

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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Sin has marred God's perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. . . . The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world (The Desire of Ages, pp. 20, 21).



*Ellen White and
the Truth About God*

**New DVD is ready!
Please see page 20 for
details.**

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The Divinity of Jesus Christ

By Onycha Holt and Allen Stump

In our mind's eye, let us move forward to a time in the near future when life as we know it now will only be a part of our memory. The land is in chaos and upheaval. Homes have been demolished by earthquake and fire. Tornadoes have swept through the land with unleashed fury, reducing everything in their paths to matchsticks and tangled metal. Hurricanes have pelted the earth, leveling things standing in their way with the ferocity of demons. Rivers and creeks have overflowed their banks, washing away man, beast, and all material things. The economy has collapsed; there are little wages and few jobs. Trucks no longer move food from the south to the north and from the west to the east, for there is no food to move and no fuel to move it with. Refineries burn uncontrollably, mothers have no milk for their babies, and pet dogs are now scavenging beasts, but worse is the violence shown one man to another. No one is safe, and the life of a neighbor is of little concern to one who has been used to plenteous food and the comforts of home but who is now starving, cold, and without protection from man, beast, and the unpredictable forces of nature. Into all of this confusion walks a man of commanding appearance. (See *The Great Controversy*, pp. 614, 624.) He visits our cities, speaking in melodious tones to what is left of legislatures and town hall meetings, and what does he say? "Satan himself will personate Christ, declaring that he is the *Son of God* (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 346; emphasis supplied)."

How interesting! Satan does not, in his majestic impersonation of Christ, claim to be *God!* He knows that Jesus is the *Son of God* and not *God!* Yet, nearly all of Christendom in 2008 proclaims Jesus Christ to be God, a god who has assumed the role of a son. What a shame that in the deep deception of the trinity this glimmer of light in Satan's claim about the Son of God is not discerned by God's remnant people!

Last month we discussed the monotheistic doctrine of God and that our heavenly Father is the Supreme Ruler of all, and we considered some of the human reasoning used to explain the doctrine of the trinity. This month we wish to continue our study of divinity by focusing on Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. There are many doctrinal areas concerning Jesus that we could explore such as the personhood of Jesus, his incarnation (which Pastor Stump continues to discuss in part 2 of his article on page 8), the atonement of Jesus, the offices of Christ, the attributes of Christ, the sonship of Jesus, including the concept of *monogenes*, etc; but in this article we will focus on the divinity of Christ because there is confusion on who Christ really is and on the nature of his divinity. It is a common misconception that nontrinitarian Seventh-day Adventists deny the divinity of Christ. As in our article last month, we will first give a summary of texts to form a biblical basis for the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his attributes, and at the

conclusion of this article we will include a few pertinent thoughts from the Spirit of Prophecy, followed by a quiz!

Summary:

Jesus Christ is the Son of God: John 3:16; John 20:31; Mark 1:1; Acts 8:37; Luke 1:35; Matthew 3:17; Romans 1:3, 4; Acts 13:33; Psalm 2:7; Matthew 8:29; Mark 14:62; 1 John 4:15; 1 John 5:5.

Jesus Christ is the son of man: Isaiah 7:14; Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:31; Galatians 4:4; Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 2:16; Jeremiah 23:5; Matthew 22:42; Mark 10:47; Acts 2:30, 13:23; Romans 1:3.

Jesus Christ is Lord: Acts 15:26; Acts 20:21; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 Timothy 3:16; Colossians 1:14, 15; Philippians 2:10, 11.

Jesus Christ is Mediator: 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1.

Jesus Christ is Saviour: 2 Corinthians 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 John 1:7.

Jesus Christ does not change: Hebrews 13:8.

Jesus Christ is coming again: Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:7; John 14:3.

Jesus Christ received worship: Matthew 14:33; John 9:38.

Jesus Christ reveals the Father: John 5:19, 30; John 8:28; John 10:32; John 12:49.

Discussion:

One of the chief stumbling blocks that prevents most Seventh-day Adventists from accepting the nontrinitarian monotheistic doctrine held by Adventist pioneers and which causes them to continue in the Evangelical/Catholic Trinitarian mold is the belief that nontrinitarians deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. The conflict concerning this doctrine has a long history, dating back to the time of Arius (c.250-c.336).

Arius was a priest in the city of Alexandria who taught that Jesus Christ was not of the same substance of the Father and that he was a separate, distinct being from God, using the language that Jesus was created by God but was the first and highest of all created beings. Alexander was the bishop of Alexandria at this time and he taught that God was immutable and could not be divided and have his substance shared; therefore, Christ was very God and part of the being called God. Alexander repudiated Arius' idea that Jesus was not fully and absolutely eternal, created of a similar but different substance from the Father.

Alexander convened a local synod in Alexandria to address this issue and through it accomplished an uneasy truce between the two factions but at the same time denounced Arius (March 324). A few months later (February 325), because Arius repudiated the truce by further publicizing his views, he was condemned at a synod in Antioch.

This is when Emperor Constantine stepped in and tried to facilitate a settlement between the divergent views on the nature of Christ. Constantine called for a council at Nicæa, which convened on May 30, 325. This council eventually condemned Arius and his teachings, and Arius was banished.

A result of the Council of Nicæa was an approved, “orthodox” view of the nature of Christ, which stated that Christ is truly God. We will consider the Nicene Creed in a few paragraphs, but before we do, we should first consider a third group of believers in this discussion who emerged after the Council of Nicæa, the Semi-Arians, with which nontrinitarian Adventists are sometimes compared. In describing Semi-Arians, John Henry Newman states:

Instead of admitting...that our Lord was in reality a creature, though “not like other creatures,” they plainly declared that He was not a creature, but truly the Son, born of the substance (*usia*) of the Father...yet they would not allow Him simply to be God, as the Father was; but...distinct in substance from God [and]...holding that the question of the beginning of the Son’s existence was beyond our comprehension, they only asserted that there was such a beginning, but that it was before time and independent of it.

Such was the Semi-Arian Creed...that the Son was born [begotten] before all times, yet not eternal; not a creature, yet not God; of His substance, yet not the same in substance; and His exact and perfect resemblance in all things, yet not a second Deity (John Henry Newman, *Arians of the Fourth Century*, pp. 298, 299; <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/arians/chapter4-2.html>).

An understanding of this historical background is helpful in our consideration of the divinity of Christ. In approximately A.D. 328, Athanasius was staunchly proclaiming that only *God* could be our Saviour:

In the long run the most telling argument against Arianism was Athanasius’s constant soteriological battle cry that only God, very God, truly God Incarnate could reconcile and redeem fallen man to holy God (<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txo/arianism.htm>).

The formation of the Nicene Creed at the Council of Nicæa stated formally for the first time the basis for the trinitarian theology of God, part of which stated that Jesus is “Very God of Very God”:

One God the Father...and in one Lord Jesus Christ...God of God...Very God of Very God...and we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life...who...is worshipped and glorified (<http://www.creeds.net/ancient/nicene.htm>).

A clarified Semi-Arian position that the Adventist pioneers adopted could be stated in the following manner: Jesus Christ is the Son of the eternal Father and is of similar substance as the Father. He is divine in nature but is a distinct

separate being from the Father, in contrast to orthodox trinitarianism which has taught from the Council of Nicaea to the present day that Jesus is a part of the same being (hypostasis) of which the Father is a part. Jesus Christ is divine because of his relationship to God, his Father, but he is not “the God” in the sense of being the Supreme Being of the universe. Orthodox trinitarianism teaches that he is a part (the same substance) of this Supreme Being.

The question we must face, however, is does the Bible teach us that Jesus is “Very God of Very God?” The councils of man provide an insufficient foundation upon which to base any theological beliefs. Let us look at a few texts that may appear to be troublesome, taken from chapter 18 of *The Foundation of Our Faith*. The first is found in Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:8

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

In this verse in Hebrews, Paul quotes Psalm 45:6 from the Septuagint. The Bible tells us that it is the Father, the Supreme Sovereign of the universe, who gave this title to Jesus, so obviously Jesus cannot be the Supreme Being.

Jesus was declared to be God, or divine, by the Father because of who Jesus is. Jesus is divine by the very nature of being the Son of God. In comparison to the angels, Jesus “hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:4)” because he is God’s own Son.

The Father exalted the Son to the same plateau as himself, thus making his Son worthy of worship. “And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him (Hebrews 1:6).” Here we see that even the angels of God were instructed to worship the Son even as the Father is worshipped.

