. "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John 5:16) This is in contrast with sin that has been committed while the Holy Spirit can still work in our lives and forgiveness be found. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ... All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." (1 John 1:9; 5:17)

Ellen White explained the sin against the Holy Spirit in the following testimony:

Brother P, you ask if you have committed the sin which has no forgiveness in this life or in the life to come. I answer: I do not see the slightest evidence that this is the case. *What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit*. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness. Thus the words of Christ are verified: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy's ground, standing under his black banner. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634)

The sin against the Holy Spirit is committed when one knowingly attributes the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. This sin marks *the point* where our connection with God and Christ has been forever cut off!

Christ told them [the Pharisees] plainly that in attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, they were cutting themselves off from the fountain of blessing. Those who had spoken against Jesus Himself, *not discerning* His divine character, might receive forgiveness; for through the Holy Spirit they might be brought to see their error and repent. Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but *he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where*

repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. (The Desire of Ages, p. 321. See also S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1092.)

The Jewish Leaders Sin

On the day of Pentecost, the message of the Holy Spirit through Peter to the multitude was, “Repent.” (Acts 2:38) After the healing of the lame man by the gate called Beautiful, the people ran to see what had happened. The message to the people was again, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted.” (Acts 3:19) Yet, when the apostles were called into account by the Jewish leaders for what had been done, there was no message of repentance given by Peter and John to the rulers. (See Acts 4:5-22.) Why? As the apostles continued to preach they were imprisoned and there was still no message of repentance given to the Jewish leaders. (See Acts 5:17-42.) In fact, one searches the book of Acts in vain for a call for corporate repentance to the leadership of the Jewish Church. Why? Because they, as a group or corporate body, had crossed the line between God’s acceptance and eternal rejection. Did that mean that individual priests and rulers could not accept the truth? NO! The record is clear that “a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7) These were men who had not been involved with the satanic accusations concerning Christ’s work.

History is Usually Repeated

Solomon wrote, “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9) Many of the events of humanity happen in recurring cycles. Could the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders be repeated today? Remember, God called Israel to be a nation. He named them, nurtured them, warned them, and reproved them. They were willing to accept a messiah, but not a messiah on God’s terms. They rejected Jesus as the Son of God. Could the religious leaders of Adventism today fall into the same trap of Satan? “Is not the same thing repeated in our day? Are there not many, even religious leaders, who are hardening their hearts against the Holy Spirit, making it impossible for them to recognize the voice of God? Are they not rejecting the word of God, that they may keep their own traditions?” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 213) We could paraphrase this to say: “Is not the same thing repeated in our day? Are there not many, even religious leaders among those in Adventism, a movement called of God, who are hardening their hearts against the Holy Spirit, making it impossible for them to recognize the voice of God by their rejection of Jesus as the Son of God? Are they not rejecting the Word of God, that they may keep their own traditions such as the Trinity?”

Let us take it a step further and examine this on the individual level. Today many Seventh-day Adventists are under the delusion that regardless of her spiritual condition or actions, the church as a denomination will always have the favor of God and that the ship is going through irrespective of her worthiness. However, the servant of the Lord wrote very sharply on this matter. After rejecting the reform measures of the 1897 and 1901 General Conference sessions, she wrote the following after the 1903 General Conference Session:

In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: “Found wanting.” By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 247)

Who can truthfully say: “Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world”? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: “Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? ‘How is the faithful city become an harlot!’ My Father’s house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking.” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 250)

Ellen White, with crystal-clear clarity, showed that the Adventist Church as a body, as a denomination, has no free pass into the kingdom of heaven.

Can you or I commit this wicked sin today? Let us not forget that many of the same people who cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” later that same week also cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him.” (Matthew 21:9; 27:25; Luke 23:21)

What lessons can be drawn from this understanding that can be applied to the lives of those within either the mainline Seventh-day Adventist Church or within any of the various independent churches or ministries? Just as some of the greatest humanitarian programs of the world are run by the Catholic Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church also has many good programs that people benefit from. Not all the Adventists ministers use neurolinguistic programming or preach the “New Theology.” Yet, if a leader or member of an independent ministry, in his zeal to denounce the church, allows Satan to work in his life in such a way that he denounces truth that he *knows* to be the third angel’s message in verity, then he has cut himself off from God! On the other hand, if those who support the corporate church *know* that a particular message being given by an independent ministry is the third angel’s message in verity and yet they attribute

the message to Satan, they have pulled the curtain forever between themselves and God.

Specifically, the doctrine of God (the godhead) evokes great pathos from most Christians and non-Christians alike. Most who advance the Trinity doctrine will declare one cannot be a Christian without acceptance of said teaching. As we noted two months ago, the acceptance of the Trinity doctrine and what it teaches concerning the personhood and divinity of the Holy Spirit is considered vital by Evangelical Christians. On page 10 of the companion book to the quarterly, *New by the Spirit*, Wallenkampf, writes, "Anyone who knows God the Father and God the Son, but has not attained to the belief in the Spirit as a Person and as God, is not a Christian any more than are those who do not believe in the deity of the Son." The evidence is so overwhelmingly clear that God is not a trinity. One must wonder how some teachers and ministers of this devilish doctrine, who have had the opportunity to be enlightened, can sleep at night. Those who would fight to uphold such a false doctrine, in light of clear evidence, must be warned to be very careful not to cross the unseen line.

The Lord sends warnings to His people, not to destroy them, but to correct their errors. I have never been given the testimony to bear to any one, "You have committed the unpardonable sin." God never told any one to say to a fellow being, "You have committed the unpardonable sin." (The Review & Herald, July 30, 1901)

However, that line is crossed at some time by every soul who will be lost, and God will especially hold those who have had great light available to them to a higher degree of responsibility.

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. (Luke 12:47)

Christ or Caiaphas

Caiaphas knew the real identity of Christ, but to preserve the corporate structure of the Jewish Church, he was willing to condemn Jesus. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 704, 737.) He told the council, "Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." (John 11:49-50) It was either Christ or Caiaphas, the truth or tradition, acceptance of the message of the Holy Spirit or rejection of the Spirit of God forever. Caiaphas made his choice. What choice will we make? This subject involves eternal destinies. We will be held accountable not only for that which we know, but for that which we could have known.

Korah would not have taken the course he did had he known that all the directions and reproofs communicated to Israel were from God. But he might have known this. God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or

satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 404, 405)

The mainline Seventh-day Adventist Church is advising their members to be very careful about "independent" publications and presentations and not to give ear to what they have to say. At the last General Conference Session in St. Louis there were several non-conference affiliated groups passing out literature to those going into the meeting areas. The publishers of this paper were among those passing out literature. During one of the meetings an official announced from the pulpit that the material we were passing out was not approved, was dangerous, and should not be accepted. Many could have known, but decided to listen to men rather than conscience. It would be wise for all concerned to carefully consider the following counsel:

Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power. (The Desire of Ages, pp. 322, 323)

In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God. (The Desire of Ages, pp. 324, 325)

It is hardly possible for men to offer greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities He would use for their salvation. (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 402)

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)

Allen Stump

The Image of God

The eleventh lesson of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for the second quarter of 2006 is entitled, “The Restorer.” The main point of the lesson is that the Holy Spirit is the Restorer that brings man back to the image of God. The lesson has some good points that should be carefully considered, as well as some points that are lacking in depth and comment. On page 127 of the “quarterly,” in the introduction of the teacher’s edition for this lesson, we find the following quotation from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 824: “The very essence of the gospel is restoration.” To be restored back into the image of God in which man was originally created is the heart of the gospel. But what does inspiration say concerning the original state of man?

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Genesis 1:26)

Man was to bear God’s image, both in outward resemblance and in *character*. Christ alone is “the express image” (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45. All emphasis in this article is supplied unless otherwise noted.)

In the councils of heaven God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” The Lord created man’s *moral faculties and his physical powers*. All was a sinless transcript of himself. God endowed man with holy attributes, and placed him in a garden made expressly for him. Sin alone could ruin the beings created by the hand of the Almighty. (*The Youth’s Instructor*, July 20, 1899)

While man was made in a physical image of God, the most important sphere of his existence in being akin to God was the moral image or the character of God. When Jesus comes back the second time, “this mortal shall put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:54), and all the physical scars of sin shall be erased in man. However, before that happens, the moral image of God must be restored in man and this is the great work of the gospel.

The one aspect of God’s moral character that must be restored is the ability to love as God loves. God created mankind with the capacity to love. This experience of *agape* is the great goal of God. To repair worn-out eyesight or restore lost limbs is not difficult for God, but to change the heart of a selfish sinner to that of a self-sacrificing saint is the greatest miracle God ever performs.

Unbelievers have inquired, “Why are not miracles wrought among those who claim to be God’s people?” Brethren, the greatest miracle that can be wrought is the conversion of the human heart. (*Manuscript Releases*, bk. 4, p. 113. See also *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 152.)

Our fallen natures are corrupt and selfish to the core. A person only naturally gravitates towards evil and selfishness: the opposite of love. Of our own selves, we will do nothing but seek our own pleasure and service, but when Christ lives in our hearts and we are filled with His Spirit we will walk in love, the first fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5.

The concept of godly, unselfish love that our Father wishes to restore in man is much higher than most Christians realize. Of all the people in the Bible, perhaps none exemplifies this love as much as Abraham, Moses, and Mary Magdalene do.