It is the Father who is ultimately responsible for all things, and he has given to Jesus the authority and position Jesus now holds. Paul understood this well, for he wrote:

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28).

These verses clearly show that God the Father has put all things under Jesus’ feet, and that he, God, is not under Christ. When all things shall be given back to the Father, then shall Jesus be subject to the Father that God may be all in all.

Thus, when Jesus is given the title of “God,” it is in reference to his divine nature and in reference to his relationship to us, his children. However, he is not the Father himself. Ephesians 1:17 agrees with this for there the Father is called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” While the Father

is called the God of Christ, Jesus is never called the God of the Father.

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah says that “his name shall be called...The mighty God.” Some people understand this phrase to mean that Christ is the Supreme God, and this might be true if the verse had referred to Christ as the Almighty God, but it uses the term mighty God. In the Bible we read of mighty men but never of almighty men. It is certainly appropriate to refer to the Son as mighty, for he is powerful. It is also appropriate to refer to him as God, for the Most High God himself refers to his Son as God in Hebrews 1:8. The term “The mighty God,” therefore, can rightly apply to the Son.

Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:17

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6).

Because the term “I am the first, and I am the last” is used by Jesus in Revelation, some people conclude from reading this verse that Jesus is the one and only God of the Bible or, at least, part of the one God.

Let us read in Revelation where Jesus applied this term to himself. When John saw Christ in vision, he said, “I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last (Revelation 1:17).” Jesus did not end his conversation here. In the next verse, he went on to say, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore (v. 18).”

Jesus used the term again when he spoke to the church at Smyrna. He said, “These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive (Revelation 2:8).” Jesus said that he, “the first and the last,” was dead. If he was the one and only God, he could not have died, for the Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:16 that God cannot die. Therefore, we must conclude that the person speaking in Isaiah 44:6 is someone other than Jesus Christ. There are other titles and names in the Bible that are shared by both the Father and the Son, and the title, “the first and the last” is one of these titles.

Let us go back to Isaiah 44:6 and find out who is speaking. The speaker says, “beside me there is no God,” and in verse 8, he says, “Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” This is very precise language to indicate that the speaker is alone. All of the pronouns are singular, indicating that only one person is speaking. Who is this one person? The New Testament clarifies this.

In 1 Corinthians 8:4, Paul wrote, “we know... that there is none other God but one.” And to make it abundantly clear who he was referring to when he spoke of the God beside

which there is none other, Paul also wrote “to us there is but one God, the Father (v. 6).” Paul understood the one God of the Bible to be God the Father and no one else.

Jesus had the same understanding. After Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4, the scribe told him, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he (Mark 12:32).” Who is the one God the scribe was referring to? Was he referring to Jesus as the one God? Certainly not! He was referring to God the Father and Jesus knew it.

At another time, while Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, he said, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God (John 8:54).” Jesus knew that when the scribes and Pharisees said “God” they were referring to his Father. When this scribe said, “there is one God; and there is none other but he,” Jesus knew that he was talking about his Father.

Jesus did not correct the scribe by saying, “You are wrong, I am really the one God of the Bible.” Not at all! To the contrary, the Bible says that Jesus saw that he answered discreetly or wisely (Mark 12:34). Jesus knew that this man was correct, that there is one God, the Father, and there is none other God but him.

With this clarification from the New Testament, we can be completely sure who is speaking in Isaiah 44:6. He is God the Father and no one else. He is the ultimate first and last, even though he allowed his Son to carry this title as well.

Revelation 1:8

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

In many Bibles the first part of this text is in red letters. This text is sometimes used to suggest that Jesus is called the Almighty, a term which is used several times in the book of Revelation but always with reference to the Father exclusively. The mistake in believing that this verse refers to Christ stems from faulty reading and carelessness on the part of some Bible publishers. In red-letter editions of the Bible, this verse is usually printed in red, indicating that it is Christ who is speaking. This misleads many readers. The publishers, and many others, come to this conclusion because of reading verse 11 where Jesus states, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” The terms used in this verse, “Alpha and Omega” and “first and last,” seem to correspond with the identical term, “Alpha and Omega,” and the similar term, “beginning and the ending,” in verse 8 and seem to indicate that it is Jesus who is speaking in verse 8. A closer examination of the passage, however, reveals that this is not so.

Let us begin a little earlier in the passage, in verses 4 and 5, where a greeting is given from the Father, from the seven spirits, and from Jesus Christ. We read:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Revelation 1:4, 5).

Now notice that a definite description or designation is given to each of them. The one who sits on the throne is definitely described as him “which is, and which was, and which is to come.” The seven spirits are declared to be before his throne, and Jesus is described as “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

There is no mistaking the Father’s description. He is the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come.” Nobody else is given that description. In fact, this description is in definite contrast to Jesus who is “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead.” When we come upon the statement a few verses later, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty,” to whom should we legitimately apply it? Clearly, it refers, not to Jesus, but to the Father. He is the one who “is and was, and is to come.”

Philippians 2:5-9

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

What does the phrase “being in the form of God” mean? Does this mean that Jesus is the sovereign God himself? This phrase is evidently set in opposition to the phrase, “took upon him the form of a servant.” The intent of the passage is to show the degree of the condescension of the Son of God by highlighting the immensity of the humiliation which he embraced when he took humanity upon himself. The difference between humanity and divinity is infinite, with divinity being at the pinnacle of existence and humanity far down on the scale. What was the position of Christ before he came to earth? Was he human? Was he angelic? Where would he fall in the classification of beings? Clearly, he was divine; he was in the category of divinity. He was in the form of God. It was from this position that he descended to the level of humanity. In other words, it was not an angel who came to earth and it was not a human being, but rather it was One who was at the utmost height of existence, even One who was divine and, in this respect, equal with God.

Let us note that it is not the divinity of Christ which is in question. It is not the fact that he is equal with the Father in nature which is in question. Rather, the problem is the concept of the Godhead which makes Jesus the sovereign God himself (the Supreme Being of the universe). This would destroy the truth that the Father is the highest authority in the universe, the source of all, and that Jesus truly is his begotten Son.

What many find it difficult to come to grips with is the concept that Jesus can be a divine Being, One who is God by nature, yet not be the most high God himself. However, this is the clear teaching of the Bible and it is only as we pursue our studies upon the basis of what the Bible clearly teaches that we can arrive at a proper understanding of biblical truth.

The true relationship of Jesus to the Father is brought out in Colossians and Paul makes the matter very clear. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).” Here we see that the fullness of the Godhead exists in Christ, and, as Colossians 1:19 explains, “it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Here we see that it is the Father who has ordained that the fullness of the godhead should dwell in Christ. This makes it clear that the Father is greater than Jesus and is the One who has ordained the status of Christ.

This is in perfect harmony with Matthew 28:18 where Jesus said, “All power [*exousia* (authority)] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” All power is his, but it was given unto him by One who is greater than he.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28).

The Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that Jesus is the Son of God and *never* refers to him as the Supreme God. Only the Father is supreme, but this does not in any way diminish the divinity of Jesus! All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him, but it dwells in him because the Father has conferred it upon him. This is the reason he could lay it all aside in the incarnation, for it had been given to him in the first place. The phrase, “made himself of no reputation” in Philippians 2:7 in the Greek means “emptied himself” (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν). Jesus emptied himself of what had been conferred upon him and took on himself the form of a servant. The Scripture also says that God has highly exalted him (Philippians 2:9).

Now, where else in the Bible can we find verification of Christ’s divinity? The Jewish leaders equated Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God to be a claim synonymous to equality with God:

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, *making himself equal with God* (John 5:18).

The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God* (John 10:33).

And Jesus himself said that he and his Father were one:

I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him (John 10:30, 31).

Jesus also claimed sovereignty over the law of God:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: *But I say unto you*, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:21, 22).

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: *But I say unto you*, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matthew 5:27, 28).

And that he was judge:

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity* (Matthew 7:22, 23).

Many other attributes and/or offices are ascribed to Jesus by the Scriptures that are ascribed to no other human being, such as the ability to forgive sins, the office of being our mediator, all power, etc. In all of this, however, let us always remember that Jesus is the begotten Son of God and all the attributes of divinity were given to him by his Father. He was divine while on this earth, not because of the divine attributes that he had laid aside during his incarnation, but because of *who he was* even while in the form of a servant. He was (and still is) the only begotten Son of God. How and when in the long eons of past eternity he was begotten we do not know; how he became incarnate we do not understand beyond what inspiration has revealed, but we know that he and our heavenly Father are worthy of our undying praise, worship, and honor and will forevermore be.

E. J. Waggoner of 1888 said this about Christ:

The Scriptures declare that Christ is “the only begotten son of God.” He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from

the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning (*Christ and his Righteousness*, pp. 21, 22).

Let us now look at a few passages from the pen of Ellen White to complement our understanding of the divinity of Jesus. The first equates *agape* with the divinity of Christ:

“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have *love* [agape] one for another” (John 13:35). *The divinity of Christ* is acknowledged in the unity of the children of God (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, p. 266; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted).

Our great Exemplar *was exalted to be equal with God*. He was high commander in heaven (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 426).

Christ’s followers today should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear. The Scriptures teach men how they should approach their Maker—with humility and awe, through faith in a *divine Mediator* (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 48).

A complete offering has been made; for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,” —*not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person*, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (*The Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

For centuries the divinity of Christ has been debated. The basis of the Trinitarian view was first expressed in the Nicene Creed in 325, which stated, in part, that Jesus Christ is the “Very God.” Then we have the Arian view which stated that Jesus was created because God is one and no substance of God can be shared. A spin-off from the Arian view were the Semi-Arians who believed Jesus was not created but was born of God and was, therefore, not the supreme God, but the Son of God.

As Bible-believing Christians, what can we believe about our Saviour Jesus Christ? He is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16), brought forth from the Father before his works of old (Proverbs 8:22), he was exalted by the Father (Philippians 2:9), he is our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5), his will is on an equality with God’s will (John 17:24), he is the giver of life (John 10:27, 28), he forgives ours sins and cleanses us from unrighteousness (1 John 1:9), he gives us rest, peace, and sonship (Matthew 11:28; John 14:27; John 1:12), and his words stand forever (Matthew 24:35). He is our high priest touched with our infirmities and tempted in all points as we are yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He is the express image of the Father (Hebrews 1:3), and the list goes on. You will be able to add many more texts to this list, but what we want you to remember most of all harkens back to the Council of Nicæa and the debates that occurred there and

subsequently—was Jesus God or the Son of God? Jesus is the *divine* Son of God, wherein dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, a Son who has been exalted to be equal with the Father and who has been given all the attributes of God except immortality, for the Father alone is inherently immortal (1 Timothy 6:16).

Satan, above all on this earth, understands who God and Jesus are, and the fallen angels believe and tremble (James 2:19). They are working with all their energies to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.

When Jesus was on earth, Satan led the people to reject the Son of God, and to choose Barabbas, who in character represented Satan, the god of this world. The Lord Jesus Christ came to dispute the usurpation of Satan in the kingdoms of the world. The conflict is not yet ended; and as we draw near the close of time, the battle waxes more intense. As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will personate Jesus Christ; and the world that has rejected the truth will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings...

The form Satan assumed in Eden when leading our first parents to transgress, was of a character to bewilder and confuse the mind. He will work in as subtle a manner as we near the end of earth's history. *All* his deceiving power will be brought to bear upon human subjects, to *complete* the work of deluding the human family. So deceptive will be his working, that men will do as they did in the days of Christ; and when asked, Whom shall I release unto you, Christ or Barabbas? the almost universal cry will be, Barabbas, Barabbas! And when the question is asked, "What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" the cry again will be, "Crucify him (*The Review & Herald*, April 14, 1896; also found in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1106)!"


When Christ was upon this earth, the world preferred Barabbas. And today the world and the churches are making the same choice. The scenes of the betrayal, the rejection, and the crucifixion of Christ have been re-enacted, and will again be re-enacted on an immense scale. People will be filled with the attributes of the enemy, and with them his delusions will have great power... They are ensnared and taken, and by their every action they cry, Release unto us Barabbas, but crucify Christ.

Even now this decision is being made...

When the world is at last brought up for trial before the great white throne, to account for its rejection of Jesus Christ, God's own messenger to our world, what a solemn scene it will be! What a reckoning will have to be made for nailing to the cross One who came to our world as a living epistle of the law. *God will ask each one the question, What have you done with My only-begotten Son? What*

*will those answer who have refused to accept the truth? They will be obliged to say, We hated Jesus, and cast Him out. We cried, Crucify Him, crucify Him. We chose Barabbas in His stead. If those to whom the light of Heaven is presented reject it, they reject Christ. They reject the only provision whereby they may be cleansed from pollution. They crucify to themselves the *Son of God* afresh, and put Him to an open shame. To them it will be said, "I never knew you: depart from me." God will assuredly avenge the death of *His Son* (*The Review & Herald*, January 30, 1900).*

Brothers and sisters, our only safety is in the Word of God.

Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in his Word; they can honor him only as they have a right conception of his character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. *None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.* To every soul will come the searching test, Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable Word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (*The Great Controversy*, 1888 edition, p. 593)? 

Quiz

1. List three texts that declare Jesus to be the Son of God.
2. Did Arius believe that God and Jesus were of the same or of similar substance?
3. Would the term "Arian," "Semi-Arian," or "Athanasian" best describe the belief of the Adventist Pioneers?
4. What Old Testament verse is quoted in Hebrews 1:8?
5. What text tells us that "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" was in Jesus?
6. Bonus Thought Question: Why could there be no atonement if Jesus was a part of the trinity just like God instead of being God's Son?

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

1. Shema is used in Deuteronomy 6:4 and it means to "hear."
2. The first set of Fundamental Principles was published in 1872 and was first changed in 1931.
3. God is called our Father in texts such as Ephesians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 1:3; Malachi 2:10.
4. According to Jesus, the first commandment is that God is one and we are to love him supremely (Mark 12: 29, 30).
5. In John 5:26 Jesus declares his life to be given him from God the Father.
6. The trinity doctrine disqualifies Jesus from being our mediator because he would then be a mediator between himself and man.

The Incarnation (Part 2) By Allen Stump

Last month we wrote an overview of the incarnation dealing with the flesh and mind of Jesus. This installment is to continue that study, with an emphasis upon the flesh of Jesus. Ellen G. White noted:

When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God (*That I May Know Him*, p. 25).

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).” His name would be “Immanuel”—God with us. (See Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23.) When God delivered the Ten Commandments to Israel, he said, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exodus 20:2).” The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a type of deliverance from sin. Before that emancipation, Christ said to Moses, “*And I am come down* to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Exodus 3:8).” Christ was not to bring deliverance from a throne in heaven, but would “come down” to where man was to give him freedom.

The Flesh of Jesus Christ

Like the word *millennium*, the word *incarnation* is not used in the Scriptures. It is derived from two Latin words, *in carnis*, which translate “in flesh” or “in the flesh.” What kind of flesh did Jesus partake of? “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3).” The phrase “in the likeness” (*en homoioiati* — ἐν ὁμοιώματι) means to make like, to be like, or to resemble. We find the identical expression used in Philippians 2:7 where we read that Jesus was “made in the likeness [*en homoioiati*] of men.”

Did Jesus come in the flesh and was it sinful flesh that he partook of? While some today differ in their understanding of Romans 8:3, the seeker of truth finds in the Scriptures many precious gems relating to the nature of Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul begins by stating Christ’s likeness to God. This is then followed by Paul setting forth Christ’s likeness to men:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. *For it became him*, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:9-11).

The Greek root word for *became* is *prepo* (πρέπω). It is defined as “suitable,” “proper,” or “it is fit or right.” Matthew

uses this word in describing the dialog between Christ and John at his baptism. “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh [*prepo*] us to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).” Paul also uses it in Hebrews 7: “For such an high priest was what we needed for [*prepo*] us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Hebrews 7:26, margin).” What, then, is Paul trying to tell us in Hebrews 2:10? Simply that it is suitable, proper, fit, and right for God to make Christ “perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10).” Paul continues:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:14-16).

Christ partook of the seed of Abraham. Abraham was not immaculate with sinless flesh. While some claim the translation of verse 16 is not the best, those who decry the King James Version do not mention that Paul, in Romans 1:3, says that “. . . Jesus Christ our Lord, . . . was made of the seed of David [not immaculate or sinless] according to the flesh.” Yet, Paul goes further so as to leave the reader with no doubt that he has a Saviour that comes close to us in our humanity:

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

The word translated *behooved* in the Greek is *opheilo* (ὀφείλω) which means “to be bound to,” “under obligation,” “indebted,” or “owe.” Commenting on this, Elder M. L. Andreasen wrote:

If Christ is to be a merciful and faithful high priest, Paul says it behooves Him “in all things” to be like His brethren. This is obligatory. It is a duty He owes and must not avoid. He cannot make reconciliation for men unless He takes His place with them and in all things becomes like them. It is not a question of choice. He *should*, He *must*, He *ought* to, He is *under obligation* to, He *owes* it. Unless He has to struggle with the same temptations men do, He cannot sympathize with them. One who has never been hungry, who has never been weak and sick, who has never struggled with temptations, is unable fully to sympathize with those who are thus afflicted (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 1, p. 6; emphasis in original).