Abraham

Abraham exemplifies unselfish love. He was willing to give up his precious son, Isaac, for God. (See Genesis 22.) To Abraham this involved more than just his son, for he knew that through Isaac the Messiah was to come. Killing Isaac was equivalent to cutting of salvation to himself and the rest of the human race, but his love for God constrained him to be willing to follow God’s command even if he did not understand it.

Upon the altar of sacrifice he laid the son of promise, the son in whom his hopes were centered. Then as he waited beside the altar with knife upraised to obey God, he heard a voice from heaven saying, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.” Gen. 22:12. This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might see the day of Christ, and realize the great love of God for the world, so great that to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 469)

Moses

Moses was the leader of the children of Israel and, oh, how they grumbled and complained to him and about him. Even though the Israelites wanted to kill him, Moses loved them. He was zealous for the cause of God and because of love for God and His glory, Moses was willing to perish forever with the children of Israel. “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” (Exodus 32:32) This is unselfish love parallels that of Christ. This is love that expresses forgiveness.

Moses manifested his great love for the people in his entreaty to the Lord to forgive their sin, or blot his name out of the book which he had written. His intercessions here illustrate Christ’s love and mediation for the sinful race. The Lord refused to let Moses suffer for the sins of his backsliding people. He declared to him that those who had sinned against him he would blot out of his book which he

had written; for the righteous should not suffer for the guilt of the sinner... Although Moses realized the dreadful fate of those whose names should be dropped from the book of God, yet he plainly declared before God that if the names of his erring Israel should be blotted out, and be no more remembered by him for good, he wished his name to be blotted out with theirs; for he could never endure to see the fullness of his wrath come upon the people for whom he had wrought such wonders. (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 252, 253)

Mary Magdalene

While the acts of the Abraham and Moses are extraordinary, I am personally drawn to the story of Mary most of all. All the gospel writers record her anointing of Jesus before His sufferings and death. The account in Luke is very vivid. Mary tried to enter into the room unnoticed, but when she broke open the alabaster box of ointment, the fragrance revealed her plan. Although Mary had hoped to go unnoticed, she must have realized that there was a good risk of being discovered. Mary had listened to many of the teachings of Jesus and she may have heard him tell the parable on the cost of discipleship wherein Jesus told His followers to be willing to count the cost of following Him. The words of Jesus, “whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33) were ringing in Mary’s ears.

Mary had been a former prostitute and had had a shady past, to put the matter in mild terms, but where others only saw an undesirable plant, Jesus saw that Mary could become a beautiful flower. By His love for her, she was transformed. According to John 12:7, Mary had bought the ointment for the burying of Jesus. Although Jesus spoke plainly to the disciples about His death, they failed to understand what He was saying and on that dark Sabbath while He was in the grave they were perplexed, but Mary understood. “She had heard Jesus speak of His approaching death, and in her deep love and sorrow she had longed to show Him honor.” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 559)

Mary had surely tried hard to rehabilitate her image. Perhaps she was just starting to be able to move about some without being under the microscopic view of others and hearing words spoken against her, but now she knows that her current position is at stake. If she is noticed, she may be forever branded. Mary counts the personal cost to herself. Despite what others may think, or the censure she might receive from her sister for her extravagance, or that the Master even might think her improvident, she breaks open the box. She anoints the head and feet of Jesus. Further, she does something that we would today consider very scandalous: she washes Jesus’ feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair. But that which would cause indignity is not over! She begins to kiss the feet of Jesus! In fact, Jesus said that from the time she came in she had not ceased to kiss His feet! Jesus summed it up well: “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.” (Luke 7:47)

Jesus declared that Mary “wrought a good work upon” him. (Matthew 26:10) The Revised Standard Version and the Phillips translations render the phrase “good work” as “beautiful thing.” Jesus considered what Mary did as something beautiful and when we humbly serve others in righteousness today, doing it as unto the Lord, Jesus just as surely looks upon our labors of agape as beautiful.

Jesus’ love had been revealed to Mary and as she was forgiven much, she loved Jesus much. Jesus says we are to have this kind of love for our brother. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matthew 25:40) When we see others perform act of agape love, are our thoughts tainted with earthliness? What would we have thought if we had been at Simon’s house? Suppose someone were to do something as simple as open a door for a person of the opposite sex or get them a cup of cold water, would our minds naturally think something was amiss? Of course, we could do such acts for Jesus, but can we care in an unselfish manner and love in a holy manner that works disinterestedly for others?

Mary’s act of great sacrifice reveals unselfish love. The ointment cost 300 pence, about the wages a common laborer could receive for 300 days of work: today’s equivalent of more than a year’s salary for a common worker. In the United States this might be something like \$20,000 or more. I don’t know how this poor woman came up with the money needed for this gift, but her love constrained her. She could have bought a cheaper ointment, but her love demanded the most she could do. Mary was the last to leave the cross and the first to reach the empty tomb.

To my mind, nobody in the New Testament reveals the restored moral image of God better than Mary. Her love shines out like a beacon to darkness all around her.

The restoration of the image of God must occur before Jesus comes back. We are each offered the chance to allow God’s Spirit to change our lives and hearts. On page 92 of the current quarterly, 2 Corinthians 3:18 is quoted: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” By beholding the glory of our Lord, the Spirit of Christ will restore us into His wonderful image. Sadly, the quarterly denies that we may have the real personal presence of Jesus Himself.

Yet, because Jesus isn’t here in the flesh, the Holy Spirit is here as His Representative, revealing to us the truths that will change and transform our lives. This is a process of restoration that will not be completed until there’s a new heaven and a new earth. Until then, God is working on us now, getting us ready for a new existence that has been made available to us through Jesus. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 92)

Continued on page 24

Bits and Pieces

In this edition of “Bits and Pieces,” we will briefly comment on some points noted in the last three lessons of the current *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* that we do not have room to expand upon but wish to at least bring to the reader’s attention for further consideration.

Questions on Doctrine Concepts Still Alive

Page 93 of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* discusses the concept of restoration and perfection in Christ. While most of the week’s lesson is well balanced in many areas, we also find the following statement, “He [Jesus] completed, once and for all, our sanctification and redemption.” This is phraseology from the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, the book published as a result of the 1955, 1956 Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences. This book taught the Trinity, denied the efficaciousness of the 1844 High Priestly ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy Place and thereby denied the final atonement in heaven, and taught that in the incarnation Jesus accepted the sinless nature of Adam before his fall. The statement from the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* carries the concept of all the work of salvation being completed on the cross and denies that Christ is now making the final atonement in heaven. This parallels the thoughts of *Questions on Doctrine*:

But it was not with the *hope* of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it for us on the cross. (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 381. Emphasis in original.)

This is to be contrasted with the typology of the sanctuary where the final atonement, according to Leviticus 16, is not made until the Day of Atonement services, which were held on the 10th day of the 7th month. According to the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 this did not happen in antitype until 1844. Ellen White noted:

As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary. (*Early Writings*, p. 253)

“Powers of the Soul”

On page 94 of the current *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, we find an excellent quotation from Ellen White. It is worth reading, rereading, and much contemplation:

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. *The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.* True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we

desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, *the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit*, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466. Emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted.)

“The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.”

The above statement, “The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself” teaches us that we must cooperate with Christ in the work of our salvation by totally surrendering our will to His will. When we do and “cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, *the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit.*” In doing a search of Ellen White’s writings we find that she defines the “powers of the soul.”

The great moral powers of the soul are faith, hope, and love. (*Gospel Workers* 1892 edition, p. 92)

The great motive powers of the soul are faith, hope, and love; and it is to these that Bible study, rightly pursued, appeals. (*Education* p. 192)

By the Holy Spirit, God imbues our faith, hope, and love with the divine energy of His Spirit. Sometimes we wish for more faith, hope, and love, but we are promised that when we surrender our will to Him we will receive the faith, hope, and love needed for each day and for all our challenges.

“Heightened Intensity”

The last lesson in the teacher’s edition of the quarterly, on pages 151, 155, and 157, introduces the thought that in the last days “the Holy Spirit works with heightened intensity.” (p. 151) The lesson teaches that the early church was imbued with “supernatural power” (*Ibid.*) and implies that the church at the end will have this supernatural power. While this is true to an extent, there is a danger of waiting for an empowering to supernaturally come upon us that we can neither cooperate with nor understand. Power is not the main point of the latter rain. Satan is able to give much power to his followers, but it comes without character.

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*, p. 56)

Jesus prayed to His Father: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17) Proverbs 1:23 says: “Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit

unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” The pouring out of God’s Spirit is equated, in the parallel construction, to making the Words of God known. As noted on page 153 of the teacher’s edition of the quarterly, Ellen White refers to the “latter rain” as “light.”

Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive *greater light*. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507)

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17)

If we are looking for power, supernatural power, then such phenomena will be easily visible to those around us; however, Ellen White says that the Holy Spirit “may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it” unless we have been *advancing in light*. Because the latter rain is primarily truth, Ellen White’s statement makes perfect sense. Especially can one see how this fits when the doctrine of God is considered. I believe with all my heart that the light going forth on the truth about God (the Non-Trinitarian message) and how it relates to righteousness by faith is the beginning of the restoration of the latter rain. To the staunch Trinitarian it is unnoticed and as Ellen White predicted, considered dangerous:

There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. *In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it.* Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. “Why,” they say, “should not we know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?”—Because they did not respond to the warnings, the entreaties of the messages of God, but persistently said, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” Talent, long experience, will not make men channels of light, unless they place themselves under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and are called, and chosen, and prepared by the endowment of the Holy Spirit. (*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1880)

The early rain set the Apostolic Church into motion, but by the time the apostles died, the church had lost its first love and much of the Holy Spirit. In fact, just a couple of decades after the cross, Paul could write that “the mystery of iniquity

doth already work.” (2 Thessalonians 2:7) Forty-five years later, the Apostle John wrote that anti-christ had appeared. (1 John 2:18) The outpouring of the Spirit of God has never been seen again like it was seen at Pentecost, but the promised latter rain began to fall upon God’s church in 1892. (See *Review & Herald*, November 22, 1892 and *Old Paths*, May 2006.) God sent a special message from heaven (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91, 92) but it was spurned, scorned, and rejected. However, for those today who will accept the light from heaven, put away sin, and totally surrender to the working of God, the promise of the latter rain is sure.

Authority: In the Bible or a Statements of Belief?

In the “Witnessing” section of the *Adult Teacher’s Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* on page 157, we are told that Christ’s second coming is near: “In other words, we don’t have a lot of time to waste in getting our lives in order for Christ’s soon return to earth.” The authority for this timely counsel does not come from Bible texts, but rather from Statement 24 of the Fundamental Beliefs! How much better it would have been to quote Bible texts instead of conditioning people to accept something because it is in a church creed.

Are We Fitted for the Loud Cry?

The lesson of June 22 is on “The Loud Cry.” There we find the following interesting statement:

The whole world needs to know the truth about the Lord Jesus in the context of the three angels of Revelation 14, as opposed to the false doctrines of Babylon that lead to the mark of the beast. And, quite simply, who else, at this point, but Seventh-day Adventists are preaching this distinctive message? (p. 109)

“Amen” to the first sentence that says the world must be warned about “the false doctrines of Babylon that lead to the mark of the beast,” but to claim that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is now preaching this message and even the only one preaching the message is quite off the mark. With the acceptance of the Trinity doctrine and the denial of the atonement in heaven, with the daily lowering of standards and the increase of worldliness in the church, it is clear that the denomination is not at all ready to give a message to come out of Babylon, when they themselves are so deeply entrenched in the doctrines and ideals of the harlot. However, even those who believe that they have retained doctrinal purity concerning the basic tenets of Christian faith and practice must beware. So much of our society is influenced by Babylon that we may be missing many encroachments Babylon is making in our lives. Most of the educational philosophy of the world is from Babylon. So much of all that we do has been tainted, and as a people we need to give this issue serious personal consideration.

Allen Stump

THAT WHICH A GOD OF LOVE HATES

by Leon Holt

(Leon Holt is a longtime member of the Smyrna family and the husband of Onycha Holt, my assistant for Old Paths. Allen Stump)

Time is short. Christ is coming soon. He needs champions and champions are few. Where are those who will stand for the right though the heavens fall, who will stand in the gap? Are you ready? Am I? And are we ready to hold up the hands of those who are taking the battle to the front and encourage them? Or will we deny that we know them when Satan, through various means, attacks them and adds to their cares and sorrow? The Bible says that all who will live godly will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12) We all will be called to take a stand and we will help one side or the other. The question is, which side? Have we fortified our minds with the truths of the Bible? Do we have an experimental faith that will take us through? Have we beheld Christ to the point that people will take note that we have walked with Him? We all must have this walk with Him that we might stand, and having done all to stand, stand. (Ephesians 6:13)

In the book of Proverbs, Solomon lists six things that the Lord hates, then he says, seven are an abomination unto Him. We read in Proverbs 6:16-19:

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

If you look these four verses up in the King James Bible, you will notice that three words are supplied: “things” and “are” in verse 16 and “that” in verse 19. Let us consider these verses for a few minutes.

It is clear from the context that God hates the first six. Hate is a very strong word, but abomination is even stronger. It has to do with loathing and abhorrence, a great dislike. I would like to suggest that verse 16 might be read: “These six doth the Lord hate; yea the seventh is an abomination unto him.” This would suggest that even though God hates the first six things, the seventh is in a class by itself. It is despicable, loathsome, abhorrent, an abomination.

Let us look at each of these things that we do not want to be partakers of because of our love for God and His dear Son, the Lamb of God who bought our redemption.

A Proud Look: This is a look that says “I am better than you. I deserve the best, the first place, the highest seat, a better car, a better job, a bigger house,” etc. This is how sin originated with Satan, when he was known as Lucifer, the “Light-Bearer.” It comes from looking at ourselves and worshipping ourselves instead our Creator. If we do this and do

not repent, God will decree the judgment: “He is joined to his idols, let him alone.” All who share Satan’s self-worship will share his final demise—the lake of fire.

A Lying Tongue: The second thing that God hates is a lying tongue. James states: “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell...But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” (James 3:6, 8) If we wish to meet Jesus in peace when He returns, we must overcome a lying tongue now. James 3:2 states: “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” Let us strive for perfection by beholding God through His only begotten Son. Let us meditate on His life and death. Let us meditate on His Words, every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God and on His law. Let us write it upon our hearts and learn to love it. By beholding, we *will* become changed and then our hearts will be full to overflowing with the love of God. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak (Matthew 12:34) and we will glorify God with our words and our example, for it will not be us that speaketh, but Christ living in us.

Hands That Shed Innocent Blood: Satan hates the innocent. He would destroy them all if he could, but God does not allow him total freedom to reign over their lives. In most cases, if not all, Satan must get man to do his dirty work and many times it is the tongue and not the hands that shorten a person’s life and brings them to an early grave.

A Heart That Deviseth Wicked Imaginations and Feet That Be Swift In Running To Mischief: These are the fourth and fifth things that God hates. If we would follow Paul’s instructions in Philippians 4:8 and think *only* about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy; then our hearts will tend to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. (Romans 8:1) We will not be running after mischief because our hearts will not be devising wicked imaginations. Of course, the guidelines of Philippians 4:8 *may* limit a lot of what we watch and listen to now, but for those who do follow these guidelines, they will say, “Heaven is cheap enough!”

A False Witness Speaketh Lies, and He That Soweth Discord Among Brethren: Satan knows our weaknesses, the sins he has led us to commit, our inherited weaknesses, and he knows if he can divide, he has a good chance of conquering. He also knows those who are the most dangerous to his cause and he plans his attacks subtly and unscrupulously. He uses, as he did with Christ, false witnesses that speak lies to isolate the one or ones under attack.

In the Scriptures he [Satan] is called a destroyer, an accuser of the brethren, a deceiver, a liar, a tormentor, and a murderer. Satan has many in his employ, but is most successful when he can use professed Christians for his satanic work. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 137)

Satan would be pleased to have anyone and everyone become his allies in the work of weakening the confidence of brother in brother, and sowing discord among those who profess to believe the truth. Satan can accomplish his purpose most successfully through professed friends of Christ who are not walking and working in Christ's lines... This is the day of the Lord's preparation. We have no time now to talk unbelief or ...to do the devil's work. Let everyone beware of unsettling the faith of others by sowing seeds of envy, jealousy, disunion; for God hears the words, and He judges, not by assertions which are yea and nay, but by the fruit of one's course of action. (*Maranatha*, p. 63)

And so, my brothers and sisters in the faith, let us stand together, lifting up one another in prayer, speaking words of encouragement and never discouragement. Don't listen to Satan's lies. Think no evil. We are judged as we judge. We are forgiven as we forgive. Those that are merciful will receive mercy. If we do err, let it be in being like Christ and loving one another, even at the cost of our own life. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isaiah 53:11) Let Jesus be our example. The test will soon come. Let us 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. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 136) ✍

West Virginia Camp Meeting

Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to extend the last call of invitation to attend camp meeting this June 20-24, at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. As always, we eagerly look forward to this special time of study, prayer, and fellowship, and we are very anxious to see *all* of you once again. We are also very desirous to meet new friends and families. Don't let anything prevent your attendance this year because time is short and more than ever, we need to draw closer to one another and closer to our Redeemer. Our theme will be "Revival, Reformation, and Rededication—Let Us Look Unto the Hills." We desire your fervent prayers that the sweet Spirit of God will reign in harmony, truth, and love.

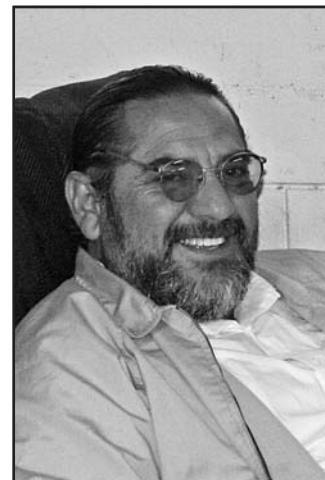
For directions, maps, and further details please see the May 2006 issue of *Old Paths* or contact us using the information in the Publisher's information section on page 24. Hope to see you at camp. ✍

Report from Peru

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings from Peru. We wanted to share with the readers of *Old Paths* some of God's recent blessings.

We dared to go on our recent missionary trip for as far as we could reach, over to Baquedano and Iquique, Chile, near Antofagasta, Chile, and all the way down the southern coast of Peru, reaching many small towns on the coast. I am glad and full of joy about how the message of truth was received, especially the message about the commandments of God and how they were changed by the Papacy. It was amazing to see people ask for more information. We were able to pass out almost 14,000 pieces of literature during the whole trip to Chile. Please pray for all of these souls who continue to search for truth and also for those who reproduce tracts. We tried to reach Argentina, but we started having problems with our vehicle's electrical system, and after leaving Iquique, Chile, we decided to return home. We were driving a small 1975 Toyota, which is normally very reliable, but we had to exchange the battery. We thank our almighty Father in heaven that we are back and full of joy and blessings. We were able to leave tracts with many Seventh-day Adventist brothers and they also want to receive *What Did The Pioneers Believe?* This was a blessed trip. The love of God has reached so many places and I was a witness to how this truth made people on benches along the beach, in courthouses, in parks, and in universities and schools want to read. It was like they were drinking in and their thirst was satisfied.



Aland Ashton

We are now preparing to reach the Amazon cities of Pucallpa, Tingo Maria, and Iquitos. We will drive and then continue by boat, so please pray for us as we prepare to fulfill the commission to take the good news of salvation and truth to the ends of the world and thus hasten the second coming of our Saviour and Redeemer.

My dear brothers and sisters, as you continue to take the truth, may God bless you and keep you. My prayer for you is Numbers 6:24-26. Thank you for your prayers and your support, and for your love.

In the hope of the advent of our Saviour, the Son of God,

Karina and Aland Ashton

GOD'S SACRED WAY

On Sunday, May 7, 2006, an event of major significance took place in this nation. Christians in America banded together in unity to declare support for God's Ten Commandment Law. The focal point of this movement was the first annual Ten Commandment Day celebration held on the seventh of May. The Ten Commandment Commission is actually a coalition of thousands of prominent community leaders, pastors, rabbis, educators, denominations, religious organizations, and ministries who are committed to bringing back the Ten Commandments as the moral foundation of society. Realizing that the moral fiber of the nation has been lost due to disregarding the Ten Commandments, coupled with the removal of the Ten Commandment plaques from public display places such as courthouses and schools, the Ten Commandment Commission is urging people to bring back God's law into society. This Ten Commandment coalition is heavily supported in their efforts by the National Religious Broadcasters Association.

The goal of this coalition is to focus on the law of God. To the minds of most who are promoting and participating in this event, part of that law of God, the fourth commandment, instead of pointing to the seventh-day Sabbath, points to Sunday. The truth of the matter is, a great degree of the blame for the lack of a moral fiber in our country today must be shouldered by the evangelical churches who have been preaching against the law of God for decades. While nine of the ten commandments have been encouraged by these evangelicals, the whole law was actually set aside under the excuse of grace, to be able to remove the Sabbath from duty and view.

The crime and degeneracy wreaked by this doctrine has been clearly seen, and as the pendulum swings to the other side, there is a cry to get back to God's law. As prophesied in Revelation 13, Satan is behind a movement to try to establish a law in opposition to God's divine Word, exalting Sunday as the day of worship in place of the seventh-day Sabbath.

The Giving of God's Law

Let us consider when God gave His law at Mount Sinai. Exodus 19 details God's instruction to the children of Israel in preparation for the giving of the law. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:" (Exodus 19:10-12) The people were to wash themselves and their clothes, and boundaries were set

about the mountain to prevent the people from coming too close. This was to be one of the most awesome events the whole universe had ever witnessed. Exodus 19:18 says: "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." Then, after God had spoken his great law, "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exodus 20:18, 19)

This great law that was spoken is the law of God our Father, but this law, as we study the Bible, was actually spoken by Jesus Christ, the Angel of God. "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. Emphasis supplied.) All things come to us from the Father by Christ. When Stephen gave his defense before the Jewish leaders as recorded in Acts 7 he said, "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:" (vs. 37, 38) Stephen says Moses was with the Angel and it was the Angel that spoke, and this Angel was none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

This Angel is the Angel of God's presence also. This needs to be understood because it is extremely important that there is no confusion about God's law. This law is not separate from Christ, so that God stands for "law" and Jesus stands for "grace." No, no! God works for the benefit of mankind through the "angel of his presence," as is stated in Isaiah 63:9: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." We read about this Angel again in Exodus 20:20, 21: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." God says that His name is in this Angel and this can refer to no other being than the Son of God, Jesus Christ, because only Jesus has the prerogative to forgive sins.

In the New Testament, Jesus is called the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." (John 1:1) Christ is the Word of God and He speaks to us the Words of the Father. He is the mouthpiece, the interpreter,

and the translator, if you please, of God. In John 8:28, we read: "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but *as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*" The things that Jesus taught and spoke were the things that He had learned of the Father. In verse 38, Jesus says: "*I speak that which I have seen with my Father.*" Jesus attributes His work and the source of His teachings to the Father. In John 12:49, 50 we read: "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. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, *even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*" Ellen White states:

The Father and the Son, attended by a multitude of angels, were present upon the mount." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 339)

Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father's law. It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone. (Ibid., p. 366.)

God's Law Embraces Our Whole Duty

God's law embraces the whole duty of man. In Ecclesiastes 12:13, the wise man says: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Within this duty of man, there are two great divisions. The Lord Himself showed us these great divisions, and we read about them in Matthew 22:35-40:

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The first four commandments pertain to our duty to God and to God alone, and, properly observed, they cannot be regulated by anyone. The last six commandments pertain to our duty to our fellow man. The Bible as a whole is an unabridged edition of the Decalogue.

I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad. (Psalm 119:96-all emphasis supplied.)

God's law was implanted in the nature of man at creation. God says: "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:26) When Adam was first created, the first table of God's law applied to him. The second table had no meaning for him, for there was no one for him to relate to. The commandments that Adam did relate to at this point were the first three, for the Sabbath had not been instituted yet, but after the creation

of Eve, the second table took on meaning. Despite man's fallen nature, God is still able to impress upon even the heathen their responsibility to His law.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. (Romans 2:14, 15)

Even the heathen have a heart and a conscience that is awakened by the law of God; yet, obedience is not natural as it was with Adam. Within the heart of man there is a tremendous struggle and conflict to do that which is right, but the standard of all righteousness is found in the commandments of God. "All thy commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119:172) "Righteousness is right doing." (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312) Before we can do anything that is right, however, we must become or be righteous. We must be justified. Psalm 40:8 prophesied of Jesus: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." According to Jeremiah 31, the basis of the new covenant experience is having God's law written in our hearts. Beloved, if we are right, we will want to do what is right. When God's law is in us, we will want to do the right thing. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3) When we really love God, we will want to keep His commandments and it will not be grievous to us.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. (The Desire of Ages, p. 668)

That is a beautiful thought. If we have true obedience, it is because the obedience comes from a heart that works with Christ. As we consent and draw close to Him, our aims, goals, and purposes become one with Him, and as we obey Him, we simply carry out the impulses of our soul.

The Reign of Law

Let us consider the reign of law in both the physical and the spiritual world, for God has placed the entire universe under the domain of law. If you walk off a cliff, you will fall. If you put your hand in a fire, you will be burned. If you stir up a beehive, you will be stung. Casting aside law would soon bring chaos and ruin to all things. The law of gravity, for instance, is your friend. If it were not for gravity, all things would float away like a helium balloon slipping through your fingers. How would you like to cook, if today water boiled at 212 degrees Fahrenheit and tomorrow it boiled at 50 degrees? All law is the expression of the will and a manifestation of the character of the law-giver. Natural law is the

operation of principles which the Creator implanted in all of His creatures according to the nature and purpose of each. God is the author of all of these laws and from Him they derive the impelling power that makes them operate. All laws carry a penalty for transgression, whether they be natural or moral. Remember the cliff? You walk off, you fall. You put your hand in the fire, you get burned. The same is true with moral law. Moral law disobeyed has a reckoning involved, though sometimes it seems delayed. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death. Either we must die or a substitute must be found.

The Character of God's Law

God's character is revealed in His Ten Commandment Law. The Bible says in Isaiah 6:3 that God is holy and in Romans 7:12 that the law is holy. Revelation 15:3 pronounces God to be just and true in all of His ways, and in Romans 7:12 again the Bible says that God's commandments are just. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) God is perfect and in Psalms 19:7 the Bible says "The law of the LORD is perfect." Both God and His law are perfect. God's law is not an arbitrary enactment, but rather an annunciation of eternal principles. God's law is eternal. There is no need to change it. It is brief (297 words – KJV) and comprehensive and just as God does not change, His law does not change.

The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. (Psalm 111:7, 8)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17, 18)

The Son of God consented to die in the sinner's stead, that man might, by a life of obedience, escape the penalty of the law of God. His death did not slay the law, lessen its holy claims, nor detract from its sacred dignity. The death of Christ proclaimed the justice of his *Father's law* in punishing the transgressor, in that he consented to suffer the penalty in order to save fallen man from its curse. The death of God's beloved Son on the cross shows the immutability of God's law. His death magnifies the law and makes it honorable, and gives evidence of its changeless character. From his own lips is heard, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.' *The death of the divine Son justified the claims of the divine law.* In order to more fully realize the value of redemption, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of limited views of the sufferings of the *divine Son of God*, many place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement." (*The Signs of the Times*, August 7, 1879)

So, we might say as Paul did in Romans 3:31: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Nothing can make void the law of God except in the way we apply ourselves or fail to apply ourselves to it. Even the evangelicals are now saying we must establish the law, but it is for the purpose of attempting to change the Sabbath, to bring in their false day of worship, and even to force people to keep it.