One may ask, “Is not God omniscient? Did God have to send his Son to our level to find out what we experience?”

Why would Christ have to take “upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181)?” Firstly, the Bible states that Christ “emptied himself” at the incarnation. (See Philippians 2:7, Greek.) In order to die for the sins of man, Christ must first empty himself and give up his immortality. “But he humbled himself, and took mortality upon him (*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887).” Also, he “emptied himself” of his omniscience because the Scripture states that “Jesus increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52).” This could not have been if, in his humanity, he was omniscient.

This truth is vital. Unless we struggle with the same temptations, problems, or trials of those we seek to help, we are hampered in understanding their trials. Also, the one in need must know that the sympathizer *can relate by experience* to his or her situation! How difficult it is to help those that look at you with a tear-filled face, saying: “You don’t understand; you’ve never been in my situation!” The sinner who understands that Jesus has taken upon himself his own sinful nature can gain courage by the fact that his Saviour does know *by experience* the trial he is under and that he can relate *by experience* to the sinner’s need. Therefore, Jesus can provide the help we must have when we are tempted because he “condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3).” The Scriptures further state that Jesus was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and was “compassed with infirmity (Hebrews 4:15; 5:2).” “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting (Isaiah 50:5, 6).” He “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matthew 8:17).” God did not exempt Jesus nor did Jesus ask to be exempted. *All* of Christ’s experiences were necessary if he is to be of help to his brethren. Thus the Scriptures state: “Wherefore in *all things* it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17).” Christ, the Son of the eternal God, became Jesus, the Son of man, that we might become the “sons of God (1 John 3:1).” Christ became man so that he might redeem man. Jesus was made what man is:

- “Man . . . is flesh. . . (Genesis 6:3).” The Bible says “the Word was made flesh (John 1:14).”
- Man is “under the law (Romans 3:19).” “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, *made* under the law (Galatians 4:4).”
- Man is “under the curse (Galatians 3:10).” “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made* a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).”
- Man is “sold under sin (Romans 7:14).” “. . . and the LORD hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).”
- Man is a “body of sin (Romans 6:6).” Christ has been *made* “sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).”

We see that “in *all things* it behoved him to be made *like* unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17).” A. T. Jones noted:

Yet it must never be forgotten, it must be borne in mind and heart constantly and forever, that in none of this as to man, the flesh, sin, and the curse was Christ ever of *Himself* or of His own original nature or fault. All this He “*was made*.” “He *took upon Him* the form of a servant, and *was made* in the likeness of men [Philippians 2:7].”

And in all this Christ was “*made*” what, before, He was *not* in order that *the man* might be made *now and forever* what he is *not* (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 47; emphasis in the original).

Three of the gospel writers have references to the incarnation early in their accounts. Matthew and Luke both give genealogies, with Luke adding greater detail concerning the conception of Jesus. Luke, a physician, records the words of Gabriel to Mary: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).” Furthermore, John writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 2, 14).” The One who was with the Father from the beginning, “emptied himself” and became flesh, flesh such as Mary had. Yet, Jesus was not degraded by this assumption of flesh, for, as Luke records, he was “that holy thing.”

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman (Galatians 4:4).” Christ must be born of a woman, for being made of a man would not bring him close enough to mankind to be the complete Saviour. Christ must come all the way down to us or he fails to reach us. In Jacob’s vision, the ladder reached all the way from heaven to earth. It did not stop one or two rungs short. That ladder represented Christ. (See Genesis 32:10-16.) For Christ to be able to reach all the way to the bottom, he must be “made of a woman.” “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Timothy 2:14).” Had Christ been only of a man, he would have fallen short for the woman had sinned first, thus sin was already in the world before Adam sinned.

Mary could share no other nature with the divine embryo than that which she possessed, a fallen nature. Most Protestants would say they do not believe in the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, yet few know what the teaching is about. Most people think it has to do with the conception of Jesus; instead, it has to do with the conception of Mary. The dogma teaches:

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant

of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore is to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful (*Catholic Belief*, p. 214).

Thus, this teaching states that Mary was born without sin and was preserved sinless so as to be able to be the mother of Christ without transmitting to him a sinful, fallen nature. While most Protestants today reject this version of an immaculate conception, at the same time they believe another version of an immaculate conception which is that the conception of Jesus was in such a manner that Mary was nothing more than a surrogate mother. She passed on nothing to Christ. If this is so, then Jesus falls far short of being the Saviour we need to help us.

Are We Out of Rome?

As Elder E. J. Waggoner said, “We need to settle, every one of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not (*General Conference Bulletin*, April 22, 1901).” Waggoner wrote on the incarnation with clear logic and reasoning. In his most famous work, he noted: “A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 26).”

Another typical statement of Waggoner comes from his study of Galatians: “So I say that his being born under the law was a necessary consequence of his being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, of taking upon himself the nature of Abraham (*The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*, pp. 61, 62).”

We need to understand if we are out of the church of Rome or not. Papal teaching abounds not only within the confines of Catholicism but in much of Protestantism today. The Catholic dogma on the incarnation is that Jesus is not really human at all but, instead, has a divine nature far separated from sinners. He is not in a place where he can feel the needs of men. Such is not the true Christ but a false christ, a Tammuz we might weep for yet receive no help from. *This is not “the faith of Jesus.”* In 1905, Elder A. T. Jones said powerfully:

The faith of Jesus is that God sent “His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

The faith of Jesus is that “in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren.”

The faith of Jesus is that He “Himself took our infirmities” and was touched “with the feeling of our infirmities,” being tempted in all points like as we are. If He was not as we are, He could not possibly be tempted “like as we are.” But He was “in all points tempted like as we are.” Therefore He was “in all points” “like as we are.”

The faith of Rome as to the human nature of Christ and Mary and of ourselves springs from that idea of the natural mind that God is too pure and too holy to dwell with us and in us in our sinful human nature; that sinful as we are, we are too far off for Him in His purity and holiness to come to us just as we are.

The true faith—the faith of Jesus—is that, far off from God as we are in our sinfulness, in our human nature which He took, He *has come* to us just where we are; that, infinitely pure and holy as He is, and sinful, degraded, and lost as we are, He in Christ by His Holy Spirit will willingly dwell with us and in us to save us, to purify us, and to make us holy.

The faith of Rome is that we must be pure and holy in order that God shall dwell with us at all.

The faith of Jesus is that God must dwell with us and in us in order that we shall be holy or pure at all (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, pp. 38, 39; emphasis in original).

Why would not all men want such a Saviour? Some read the implications very clearly. It is possible for man, in fallen flesh, to have total victory. If Jesus had come in some other nature, then how could he expect from us that which he was not able to do himself? The same victory that Jesus obtained in fallen, sinful flesh, he desires to reproduce in our sinful flesh by his indwelling presence! Jesus said, “I can of mine own self do nothing (John 5:30).” “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works (John 14:10).” We may overcome as Christ overcame by totally depending upon divine help and guidance. Christ has promised us: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Revelation 3:21).”

Bible Readings for the Home Circle was a standard reference book among Seventh-day Adventists. It reflected the views of the Adventist pioneers and correctly commented on the Bible teaching of the incarnation:

The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is needed. On His human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, – a sinful nature. On the divine side, from His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit. And all this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that *in the very same way* every one who is ‘born of the Spirit’ may gain like victories over sin in his own sinful flesh (*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, p. 174, 1935 ed.; also p. 115, 1915 ed.; emphasis in the original).

Notice this statement not only declares that Jesus inherited “a sinful nature” but it also denies that Jesus “was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, [and] inherited no tendencies to sin.” The last part of the phrase is of special interest. This representative statement says that Jesus, while never sinning or submitting to sin in any way, understood temptation from within apart from the direct assaults of Satan.