Thoughts from M. L. Andreasen

The following thoughts are from the book, *The Sabbath*, by M. L. Andreasen and they are very appropriate to what we are talking about:

Did God or Christ change the Sabbath? Christ had nothing to do with any change of the Sabbath day from the seventh to the first day of the week. If He had, He would never have done it in the way its advocates say it was done. According to their view, instead of heralding to the world the inauguration of a new rule of conduct, telling all that the old Sabbath had been abolished and that a new day had dawned, a glorious day, far surpassing in splendor the seventh-day Sabbath, its own advocates admit that Christ said nothing to anybody concerning it and that His own disciples were completely in the dark. We submit this is altogether unlike Christ. We know what God did in announcing the seventh-day Sabbath. Ought He not at least to have notified the disciples most concerned, so that they would not be in ignorance years after the event took place?

The whole conception seems entirely unlike God. If we are to have a new Sabbath, let the old one be abolished by divine fiat, and let the new one be honorably installed with at least as much respect paid to it as was paid the old. Let this be done as openly and publicly as when the Sabbath was first commanded and announced. Anything less than this would be to the detriment of the new day, would, in fact place it under suspicion, and would reflect upon God Himself.

In view of the fact that God has announced to the world and to the angels that "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord," that is, that it is God's own Sabbath; in view of the further fact that God has announced Himself as "the Lord I change not," in view of the still further fact that He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning," would it not be embarrassing to Him to announce that a change had been made in the day of the Sabbath; that the seventh day which He had pronounced holy was no longer holy; that henceforth it was not be known as "My holy day," "the holy of the Lord, honorable"; that another day had been chosen in its stead; that He had removed the blessing and sanctification with which He had once invested the Sabbath; that it was now demoted to a common working day; and that while men had formerly been punished for profaning the Sabbath,

they could now work all they wanted to on the seventh day and be guiltless?...How could God after such an announcement ever claim to be the One who changeth not, the “Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness” or “shadow of turning”?

But if it would be embarrassing for God to make such an announcement to men, would it not be equally or even more embarrassing to make it to the angels? They were present at the time of the giving of the law on Sinai. They were present in the Garden of Eden when God rested on that first beautiful Sabbath. They were present when the man in the wilderness went out to gather sticks on the Sabbath, and they saw what happened to him. But now for some reason God has changed. The angels are in perplexity. They have associated and worked with men since the days of creation. They have patiently helped and instructed them; they have warned them not to profane the Sabbath; they have assisted conscience in bringing men back to a realization of their errors; they have been used by the Spirit in convincing men of sin; and again and again they have instructed men in the sacredness of God’s holy day. Even the week before the supposed change of the Sabbath took place, they were engaged in teaching men the sacredness of God’s holy Sabbath. But now the following week a change has come. The Sabbath is no longer the Sabbath. They will now have to educate men’s conscience over again; and they wonder how they will justify God in the sight of men, how they will justify the law. To them this is no small matter. They are perplexed, and do not feel free to go to God for help. Something has happened to God. He has changed, though He claims He never changes.

Angels, of course, did not reason thus, for God would never put Himself in a position that would call for such reasoning. Whatever God does, He does openly and above board. If He had thought best to introduce another day than the Sabbath, He would have been as open about it as He was in the introduction of the seventh-day Sabbath. He would not secretly, surreptitiously, almost ashamedly, institute a new, and as its defenders say, a far more glorious day than the first Sabbath. No, a thousand times no! Such a day would deserve a better introduction, as much greater and glorious as the first day of the week is supposed to be greater and more glorious than the seventh! As God once spoke from heaven telling men their duty, so He would again speak if He changed His requirements. This would seem the only fair way and would meet the approbation of mankind.

If there was any justification for God’s coming down on Mt. Sinai to announce to men the Ten Commandments, there is the same justification for God’s coming down the second time should He wish to change the law. God with His own voice spoke the law and commanded men to keep it.” (*The Sabbath*, pp. 153-157)

Conversion Power in God’s Law

One of the purposes of God’s law is to bring conviction of sin. Psalm 19:7 says “The law of the LORD is perfect, *converting the soul.*” The Bible says, indeed, that there is conversion power in God’s law. The law explains to us what sin is. 1 John 3:4 declares sin to be “the transgression of the law,” so the law, not genetics, tells us what sin is. The concept of original sin proclaims that genetically we are sinners by Adam, but the Bible says that sin is the transgression of God’s law and not the nature we inherit from Adam. God’s law is like a great moral mirror.

But ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:22-25)

It is sad today that Laodicea cannot see. She needs eyesalve, but not only does she need eyesalve, she needs to look in the right direction. To be able to see something properly, we must have acute vision *and* be looking in the direction of that which we wish to view. Laodicea needs the eyesalve of the Holy Spirit, but she also must look toward God’s perfect law of liberty. A printer may get ink on his hands and sometimes it gets rubbed on his face, but he does not realize it until he looks into a mirror. When he sees himself in the mirror, however, he knows he needs to wash his face. This is what the law of God does for us. It shows us our sinfulness, and it shows us the errors of our ways.

The law works hand-in-hand with the gospel. The law cannot cleanse us. The law cannot take away our filth or our sin. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Romans 3:20) This is why Jesus came to be our Savior—to take away our sins. We noted in 1 John 3:4 that sin is the transgression of the law, but also we read in the very next verse these words: “And ye know that he [Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” Jesus came to take away our sins or our transgressing of the law. He did not come to take the law away, but He came to take away our transgressing of the law.

Jesus said in Luke 19:10: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Before a man will see a physician, he must believe and know that he is ill. In Luke 5:31, 32 we read, “And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” We need to understand that we are all in need of the righteousness that Jesus offers. The law points us to Christ as the One and the only One who can supply our great need. So, the law and the gospel are not enemies.

God's great work for man centers around two mountains, Mt. Sinai and Mt. Calvary. If we undo the work of the first, we will surely undo the work of the second in our lives. At Sinai we had the giving of the divine standard, or righteousness—a perfect, eternal, unchanging law representing the character of God. This law reveals sin and convicts us of our unworthiness to be in God's kingdom, but God does not leave us in this hopeless, undone condition. He takes us to another mountain. At a hill called Mt. Calvary, we find a way of escape. Here we find the One who died to pay the penalty for the unchangeable law that could not be set aside. Here we see the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. To be God's people, we must follow God's Word and

God's way, and that includes the Sabbath of the fourth commandment and not the commandment of the Bishop of Rome.

For years we have been proclaiming the Bible prophecy that a nationwide movement, followed by a worldwide movement, would one day come exalting the spurious sabbath of the man of sin. Beloved, that movement is making swift progress and we need to fortify our minds with truth as never before, lest we be drawn away from the “old paths” of God's Word.

Allen Stump

The Answers To Our Doubts

(This the third sermon in a series of four on Salvation presented at Smyrna Camp Meeting 2005 by Allen Stump.)

We can have security in Jesus and know that we belong to Him right now at this moment. Regardless of our sinfulness, we can know that He accepts us as we are, but, at the same time, Jesus does not want us to stay sinful. If we take our understanding of assurance of salvation out of Biblical context, it may be possible to come to the wrong conclusion that once we have been accepted by Jesus, we will always be saved. Our article this month will focus on God's desire for us to have assurance of salvation. We will look at many facets of this subject, for there are many misconceptions about this topic. Some people question if they are even saved. Others wonder what it means to be saved and if there is a difference in “being saved” and in having the “assurance” of salvation.

Presumption to Claim Assurance

There are at least four reasons for the spiritual misconceptions we have concerning our salvation, and through these four misunderstandings, Satan tries to steal away our assurance. The first misunderstanding to consider is the belief that it is presumption to claim assurance. We have been told by some who are intelligent *not* to say that we are saved. We need to make a distinction between the doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” as it is commonly taught in the evangelical churches, and the concept of having assurance. The familiar term “once saved, always saved” is not always used by evangelicals, but more often the concept is called the “doctrine of eternal security.” What is meant in evangelical circles by this phrase is simply that once you come to Jesus and make a profession to follow Him, then, no matter what happens in your life thereafter, you are assured of being in

God's kingdom because God has promised you the gift of eternal life and He does not go back on His promises.

For instance, my best friend in high school, Max, and I were talking a few years ago about another good friend of ours, Jim. Jim is the first person from our high school graduating class that died. To my knowledge, Jim never changed his worldly ways before he died, and Max was telling me of a conversation he had had with a minister who had spoken to Jim before his death. The minister had encouraged Jim to accept Christ and had said to him, “Well, do you believe in Jesus Christ?” and Jim answered, “Well, yes, I believe in Jesus Christ and that He existed.” The minister said to Max, “The Bible says that with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” and because of this the minister believed that Jim was saved for he had confessed Christ. This is what salvation is to many people. A person confesses Jesus and then continues to live in the ways of the world, believing that in the end he will be saved. That is the concept of the doctrine of eternal security and this is the concept of salvation we find Ellen White talking against. The doctrine of eternal security for the believer also says that God knows our timetable for living and for dying and if there is something that needs to be taken care of, God will see that we live long enough to take care of it. It is true that God does know those who are His and He will not allow any of His to die until the work that needs to be done in their lives is done, *if* it is their desire to follow Jesus. If we are truly His, He will not allow us to die until we are ready to die, and that is good news! That means, friends, if I am in a car wreck and I die tonight, the Lord knows that I am ready to die and that my character is ready to take to heaven.

Consider these words from Ellen White:

Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved. This is misleading...Those who accept

Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan's devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 154, 155)

Sister White is saying we cannot say that once we are saved there is no future possibility of being lost, for in so doing we would be like Peter who trusted to himself, but, as we shall see in a moment, she does tell us we can have the assurance that Jesus accepts us.

We are never to rest in a satisfied condition, and cease to make advancement, saying, "I am saved." When this idea is entertained, the motives for watchfulness, for prayer, for earnest endeavor to press onward to higher attainments, cease to exist. No sanctified tongue will be found uttering these words till Christ shall come, and we enter in through the gates into the city of God. (*Maranatha*, p. 236)

Do you understand what she is saying, based on the background we have laid? When we realize that our acceptance in Jesus is based in His merits and in His merits alone and when we come close to Jesus because we love Him, we will never rest nor be satisfied with where we are at. We will always want to come closer and closer to Jesus. Once we are saved, we will be in God's kingdom eternally. I can tell you today that I have eternal life and I can tell you that I have the assurance that Christ accepts me, but tomorrow I have to renew my commitment and make my decisions anew.

The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I die daily." You see, it is a daily experience. We come to Jesus just as we are, but He doesn't leave us there. He wants to continue to work with us and to help us grow. At any given point along that path we can know whether we are in Christ or not, but we cannot stay with Christ while in a lawless condition.

"Oh, yes," some say, "we are saved in doing nothing. In fact, I am saved. I need not keep the law of God. I am saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ." (*Faith and Works*, p. 71)

It is true that we are saved in the righteousness of Jesus alone, but this includes, friends, an issue of obedience and love, for true love brings forth obedience.

Many have misunderstood what Ellen White says and think that she teaches it is presumption to claim assurance of salvation, but if we understand what Ellen White has written, we will see a clear picture. The Bible and the writings of Ellen White teach that we may have assurance and that it is essential to have this assurance.

Let us review a few points made about this in the earlier articles in this series. Firstly, let us notice 1 John 5:10-13:

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and

this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Friends, wouldn't it be awful to go through life without knowing about the greatest gift that God has ever given? Think about your families. You try to show them your love and appreciation, I am sure. Maybe you will get your wife some flowers or bring home something special for the kids. You do this because you love them, but can you imagine trying to bring home a gift that they will never be aware of? Think about how ridiculous this sounds! God has this great gift he wants to give you, but you do not *know* you are to have it! John says, however, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13) He says that we each can know. Ellen White wrote:

It is insanity to be quiet and at ease as so many are at the present time, having no assurance that they are indeed sons and daughters of God. (The Review and Herald, November 9, 1886. Emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

She says it is insanity to not know this.

If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour, and trust in his power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness. (The Review and Herald, October 1, 1908)

To our knowledge, some of the very the last words that Ellen White ever penned were:

It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 517.)

Isn't that beautiful? What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus!

Assurance Only If We Are Deserving

Another misunderstanding is that assurance can be ours if and only if we reach a certain level of spiritual growth that makes us deserving of that confidence by reason of our achievement. This is really a form of legalism in one of its highest forms but disguised as Christianity. I want you to remember something that we emphasized before. The closer we come to Jesus, the more sinful we will appear in our own eyes because we will see more clearly our sinfulness for what it really is.

While colporteur, I once spoke to a woman who said, "Well, I don't think I've ever sinned, but I know the Bible says we've all sinned, so I must have sinned somewhere, but I'm not sure where." The sad thing is that she was sincere. The closer we come to Jesus and see His beautiful character, the more we will see how defective and unworthy we really are and the less satisfied we are going to be with our

performance. If we try to measure our assurance of salvation by our performance, we will be sadly disappointed for the closer we come to Jesus the more of our sinfulness we will see. Friends, we cannot evaluate our experience based on how we feel about it. "The proud heart strives to earn salvation." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300). It is the proud heart that wants to earn salvation, but the Bible says salvation is the gift of God.

Satan Wants Us To Doubt

Misunderstanding number three: Satan wants us to doubt. We may have doubts because of direct, willful disobedience in our life. If this is the case, then God wants us to be under conviction and condemnation. In this state we cannot expect assurance from Him. If you are in direct, willful disobedience to God, you have no right to any assurance of salvation. Let us look at a few texts.

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. (Proverbs 28:9)

A colporteur friend of mine went to a lady's home several years ago and knocked on her door. My friend had sold many books in the area and people knew who he was. When she opened the door, the lady recognized him and said, "Young man, I know who you are and I know what you are doing and I want you to know I'm going to be praying that you get out of this wicked, cultish thing that you are in." He said, "Ma'am, I appreciate your prayers. I need all the prayers that you can pray for me, but before you pray would you please read Proverbs 28:9?" Then he just bid her good day and left. Well, according to this sister's own testimony, she tried to pray for him, but do you know what was on her mind? Proverbs 28:9. She started to pray but kept wondering what Proverbs 28:9 said! Finally she read the verse and then again attempted prayer, but the words, "prayer, abomination, and turn my ear away from the law" stayed on her mind and so impressed her that she finally became a Seventh-day Adventist.

Friends, when we disregard God's law, we cannot expect His assurance. The Bible says "the wages of sin is death," (Romans 6:23) and if we stay in sin we will find death. Isaiah 59:2 says our iniquities have separated us from God. A time is coming when God is going to destroy all the sin in the universe. Everything that is wicked, anything that is vile, everything that is wrong is all going to be destroyed because God will not allow the universe to continue in existence like this forever. God does not want to destroy you and He does not want to destroy me. He does not want to destroy the billions of people in China, the billions of Roman Catholics, or the many Hindus, but friends, He is going to have to eradicate sin. If we cling to sin, we will be eradicated with it, but the good news is we don't need to hold onto sin. We can have the righteousness of Christ. He can impart His righteousness to us day by day and give us the power to walk in newness of life.

The Bible says we must acknowledge our sin.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile...I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:1, 2, 5)

Beloved, if we harbor doubts because of known sin in our lives, if we have habits that bind us like chains, if we indulge in impure thoughts, even if no one else in the world knows about it, God knows and we cannot fool God. Even if we are wicked today, the Bible says that if we will confess our sins, God will forgive us. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." (Psalms 38:18) Sometimes we unintentionally do things that are wrong and we are sorry for them, and we should be sorry for we are not to serve sin. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1) We need grace and God gives us an abundance of amazing grace every day of our lives, but He says we are not to use that grace as an excuse for sin. "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2).

There was a time when my father worked at a funeral home and I remember being around a lot of dead bodies as a youth. One thing I have noticed about dead people is that they are totally unresponsive to anything you do to them. You can talk to them and they never talk back. You can poke them and they don't respond. You can stick them with a pin and they won't say "ouch." They are like this because they are dead. "God forbid. How shall we, that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2) Being dead to sin means we do not respond to it anymore.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:3-6)

It is God's design for us to accept Him today and to never sin again. I have an automobile and it has a spare tire. Now, I have never gone driving expecting and planning to have a flat tire, but I want to be prepared in case I do. God has made provision for us if we sin. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And *if* any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" (1 John 2:1)

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1) The Bible teaches we are to confess our sin, to be sorry for our sin, to acknowledge our sin, to not serve sin, and to lay our sin aside, but it is interesting that this is not the only thing we are to lay aside. There is something else to be laid aside. Hebrews 12:1 also speaks of weight to be laid aside. Interestingly, Paul does not say the weight is sin, but it is something that holds us back, something that may eventually lead us to sin or cause us to turn back.

When I was in high school, I ran track as a long distance runner. When we went to a track meet, we did not wear heavy shoes and we did not wear very much clothing. We wore very light, thin shorts and a thin tank top. We put off everything we possibly could to lighten ourselves, so as to have the best chance of winning the race. As Christians, we are in a race and we are so close to the coming of Jesus that we can't afford all the weights we are carrying. For example, even “good” programs on television can become weights because the fast paced mode of switching scenes commonly used in television can change the mind's thought patterns. Instead of the mind trying to assimilate and sort out all the data it quickly receives, it goes into a mode that subconsciously accepts data without evaluating its content. I have helped to carry pianos and I have never found a light one. I would not want to carry them around all the time. You might find it interesting trying to carry just a one or two pound weight for a day and see how it feels.

I cannot define what the weights are for you, but I can tell you I know what a lot of them are for me. There are things in all of our lives that we need to lay aside and be rid of. “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” (Heb. 12:4). We need to strive against sin. I cannot emphasize these issues enough, friends. We need to pray that God will hold us and keep us fast. “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” (Psalms 19:13)

If you have doubts about your assurance that Jesus accepts you because of sin in your life, I am thankful you have those doubts and I hope they become more than just simple doubts. They should become an assurance to you that you don't have salvation. The remedy for this is to confess your sins, to repent of them, to be sorry for them, to not serve them, to lay them aside, and to resist and keep from those sins.