The Holy Flesh Movement

The first time we find the idea within Seventh-day Adventism that Jesus did not inherit tendencies to sin (notice not tendencies of sin) is during what became known as the Holy Flesh Movement that took place in the Indiana Conference from 1899 to 1901. Ella M. Robinson, granddaughter of Ellen White, gives some of the background:

The conference evangelist, S. S. Davis, developed and promulgated the teachings that led to these strange happenings. In time he was joined by R. S. Donnell, president of the Indiana Conference. Nearly all the conference workers followed. The basic features of this strange doctrine, which was called the “cleansing message,” were that when Jesus passed through the Garden of Gethsemane, He had an experience which all who follow Him must have. It was taught that Jesus had holy flesh, and that those who followed Him through this Garden experience would likewise have holy flesh. They were then “born” sons of God and they had “translation faith.” Having holy flesh like Christ, they could not see corruption any more than he did; thus they would live to see Him come. Those who did not have this experience were “adopted” sons. They did not have translation faith. They must pass through the grave, and thus go to heaven by “the underground railroad (*Man of Action*, p. 169).”

The “strange happenings” were Pentecostal type of services with shouting, drum playing, dance music to sacred words, and dancing. It is of great interest to note what some of the key points of doctrine were that led to the strange happenings mentioned above. According to R. S. Donnell, then conference president in Indiana:

When Adam and Eve sinned, they were conformed to the nature of Satan. That nature was begotten to every son and daughter of Adam, and they don’t have to be tempted in order to cause them to sin. They are born sinners, and they sin by nature. It is those who have accepted the plan of salvation, by repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might once more become sons of God, who are tempted to sin. Satan is striving to get them to fall as he did Adam. . .

Temptation is that by which we are tested as to whether there is still lust in our hearts, for the 14th verse [James 1] says: “But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.” That is when we yield to temptation there is still lust in our hearts ®. S. Donnell,

The Nature of Christ and Man, p. 2; quoted from William Grotheer, *The Holy Flesh Movement 1899–1901*, p. 28).

Donnell and those who accepted the Holy Flesh teaching believed we are born sinners and that those who would be cleansed would no longer have the fallen nature of Adam. This would be accomplished by “going through ‘Gethsemane’ with their Lord. When this experience was realized, it meant they had received ‘translation faith’ and would never die (G. A. Roberts, *The Holy Fanaticism*; Ellen G. White Estate Document File #190, footnote #15; quoted from Grotheer, *The Holy Flesh Movement 1899–1901*, p. 28).”

In a letter dated September 25, 1900, Elder S. N. Haskell wrote to Ellen White relating his observations about the teachings of the movement:

Their point of theology in this particular respect seems to be this: They believe that Christ took Adam’s nature before he fell; so He took humanity as it was in the garden of Eden, and thus humanity was holy, and this is the humanity which Christ had; and now, they say, the particular time has come for us to become holy in that sense, and then we will have “translation faith” and never die (Letter of S. N. Haskell to Ellen White, September 25, 1900).

So far, we have seen that the Holy Flesh Movement believed that we are born sinners, thus redefining sin from the Bible definition in 1 John 3:4, and that Christ took the nature of Adam before he fell. This is clarified to show that Christ took a fallen physical and deteriorated human body but not our fallen spiritual nature:

He took a body which showed by its deteriorated condition, that the effects of sin was shown by it, but His life proved that there was no sin in it. It was a body which the Father had prepared for Him. Heb. 10:5. Christ’s body represented a body redeemed from its fallen spiritual nature, but not from its fallen, or deteriorated physical nature. It was a body redeemed from sin, and with that body Christ clothed His divinity (Donnell, *The Nature of Christ and Man*, p. 3; quoted from Grotheer, *The Holy Flesh Movement 1899–1901*, p. 31).

A fourth important point that should be understood about the Holy Flesh Movement was that Christ was exempted from the law of heredity from having any inherited tendencies to sin because of his conception by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In 1903, Elder Ira J. Hankins wrote to S. S. Davis, former conference evangelist and one of the leaders of the Holy Flesh Movement, and asked: “Is every child born into this world naturally inclined to evil even before it is old enough to discern between good and evil?” To this question Davis replied, “Yes, unless preserved from the law of heredity in conception by the power of the Holy Ghost. See Ps. 51:5 Shapen in sin, also Eph. 2:3 ‘by nature children of wrath’ (Letter of S. S. Davis to Ira J. Hankins, March 15, 1903; quoted in *The Holy Flesh Movement 1899–1901*, p. 54).”

Letters

We will consider one final point concerning the Holy Flesh doctrine in this article. Donnell taught that the believer who went through the Gethsemane experience would become God and so, therefore, could not even be tempted to sin!

Christ, according to the Apostle James, could not be tempted, or persuaded to sin, because being the Son of God He had no lust in Him, and God the Father said, “in Him I am well pleased.” Then you ask: Does God want to make God’s [sic] out of us? Yes that is just what He wants to do. He wants us to become God’s [sic] so that we cannot be tempted to sin. In the 82nd Psalm, and the 6th verse, He says, “I have said, ye are God’s, and all you are the children of the Most High” [sic]. The next verse says; “But ye shall die like men.” And why? Because they will not become God’s [sic] so that they can quit sinning. “Whoever is born of God, doth not commit sin.” 1 John 3:9. The 144,000 must attain in this life unto this high estate of perfection in character, as the sons of God, and the daughters of the Almighty, for they do not go through the grave, to leave their imperfections there. Like Christ they must become so related to God that they cannot be even tempted to sin (Donnell, *The Nature of Christ and Man*, pp. 4, 5; quoted from Grotheer, *The Holy Flesh Movement 1899–1901*, p. 30).

Let us now notice the five points that the Holy Flesh Movement taught differently from the general body of believers:

1. Humans are born sinners, thus redefining sin.
2. Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall.
3. Christ’s body represented a body that was redeemed from its fallen spiritual nature but not the deteriorated physical nature.
4. Christ was exempted or preserved from the law of heredity by the power of the Holy Spirit so that he had no temptations from within.
5. Those who would be translated would become gods and be brought to a state where they could not be tempted.

The Bible is very clear on the falsehood of each of these teachings. The only one we have not looked at to this point is number five. But the Bible plainly teaches that we may be tempted and that Jesus knew temptation. (See Matthew 4: 1-10; John 2:24, 25; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:7.) What was Ellen White’s reaction to these teachings?

The teaching given in regard to what is termed “holy flesh” is an error (*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 32).

In a talk given at a special session in Indianapolis in 1901 Ellen White stated:

When I am gone from here, none are to pickup any points of this doctrine and call it truth. *There is not a thread of truth in the whole fabric* (G. A. Roberts, *The Holy Fanaticism*; Ellen G. White Estate Document File #190, p. 4).

To be continued

Thank you so much for everything you’ve ever shared with us (and that’s a lot). We don’t have words to tell you how eternally grateful we are for your ministry. Thanks a million for the Ellen White tapes. What a blessing!!

Please pray for my four children.

Mississippi


Please send me . . . materials on the Holy Spirit, Bible studies, God and Jesus, DVDs on what Ellen White believed, etc. I already have a VCR tape “The Return of the Fourth Angel.”

I have studied the subject of the Spirit for many years but have never been able to get a pastor to study with me. When I first got *Old Paths* I was so happy. I look forward to receiving it in my mailbox each time it comes. I have wanted to write you for a long time because I do have questions, although in my spirit I have peace.

I have shared what I believe with only one other person and she told me later that the Lord told her I was terribly wrong. I told her the Lord should have told me and not her. I really don’t know how to share with anyone of our faith because of the things that Ellen White has said about the Holy Spirit. For instance “the Holy Spirit is as much a person as God is a person.” Please read *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 74 where she defines person. If you could give me light on the subject for I truly want to understand. The Bible is very clear to me but what she says is not.

I look forward to receiving the items requested and welcome your input. God bless you richly.


Missouri

Comment: I believe that the new DVD, *Ellen G. White and the Truth About God* will help answer these and similar questions. 



Prayer Requests

As Lynnford Beachy and his family make their way to Arizona after a challenging but blessed winter in the southeast, we ask that you will especially pray for them as they seek to find a permanent place to be established. The need for Lynnford to be able to travel overseas as well as the need of the children for a stable setting could be helped greatly by a permanent location for the family.

Please also pray for the work overseas, as there are currently many more calls for help and assistance than can be met at this time. Thank you. 

The Doctrine of Sin (Part 2) By Allen Stump

As we have been studying systematic theology we have noted the need to properly communicate our thoughts by stressing the need to have vocabulary that has understandable terms. We have noted that “Christology” is the study of and affirmation of Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah whose foundational point is the nature and person of Jesus. We also noticed that “soteriology” is the area of Christian theology that deals with Christ’s work of salvation. The most basic principle of soteriology is the understanding of sin.