“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) A lord is an overseer, someone we respond to, someone we answer to, someone that we serve. Lord implies *lordship*. Is Jesus really Lord of our lives? He can be Lord and He wants to be Lord of our lives if we will let Him. Jesus understands human frailty.

“He did not censure human weakness.” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 12) Jesus understands and He knows that if we fall, He can forgive us. The Apostle John speaks about a sin that is not unto death and he speaks about a sin that is unto death. “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.” (1 John 5:16) This means, in part, that when we are walking the Christian walk and are serving the Lord Jesus, we sometimes, in ignorance or even in carelessness, slip and fall. But the Lord can forgive us because He will make us aware of it and we will repent of it. We will truly be sorry for it and therefore that sin does not end up being a sin unto death. But, when we directly, willfully disobey God and we don't have any intentions to truly repent, that sin is unto death. It leads to our eternal death and we can't afford that.

Make A Covenant With God

The fourth cause of spiritual insecurity is perhaps the most significant of all. God means for us to come to Him in a definite way. If you will examine the Bible record down through the ages, you will find it to be a truth that those whose witnesses have made an impact on us are those who have known and testified in specific terms just how and where they surrendered to God. They made a covenant with God and had a special experience with Him. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all made a covenant with the Lord. In the New Testament, there is recorded a specific point in time when the demoniacs came to Jesus and were delivered by Him. The time, place, and occurrence made an impression upon them. When you think about the people who really have had an impact on other people, almost every one of them can trace his or her conversion back to a specific covenant relationship in which they asked the Lord to come into their lives and to forgive them of their sins. They desired to accept Him as their Savior and be His child. Friends, when there is no specific covenant in personal relationships, there is an infinite potential for misunderstanding and uncertainty. On their wedding day, people, for the most part, make a covenant with one another with their vows. When the covenant of marriage is made by the husband and the wife before God and witnesses, there is a surety, a certainty, and an assurance. I can honestly tell you that at the moment the minister pronounced that I was married to my wife, rockets didn't go off in the sky, there were no fireworks, and I didn't have a euphoric feeling. I did have a great love and a great peace, but the truth is I felt the same five minutes after the ceremony as I felt five minutes before because our marriage was not based on how we felt. I had only been married a few seconds at that point, but I had the assurance that I was married because my wife and I had entered into a covenant relationship with each other and God. The confidence that we were truly married, and the confidence that any of you are truly married, rests upon the covenant that was made.

Many church members have what we might call a common-law marriage with Christ, a type of living together and trying to make things fit but of not being too sure of the relationship because it was drifted into. A common-law marriage can become legalized, but it is hazy at best and embarrassing at worst. Now friends, I'm not saying that to have a valid experience, it has to be sudden. It could be like the dawning of a winter day, but unless it finally takes some definite form, it's likely to remain a cloudy day. Those who look for assurance to be experienced in feeling or in an inner witness will likely come up short and it will not be what they want to experience. Our surety in Jesus, and remember the Lord speaks about His experience with His people using the parallel experience of a marriage covenant, rests on a covenant agreement with God. I believe we need to have a covenant prayer with God, inviting Christ into our lives, accepting Him as our personal Savior, committing our way and our will to His, and claiming the promises of His word. When this is done, the believer will have a valid assurance, just as a couple being married have assurance when the preacher pronounces them husband and wife.

Beloved, we must believe in Christ. "It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God." (*Gospel Workers*, p. 261) Have we really done that, friends? That is what saving faith is about. It is joining in a covenant relation with God.

The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. [This is a very simple prayer.] He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised." (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 392)

Ellen White says, "We are to believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation," and then she quotes John 5:24. (*Ibid.*)


Well friends, that's it in a nut shell. We can come before the Lord today and say, "Lord, I know I am a sinner. I know I need the righteousness of Jesus in my life. Jesus died upon Calvary to save me. I don't need to remain like I am any longer. You can come into my life right now." When we have that kind of experience, then we know for a surety that we are really married to Christ and we no longer need to doubt. We will not have a common-law marriage with Christ.

In summary, it is not presumption to know that we have the assurance of salvation, but it is presumption to say that we are saved today and that we cannot be lost. Today we make the decision to follow Jesus, yes, but tomorrow we have to

make the same decision and continue to do that throughout the day. It's not presumption to claim assurance with Jesus, but it is presumption to claim eternal security without any possibility of falling.

We have been taught that assurance can be ours if and only if we reach a certain level of spiritual growth, but the closer we come to Jesus, the more acutely we will see our own unrighteousness.

If we are in willful, direct disobedience to God, we may doubt our assurance of salvation and we should and must do so, because in this situation God doesn't want us to have assurance. The Lord wants us to know that He is our Lord, but this lordship implies that we love Him and that we are willing to serve Him.

Finally, friends, we need to make a covenant agreement with our Lord. Do we know specifically that we are really His? This is important. "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (Acts 23:1) Do you want to be able to say that? "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." (Acts 24:16) "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Timothy 1:12) This is the last epistle that Paul wrote and in it he says he knew Whom he believed. He didn't say he knew about Him, but that he knew Him. Paul had a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ, a very traceable and definable conversion experience, and when we have this also, we will have the same assurance and persuasion he had. 

Youth's Corner - The Mirror

God has given in his word a mirror into which the sinner may look and discover the defects of his moral character. That mirror is the royal law of God, the ten commandments. We are to compare our character with the law of God, and if that law condemns us, if we are breaking any of its requirements, then our garments are defiled by sin; and all the efforts we may make in our own strength will not efface one stain, one spot of sin. We must go to Jesus, humble the heart before him, and confessing our sins, forsake them. We must cease to transgress the law of God, but exercise repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only one who can remove these defiled garments of sin, and clothe us in the robe of Christ's righteousness.

But there is something for you to do, in seeking the Lord with an earnest purpose of heart and forsaking your sins; for Jesus will not save you if you continue to transgress the law. You must, through faith in Christ, overcome sin. Through the strength Jesus gives you, you must day by day be engaged in

Continued on page 23

NO FEAR

A common euphemism today is “no fear,” which implies a certain sense of self-confidence and a knowledge that there is nothing that cannot be handled or accomplished. This concept is carried over into our everyday experiences as we decide what is fearful and what is not, and what can be done and what cannot be done. This study will give you an understanding of what truly brings fear to the heart of the beast power. Interestingly, this is not having an understanding of the activities of the Jesuits, Opus Dei, or other arms of the Papacy. That which strikes fear into the very depths of the beast’s heart and mind is the revelation of the truth about God. This revelation makes the beast tremble with fear and rage!

There are many facets to constructing a building, but any experienced contractor knows that the foundation of the building is the most important part, for it supports the rest of the structure. If the foundation fails, the rest of the building will fail. In Christianity, the most fundamental issue is the doctrine of God, which is an understanding of the identity, nature, and character of God, as well as an understanding of His interaction among His creatures and how He reveals Himself to them. This process is universally recognized by all Christian thought leaders.

STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

If one looks at denominational creeds and statements of belief, the teaching on God is always listed first, unless the position of the Bible is first instead. For example, in the 1872 Statements of Belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the first three statements are about the doctrine of God. These statements represent the truths the church used to believe. In the 1931 Statements of Belief, statements two and three discuss the doctrine of God, after statement one, which is about the Bible. In the 1980 Statements of Belief, statements two through five discuss the doctrine of God, again after a statement on the Bible. The concept of the doctrine of God being foundational to the rest of our theology has been noted as follows:

The doctrine of God is foundational to Christian theology, since God relates to everything and everything is related to Him. The doctrine determines the way theologians understand and formulate the entire corpus of Christian beliefs. (*The Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, p. 105)

Because all other doctrines are dependent upon the doctrine of God, people are more passionate over this teaching than any other. I have a close friend with whom I have studied many doctrinal issues, such as the Sabbath, the state of the dead, and the sanctuary doctrine, and it is interesting my friend even used Dr. Donald Barnhouse’s comments about our sanctuary doctrine being “*stale, flat, and unprofitable!*”

(Donald Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?” *Eternity Magazine*, 1956, emphasis by Barnhouse. *) While he doesn’t agree with me on these issues, he was able to let go of our differences in a friendly manner, but when I told him that the Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Ghost was false, he *exploded!* Another man I know was so irate when he first heard the truth on the Holy Spirit that, in his own words, he “wanted to kill” the brother making the presentation. Thankfully he allowed the Spirit of God speak to his heart and today he is rejoicing in this truth.

CATHOLICISM FOUNDED ON THE TRINITY

I have in my files a small book entitled, *Handbook for Today’s Catholic*. The printing of this book has numbered in the millions. On page 16 of the 1994 edition we find the following statement:

The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all other teachings of the Church. (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16)

Another edition of this book states the same thing with only one word added and one additional word capitalized:

The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic, Beliefs Practices Prayers*, p. 11)

The early Adventist pioneers came from many different church groups and denominations. Many of these groups were of a Trinitarian nature; however, as Russell Holt noted in a research paper, “A survey of other Adventist writers during these years reveals that, to a man, they [the pioneers] rejected the trinity, yet, with equal unanimity they upheld the divinity of Christ.” (Russell Holt, “The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance,” p. 6) History reveals that, “*to a man,*” the pioneers abandoned their Trinitarian beliefs and accepted a position. This was necessary, for they realized that the Trinity’s denial of Jesus being the literal begotten Son of God denied the atonement, which was a polarizing doctrine for them.