The nature of Christ and one’s definition of sin are critical to correct theology, as it has been demonstrated time and time again that one’s view on these two points determines the believer’s view on the plan of salvation.

Any time there is a shifting of theology with a new paradigm introduced concerning the nature of Christ and/or the nature of sin expect to hear a new theology on how mankind is saved. As one theology professor stated, “Your view of sin determines your view of salvation.”

Having inspired definitions of our concepts, such as sin, are important. We cannot start with predefined, unbiblical meanings and hope to arrive at truth. For example, because of certain human predefined views of *divinity* many have rejected the plainest statements of the Bible concerning Jesus being the Son of God.

The Bible definition of sin is found in 1 John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” The Greek ἡ ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) ἔστιν ἡ ἀνομία (*anomia*) is literally “the sin is the lawlessness.” The use of the definite article (ἡ – feminine singular nominative) twice implies that *hamartia* and *anomia* are exchangeable terms. John brings these terms into juxtaposition with each other to show their equality, while at the same time in chapter 3 he brings sin and righteousness into juxtaposition to show their contrast. The crookedness of a line is best shown when placed beside a straight line!

The writings of Paul clarify any question as to what law John is speaking of here when he writes: “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law [the Ten Commandments]: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet [tenth commandment] (Romans 7:7).” Ellen White clearly noted:

The only definition given in the word of God as to what is sin, is found in 1 John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law (The Signs of the Times, January 8, 1894; emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted).”

In the third chapter of First John, the apostle contrasts those who sin with those who are born again living righteous lives: “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (v. 3).” “Little children, let no man deceive

you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous (v. 7).”

The Bible uses the exact term “righteousness by faith” only once: “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith (Galatians 5:5).” It does, however, also speak of the concept using similar language in the following verses:

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (Romans 3:22).

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Philippians 3:9).

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Hebrews 11:7).

Before we go further, let us break down the expression *righteousness by faith*. The root word for righteousness in the Old Testament is *tsadaq*, the same word translated “cleansed” in Daniel 8:14. It means to be just or right and its basic meaning is to be straight. Ellen White simply says that “Righteousness is right doing (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312).” *Righteousness by faith* is therefore *right doing by faith!* According to Matthew 8:5-10, faith is depending only upon the Word of God and expecting that Word alone to do what it claims. Therefore *righteousness by faith* is *right doing by depending upon the Word of God alone*.

In this time of election campaigning in the United States, we hear many things promised and proclaimed. Most of the promises we know will not be kept. Yet it seems that the louder and more often the candidates proclaim their false views, the more people listen to their siren song and follow along. The same is true in the church. Many have come along proclaiming that they teach righteousness by faith, but with various and even widely different views at times. They all cannot be correct. One thing should be very clear: Truly having the genuine article will produce righteousness in the life so that the believer is pure “even as he is pure (1 John 3:3).”

Sin is a violation of God’s law in thought, word, or deed. As we have noted from John, sin involves making choices. Sometimes failing to make the right choice and *choosing* to be neglectful is also sin. A failure to do the right is declared to be sin: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin (James 4:17).” In other words, sin is not only the wrong things we do. It is also choosing not to do that which is right. Unbelief caused Jesus to rebuke the disciples (Mark 16:14). Unbelief caused the children of Israel to be cut off (Romans 11:20). And unbelief will keep us out of heaven if we follow the example of Israel (Hebrews 4:6, 11). One of

the worst choices of neglect we can make is to disbelieve God's Word and not trust him.

Further thoughts on sin are revealed in Romans 14:23 and 1 John 5:17.

All unrighteousness is sin: ... (1 John 5:17).

... for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23).

John's statement in 1 John 5:17 is easily understood when compared to 1 John 3:4. These two statements are virtually saying the same thing for righteousness is defined by obedience to God's law.

The context of Romans 14:23 is about the choices we make based upon the pressures others place on us. Unlike 1 John 3:4 which follows the proper syntax for a definition, Romans 14:23 actually express an example of sin rather than give a definition for it. Examples help to illustrate a concept but do not define it. For instance, a Mercedes Benz is a car. This is a true sentence that illustrates what a car *can be*. However, when we reverse the syntax and state, "A car is a Mercedes Benz," we create a sentence that, while it may be true, it is not necessarily always true. A car can also be a Ford, a Toyota, or a Honda, for example. These sentences do not define what a car is, they only provide illustrations of a car. Likewise if we reverse the syntax of Romans 14:23 and say, "Sin is whatsoever is not of faith," while this statement in itself is true, sin is more than this. It is the transgression of the Ten Commandment Law.

Since victory over sin can only be obtained by faith, it is perfectly logical that when faith is not lived and expressed, our actions and life will only result in sin. Further, as we have noted, faith is based on the Word of God (Romans 10:17), the true source of strength for the Christian. The context of Paul's statement in Romans 14:23 involves making decisions based on pressure to please someone else, rather than basing our decisions on God's Word.

Augustine, Calvin, and others have suggested that the definition for sin is our human nature—because Adam sinned, I am born a sinner. This is not because of anything I have done, but because I inherited sin, condemnation, and/or guilt from Adam. According to Augustine, as soon as I was born I was counted as a sinner in the eyes of God. This belief provides the rationale for the basis for infant baptism. This defies both the Word of God and reasonable logic and creates more problems than it tries to solve.

This also brings an indictment against God: We abhor the doctrine of eternal torment for it portrays an unfair, unloving god. But the doctrine of original sin and its variations does little better to the character of God.

If our *nature* is sin, then to have sinlessness is to have a change of our nature. From 1899 to 1901 there was a movement in the Indiana Conference that become known as "The Holy Flesh Movement." This movement taught that we "are born sinners"®. S. Donnell, *The Nature of Christ and Man*, p.

1; quoted from William Grotheer, *The Holy Flesh Movement 1899–1901*, p. 28)."

After the movement had been checked, there was a special conference meeting in Indianapolis. Ellen White was at that meeting and gave a straight testimony concerning the experience that the conference had just passed through. At the close of her talk, she stated:

When I am gone from here, none are to pick up any points of this doctrine and call it truth. There is a not a thread of truth in the whole fabric (G. A. Roberts, *The Holy Fanaticism*, Ellen G. White Estate Document File #190, p. 4).

At the foundation of this erroneous movement was a misunderstanding on the nature of Christ and the doctrine of sin. For further information on this subject see "The Incarnation (Part 2)," on page 8.

The Bible teaches that Adam could only pass on a fallen, sinful nature to man. Sinful here means to have a natural tendency or a bent to sin as opposed to being full of sin. This nature we receive is not accounted in God's eyes as sin. If the fallen nature of man were accepted as sin, then Jesus would not have been able to take "upon His sinless nature our sinful nature (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181)." According to the proponents of what has been termed "New Theology," Jesus had to have been born with a sinless nature, for if having the sinful nature of Adam is sin, then Jesus could not be our Saviour and, in fact, would have needed a Saviour himself. But the Bible states that "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3)."

In recent years, the position of the New Theology has been modified by George Knight and others to acknowledge that Jesus took on flesh like Adam had after the fall, describing this as having "innocent infirmities." However, Knight and others fail to attribute to that flesh any inner drawings to sin or ability to be tempted from within. However, Jesus well understood the temptations that we must face. The Bible says that he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15)." John described the reality of Christ's internal struggle when he wrote:

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man (John 2:24, 25).

Notice how Young's Literal Translation renders the verbs in these verses:

And Jesus himself was not trusting himself to them, because of his *knowing* all men, and because he had no need that any should testify concerning man, for he himself *was knowing* what was in man (John 2:24, 25 YLT).

It was not simply an imputed knowledge of man that Jesus received but a real experience that he was going through all

during his life. It is true that Jesus was severely tempted in the wilderness, but he did not need Satan present to be tempted. Accepting the fallen nature of man, he could be tempted from within as the rest of us are or he could not have been tempted in all points. James writes of our experience:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed (James 1:13, 14).

James says that we are tempted when our own lust tries to take the supremacy. He then states: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:15).” So the lust or desire mentioned here is not sin but rather that which, if cherished, given into, dwelt upon, and finally acted upon, brings sin which results in death. Jesus was tempted as we are so he could help us in our times of need.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:14-18).

It “behoved” Jesus; in other words, he was under obligation to be made like us, to be tempted as we are. If he was not made like us, he could not have been truly tempted as we are and he could not be a help us, but help us he can because he never once in thought, word, or deed gave in even once to any manner to temptation. He kept the human nature subdued and beaten back.

Let us be clear that by this we are not saying in the least that Jesus sinned or was a sinner. The Scriptures are clear that he “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:22).”

The truly good news of the gospel is that we may have the same experience Jesus had. While he had sinful flesh, his mind was ever pure. You see the real battle ground is for the mind.

For though we walk in the flesh, *we do not war after the flesh*: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and *bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

We can see that it is the mind, the thoughts that must be brought into obedience. In Hebrews 12:3 we are told to “consider him [Christ] that endured such contradiction [hostility] of sinners against himself, lest ye be *wearied and faint in your minds*.” What we need is a new mind. We must be born from above (John 3:3, margin). The unregenerated mind is not subject to the law of God, and in fact, it cannot be.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:7, 8).

The mind that Jesus had, we are not only offered, but commanded by God’s word to receive. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5).” As we have the mind of Christ we are strengthened for all the warfare that Satan can throw against us.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

God has made every provision for us to overcome sin. But we ask again, what is the real nature of sin? The plain logic of the matter is simple enough that children can understand. A sinner is one who sins. Being born to sinful parents does not make one a sinner at birth any more than a child born to man and a woman who are painters becomes a painter at birth. It is not until the child picks up the brush and applies the paint to the canvas that he or she becomes a painter.

Let us continue to expand our probe into the definition of sin to see if a sinner is really one who sins. To do this we will look at some of the Bible usages of the terms, “sinner,” “sinners,” “transgressor,” and “transgressors.” Let us see if these terms are applied to a person because of the nature he or she is born with, or if they are applied because of their violation of the law of God. The term “sinner” is used twenty-one times in the Bible. “Sinners” is used forty-six times, “transgressor” five times, and “transgressors” nineteen times.

Interestingly, not once in these combined ninety-one times does the concept of inherited sin or inherited condemnation occur. Let us notice a representative selection of the verses that define, within their context, the meaning of these terms.

“Sinner”

And, behold, a woman in the city, which *was a sinner*, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: *for she is a sinner* (Luke 7:37-39).

If Mary was a sinner because of birth, than Simon had no reason to single her out. However, according to Luke 8:2, Jesus had cast seven demons out of Mary. Interestingly, according to the *Desire of Ages*, page 566: “Simon had led into sin the woman he now despised.” Mary’s past was one of impurity, but she had been transformed by the grace of Christ.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. . . . Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15:7, 10).

Both of these texts speak of the sinner repenting. Repentance includes a change of thought (mind) and a turning away from sin. This repentance could not be accomplished if sin was our nature. Man is powerless to change the sinful nature he received from Adam. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots (Jeremiah 13:23)?” However, that nature can be overcome and subdued by the grace and power of Christ. This is why we must be born again (John 3:7).

Before Jesus comes, God will have at least 144,000 end-time sinless people in whose “mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God (Revelation 14:5).” Ellen White goes even further and states:

Every one who *by faith* obeys God’s commandments, will reach the condition of *sinlessness* in which Adam lived before his transgression (The Signs of the Times, July 23, 1902).

Notice that Ellen White does not attribute this victory to a change in nature or even in our own effort, but rather she attributes the victory to faith. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (1 John 5:4).” Only by faith can we be changed from a sinner into a saint and it is the great work of Christ within us that will enable us to have the same total victory that Jesus obtained while on earth.

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins (James 5:20).

For the sinner to be converted “from the error of his way,” the sinner must be able to choose a different pathway.

“Sinners”

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly (Genesis 13:13).

The Sodomites were a people who lived a licentious lifestyle without restraint. *It is unreasonable to think that being born a certain way makes one person an exceedingly greater sinner or more wicked than another.*

The censurers of these sinners [those who died in the rebellion of Korah] against their own souls, let them make

them broad plates for a covering of the altar (Numbers 16:38).

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram led an uprising against Israel and met the judgment of God. God called these rebels “sinners” not for being born but for their rebellion which he says is as the sin of witchcraft. (See 1 Samuel 15:23.)

Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *standeth* in the way of sinners, nor *sitteth* in the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1).

The context here clearly contrasts the path of the righteous with that of the sinners. This text mentions nothing about our birth.

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil (Isaiah 33:14, 15).

Here the “sinners” and the “hypocrites” are set in parallel construction. Hypocrites speak one way and live another. This is contrasted with those who “walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly.”

“Transgressor”

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor (Galatians 2:17, 18).

Paul says that if after seeking to be justified by Christ he goes back to his old ways of life, then he makes himself a transgressor. The only way that Paul could say this, if sin was our nature, would be if his flesh was to change from unholy to holy and then back to unholy again.

For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law (James 2:11).

The one who kills, breaking the sixth commandment, is a transgressor.

“Transgressors”

I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word (Psalm 119:158).

Transgressors do not keep God’s Word.

But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors (James 2:9).

Transgressors commit sin by showing respect or favoritism towards persons.

There is one text in the list of ninety-one verses that seems, at first, to support the idea of being born sinners. It is Isaiah 48:8:

Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb (Isaiah 48:8).

The context establishes that this verse is not talking about a person or even *humanity* as a whole, but rather the *nation* of Israel. In verse 1, God says: "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob." The next six verses help to establish the context that God is speaking to Israel who, from their beginning (the womb) as a nation, was a rebellious and transgressing people.

Understanding the clear meaning of sin will help us to avoid the pitfalls that even some of the reformers fell into because they accepted, in various degrees, the doctrine of original sin which is based upon a faulty concept of sin.

Romans 3

Many believe that when Paul writes in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned" he is simply referring to being born. However, it is imperative in our study to notice the reasoning that Paul gives in the prior verses to prove his point. Notice verses 10-18:

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:10-18).

In Romans 3:21-31, Paul establishes the doctrine of righteousness by faith alone through the grace of Jesus Christ. Prior to this, he lays the groundwork to establish this vital point. In the first part of chapter 3, Paul speaks of the advantage the Jews had over the Gentiles because they were given the oracles of God, but, aside from having these oracles, he states that both Jews and Gentiles are "under sin (Romans 3:9)" and in need of Christ's righteousness.

What I found helpful in my study was Paul's proof of his point that both Jews and Gentiles are "under sin" or are sinners. As he so often did, Paul used the analogy of Scripture, or the proof-text method of Bible study. He appealed to a little here and a little there of the Old Testament Scriptures, as verses 10-18 show. However, what really should rivet our attention are the texts that he appealed to and what they state, as well as the texts that he *failed* to appeal to. One text Paul did not appeal to was Psalm 51:5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." This text is

frequently used to support the teaching that we are born sinners. How easy it would have been for Paul to have simply stated: "Both Jews and Gentiles are under sin; sinners due to their birth. We have inherited sin and are sinners by birth." But Paul did not do this. In fact, Psalm 51:5 is not quoted by any New Testament writer for anything, let alone to prove original sin. So, let us see what Paul did quote from to establish his point!

The Apostle quotes verses from Psalms 14, 5, 140, 10, 36; Proverbs 1; and Isaiah 59 from the Septuagint. The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, which was the working Bible of Paul and the other apostles. Notice the English translation of these verses:

There is none that does goodness, there is not even so much as one (Psalm 14:1 LXXE).

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there were any that understood, or sought after god (Psalm 14:2 LXXE).

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become good for nothing, there is none that does good, no not one (Psalm 14:3 LXXE).

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit (Psalm 5:9 LXXE).

The poison of asps is under their lips. (Psalm 140:3 LXXE).

Whose mouth is full of cursing, and bitterness (Psalm 10:7 LXXE).

For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood (Proverbs 1:16 LXXE).

And their feet run to wickedness, swift to shed blood (Isaiah 59:7a LXXE).

Destruction and misery are in their ways (Isaiah 59:7b LXXE).

And the way of peace they know not (Isaiah 59:8a LXXE).

There is no fear of God before his eyes (Psalm 36:1 LXXE).

Paul is detailing the wickedness of man and stating that this is the path of both Jews and Gentiles. However, as the verses Paul quoted show, he is stating this because of the choice of action they have chosen to take, as opposed to being born into a state of sinful existence. He speaks of none being righteous; that all, both Jews and Gentiles, have "gone out of the way;" that "none *doeth* good;" that their tongues are used in "*deceit*" and their mouths are "full of *cursing and bitterness*." Paul further states that "Their feet are swift to *shed blood*," and "destruction and misery are in *their ways*."