TRINITY SUBVERSIVE TO ATONEMENT

J. H. Waggoner, the father of E. J. Waggoner, wrote a book entitled, *The Atonement*. The sixth chapter is entitled, “Doctrine of a Trinity Subversive of the Atonement.” In that chapter we read:

It will no doubt appear to many to be irreverent to speak thus of the doctrine of a trinity. But we think they must

* It is also interesting that in the same article, Barnhouse states, “The Adventists take their place in the very center of traditional Christianity’s Trinitarian doctrine as accepting the Christology of the New Testament of the Fathers, the Reformers, and all true evangelicals.”

view the subject in a different light if they will calmly and candidly examine the arguments which we shall present. We know that we write with the deepest feelings of reverence for the Scriptures, and with the highest regard for every Scripture doctrine and Scripture fact. But reverence for the Scriptures does not necessarily embrace reverence for men's opinions of the Scriptures.

It is not our purpose to present any argument on the doctrine of the trinity, further than it has a bearing on the subject under consideration, namely, on the Atonement. And we are willing, confidently willing to leave the decision of the question with all who will carefully read our remarks, with an effort to divest themselves of prejudice, if they unfortunately possess it. The inconsistencies of Trinitarians, which must be pointed out to free the Scripture doctrine of the Atonement from reproaches under which it has too long lain, are the necessary outgrowth of their system of theology. No matter how able are the writers to whom we shall refer, they could never free themselves from inconsistencies without correcting their theology.

Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on the dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption.

And here is shown how remarkably the widest extremes meet in theology. The highest Trinitarians and lowest Unitarians meet and are perfectly united on the death of Christ—the faith of both amounts to Socinianism. Unitarians believe that Christ was a prophet, an inspired teacher, but merely human; that his death was that of a human body only. Trinitarians hold that the term “Christ” comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer, or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering, and nothing more. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. And so far as the vicarious death of Christ is concerned, this is Socinianism. Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a trinity degrades the

Atonement, resting it solely on a human offering as a basis. (*The Atonement*, pp. 164-166)

Although some theologians in Adventism today consider such men as Waggoner to be “crackpot idiots,” the real truth is that many of these men were extraordinarily great thinkers despite their so-called lack of education. They were far-reaching in their reasoning and Scriptural knowledge. They knew that if the foundational doctrine of God was not correct, other issues sooner or later would give way.

COUNCIL OF NICAEA

Alonzo T. Jones, in chapter 14 of his book *The Two Republics*, discusses the Council of Nicaea (325 A. D.). This council was famous for its creed which stated in part that Jesus Christ was of the “substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.” (*The Two Republics*, p. 350) This council and its creed are acknowledged by Trinitarians for establishing the basic elements upon which the Trinity doctrine was built.

Jones was an excellent student of history. Writing on Nicaea in *The Two Republics*, he entitled the chapter on Nicaea the “Establishment of the Catholic Faith.” Jones understood that the Trinity doctrine was the basis of the papacy. The two main proponents of doctrine at the Council of Nicaea were Arius and Athanasius. Arius was a presbyter in charge of a parish church in Alexandria. (See *The Two Republics*, p. 332.) Athanasius was “archbishop of Alexander, the great champion of Catholic orthodoxy.” (A. T. Jones, *Ecclesiastical Empire*, p. 103) Arius taught that Jesus was of like substance as the Father. In other words, Jesus was a begotten Son of substance just like the Father. The Father and Son were two *separate* Beings. Athanasius taught that the Father and Son were of the same substance, or one being.

History tells us that after the Council of Nicaea there was a temporary shift of position towards Arius' position. Then in 381 A. D., at the Council of Constantinople, the position of Nicaea was reestablished with an additional statement exalting the Holy Spirit to be “the Lord and Life-giver... who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified.” (*The Two Republics*, p. 396) In his book *The Two Republics*, Jones entitles the chapter on the Council of Constantinople, “The Catholic Faith Re-Established.” On page 395, Jones notes that “the council proceeded to settle the Catholic faith again.”

Today, Athanasius is held in very high esteem while Arius and those who follow his teachings are held in contempt. While at a recent symposium on the Trinity doctrine at Southern Adventist University, Professor Woodrow Whidden stated that if it had not been for “Saint Athanasius” we would all be “Jehovah's Witnesses today.” I personally find it strange that to avoid the title “heretic” we need to adopt the central doctrine of the papacy.

BARNHOUSE AND MARTIN

However, just as surely as “the chickens will come home to roost,” the effects of the Trinity doctrine have been felt in Adventism. In order to gain acceptance with the world and to remove themselves from the status of culthood, Adventist leaders have, over this last century, seriously compromised “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3) The compromises on the incarnation and the atonement in heaven that were made in the 1950’s with the evangelicals through contacts with Barnhouse and Martin could never have been made if the brethren had not earlier adopted the doctrine of the Trinity. Concerning questions on the Trinity addressed to the brethren by Barnhouse and Martin, Roy Allan Anderson, head of the General Conference Ministerial Association at the time and involved in the evangelical contacts, wrote: “Our answer concerning the Godhead and Trinity was crucial, for in some of the books they had read that Adventists were classed as Arians...” (*Adventist Review*, September 8, 1983) While many independent ministries protest against the compromises made in the Seventh-day Adventists – Evangelical conferences of 1955 and 1956 and the resultant book, *Questions on Doctrine*, those compromises would never have been made if the Trinity doctrine had not been accepted by the church. Further compromises are being made and we are told that:

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 81)

The Trinity doctrine is the basis of unity among the churches today, and it is the basis for the unity among the World Council of Churches. The thought is, “We worship the same God, why can we not do it together?” And since the same God is worshipped, the people wonder, “Why can he not be worshiped on his day, Sunday?” Adventists have for years known and preached that the final test will be over which day we worship. What we must realize, though, is that ultimately this test is over the God we worship and not over a twenty-four hour day. Those who continue to worship the god of the beast will not be able to withstand that great final test and will yield to the demands of popular opinion. Only those who are closely connected to the true God will be able to stand through a time of trouble such as this world has never seen. Only those who personally know the Father and Son will be loyal in the end and will be able to stand before God’s throne faultless and without any guile in their mouths.

WHAT THE PAPACY FEARS

The Papacy knows that she rises on the acceptance of the Trinity or she falls on its rejection. This is why the prophecy

of Daniel 7 predicted that the “little horn” power was to uproot three kingdoms. These were Non-Trinitarian kingdoms and because they threatened the existence of the Papacy, they were disposed of. Today there are some Adventists who feel that because they are “exposing” the plots of the Jesuits or Opus Dei to take over the world that they are special targets of the Papacy. For example, Bill Hughes, author of *The Secret Terrorists*, has received hate mail and even death threats, but the leaders in Rome know that as long as these ministers hold onto the Trinity doctrine, they are not the real threat to them.


The metallic-man image of Daniel 2 shows the history of the earth from ancient Babylon to when Christ’s kingdom is set up. The last of the four main empires is Rome. According to Daniel 7, 8, and 11, Rome continues in its papal form until the end; however, there is a stone “cut out of” a “mountain” that strikes the image at its base and destroys it. Christ, through His people, is going to bring modern Babylon and all of its support to the ground. The only way this can be done is to strike it at its foundation—the Trinity doctrine. The early Adventists were raised up of God to proclaim that Babylon was fallen. They could do this because they were not in bed with the harlot, and especially with her main teaching. The only way the proclamation of this message can be done today is to flee from the satanic doctrines of Rome and accept the clear word of Scripture.

The ecumenical movement and the unification of all the churches is the result of an evolutionary process which has its foundation in the same doctrine about God, which is the Trinity, and although there are many different beliefs within different denominations today, given enough time, the differences will cease to exist. Therefore, the Papacy has “no fear” from her daughters who cling as tenaciously to the Trinity as she clings, but she does fear and tremble when she realizes her most basic support is under dangerous attack.

Allen Stump

“Youth’s Corner” continued from page 20

washing the garments of your character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. How thankful we should be to God that we do not have to make these efforts in our own finite strength! Jesus brings us divine help to aid our human efforts.

Do not be led astray with the error of the wicked. The tempter's voice will be heard on every side, telling you that you are not now required to keep the law of God. This is a device of Satan. God has a law, and men must keep it. If they disregard these rules, they will not have that perfection of character that will give them an entrance into the mansions above. (*Ellen G. White – The Youth’s Instructor*, August 18, 1886.) 

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“The Image of God” Continued from page 7

While the Bible does not teach that Jesus is here in the flesh, it does teach that *He* is here by His Spirit. While the wording of the above statement is close to the actual truth, the authors clearly mean that it is not *Jes us Who* is here, but the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. But the message could have been clearer if the writer and/or editor had quoted the verse in second Corinthians just before verse 18. Verse 17 states, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” The actual presence of Christ may be in our lives.

The quarterly states that this work of restoration will not be “completed until there’s a new heaven and a new earth.” The new heaven and new earth, according to the Bible, will be brought into existence after the millennium. While we will be growing in our experience throughout all eternity, the character and image of Christ must be perfectly reflected in His people before He comes.

The Christian life is constantly an onward march. Jesus sits as a refiner and purifier of His people; and when His image is perfectly reflected in them, they are perfect and

holy, and prepared for translation. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 340)

When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 69)

Allen Stump

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