The teaching that man is born a sinner is not supported here by Paul (nor elsewhere as we shall see in further studies), and the early Adventists rejected the doctrine that we are

born sinners for a modified Arminian view of sin. They believed, as the Bible teaches, that Adam passed a fallen nature, but not guilt, to his descendants. Man is born with a sinful nature, a nature that gravitates towards sin, but man is not a sinner until he rebels against God in violation of his will, as perfectly expressed in the Ten Commandments. The Adventists based this view partly upon texts such as:

The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin (Deuteronomy 24:16).

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him (Ezekiel 18:20).

The importance of understanding these concepts is their usefulness in understanding the character of God and righteousness by faith. God does not impute guilt and condemnation to unborn children. As we noted earlier, Ellen White declares that 1 John 3:4 is the only Bible definition for sin.

According to Ellen White, the Bible does not define sin as a state of existence. If people are born sinners, however, then could Jesus have been, as Paul says, “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15)?” Was Jesus exempted from the great law of heredity that we are bound by? Was the incarnation just a façade to make God look just and fair when, in reality, he is not willing to abide by the rules and requirements he gives to man? NO!

Bear in mind that Christ's overcoming and obedience is that of a true human being. In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of our erroneous views of the human nature of our Lord. *When we give, to His human nature, a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, we destroy the completeness of His humanity.* His imputed grace and power He gives to all who receive Him by faith. The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 341).

Notice carefully what Ellen White said. The issue is not if Jesus had something that we do not have, but if he had something that we may not have or that is not available to us. We are born with a mind that is carnal and unable of itself to obey God.

It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development--that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. The history of Cain shows what must be the results. It shows what man

will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.” Acts 4:12 (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 72).

Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 37).

Christ's mind from birth was of the Holy Spirit. This mind, this “new element of life and power,” we may have when we are born again.

Conclusion


The Ten Commandments outline the “whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13).” The violation of the Ten Commandment law makes us sinners or transgressors. While we have inherited a sinful nature with natural tendencies toward evil, God does not account the guilt or condemnation of Adam's sin to us. When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, we will “walk even as he walked (1 John 2:6).” I know, beloved, that our Father wants you always, day by day and moment by moment, to depend upon him and draw close to him, to overcome all sin. “God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).”

To be continued



“EGW and the Truth . . . “Continued from page 20, column 2

The DVD is well laid out with easy navigation features. It also has menus to quickly find ten of the most common questions people have about Ellen White and the truth about God. We have also included audio mp3 versions of all the messages in “The Good News About God” series as well as electronic editions of the last 10+ years of *Old Paths* and eleven truth-filled books such as *The Foundation of Our Faith*, *What did the Pioneers Believe?*, and *God's Love on Trial* in PDF.

We believe you will want to obtain this DVD for yourself and will want several copies to share with your Adventist friends who have questions or concerns about Ellen White's views on the doctrine of God or who may have conscientiously ill-informed views on this subject. We know that if you will devote just two hours to this DVD, you will be blessed! The suggested donation is \$6.00/DVD, plus postage, and, to continue to help spread these as far as possible, we are extending the special request offer of only \$40.00, plus postage, for a unit of ten DVDs. 

Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson Study Guide

By Allen Stump

From time to time during the last two years we have looked at selected Sabbath School Lessons and noted points of interest to our readers. Most of our comments have been welcomed; some have offended and have appeared to some as casting stones. We are sorry for anything being so received. Our desire is to say nothing personal towards the writer or the publishers. We do however without malice toward any; wish to at times bring points of interest that may be helpful to the attention of our readers. It is in this spirit that we share the following comments.

Lesson 12 of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for the first quarter 2008, is entitled "Commission and Mission." Christ has given his church a commission and a mission and it is imperative that we understand the commission properly so that we might correctly fulfill our mission. Lesson 12 begins with the following thought:

As Adventists, we understand much of our role in the *Great Commission* to be linked to the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. At the center of these messages is the *everlasting gospel*. We have nothing to give to the world unless we give them, above anything and everything else, the great truth of justification by faith alone.

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890. Thus, for Ellen G. White, central to our mission is the proclamation of justification by faith alone, the great news that salvation comes only through the grace of God poured out upon undeserving sinners, and not through any works on our part (p. 96; also p. 137 in the teacher's edition).

The part of the statement that is of interest is the sentence, "We have nothing to give to the world unless we give them, *above anything and everything else*, the great truth of justification by faith alone (emphasis supplied)." The quotation that follows seems to place an emphasis upon this subject worthy of such a bold and high recommendation. Let us be very plain that we agree that "the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message." It is to be given to a dying world and must not be neglected. Interestingly, Ellen White also wrote:

As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures, to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness (*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890).

Here the mention is not *justification by faith* but rather, *Christ our righteousness*. But what does she mean by this? Is this only justification? Is it also sanctification? Or did Ellen White have something else in mind? Of course, if Ellen White would simply tell us we could know. But wait, she has told us! In the very next sentences from *The Review and Herald* Article we read:

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." This is what needs to be brought into the experience of every worker, high or low, in all our institutions, in all our churches. God wants every soul to return to the first love. He wants all to have the gold of faith and love, so that they can draw from the treasure to impart to others who need it (*Ibid.*).

In this passage Ellen White quotes John 17:3 and Jeremiah 9:23, 24. Her emphasis here is knowing and loving God and having that experience in our lives. Most presentations of the gospel center upon the need of man and helping man. The true gospel, however, centers upon our great God and his wonderful works and deeds and upon knowing and loving him. Paul noted to the church at Corinth: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2)." The gift of God's son for mankind (John 3:16) and his death upon the cross was the force that drove Paul forward (2 Corinthians 5:14). The glorification of God in all that they say, do, and are will be found in the final generation that gives the three angels' messages. These messages begin, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:7)." Only as we fear God and give glory to him can we properly worship him. "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness (Ps 29:2)." There is a beauty in holiness, and worshiping God in holy lives will give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name. Romans 3:23 states: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sinning brings us short of the glory of God, obedience brings glory to God. God's end-time saints will bring glory to him by their lives of obedience through the indwelling Christ. Their focus is not upon themselves but upon God.

If we simply take a Protestant, Reformed theology of justification by faith to the world we have not done the work of God. If the Protestant churches had the true gospel, then there was no need for the Advent movement. Ellen White made it very clear what the righteousness of Christ would do for the believer. She noted:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure (*Testimony to Ministers*, pp 91, 92; emphasis supplied).

David wrote: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God (Psalm 42:1, 2)?" When our hearts will desire nothing more than God and to love him with all of our heart, soul, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5), when we find him whom our "soul loveth," we will hold onto "him, and not let him go" (Song of Solomon 3:4). When we serve him in obedience of love (1 John 5:3), we may be sure that we are in harmony with him and covered with his righteousness, and we will also be fitted for the commission and mission that he has said will lighten the earth with his glory (Revelation 18:1). ✍

Correction: We are very sorry for two serious typographical errors in last month's printed edition of *Old Paths*. On page 10, in the 6th full paragraph, "rebelsion" should have been "rebellion." The last paragraph on page 14 contained "immorality" but should have been "immortality." We are sorry for any confusion this has caused..... ✍

Ellen G. White and the Truth About God DVD

Who was Ellen White? Early in the Advent Movement when believers were few, she was well-known among the little group of faithful souls, but this is the year 2008. It has been ninety-two years since Ellen G. White's death in 1915 and 163 years since the Great Disappointment in 1844.

During this time the Seventh-day Adventist Church has established a publishing work on several continents with sixty-three publishing houses and branches. The church has redefined their Declaration of Principles, which were first printed in 1872, to the current Biblical Exposition of 28 Fundamental Doctrines. The Adventist Church has created a health ministry of 168 hospitals and sanitariums and 442 clinics. Its educational system has reached around the world with 5,666 primary schools and 1,618 secondary and tertiary schools. Membership has grown from the little flock of 1847 to the more than 15 million today.

The culture of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has changed and has become more diversified since 1844. Most members are now found in Latin America, next in Africa, and thirdly in the United States. Brazil is the country with the largest population of Seventh-day Adventists and India is next. We do not know the average age of a Seventh-day Adventist today, but 5,666 primary schools tell us there is a healthy core of young families, many of which have never



heard of James or Ellen White and who are unfamiliar with our pioneers and our history as a movement, even though there is now available to members of the organized church Children's Ministries, Women's Ministries, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Broadcast Ministries, Global Mission outreaches, and more, which can and should be used to teach these historic truths.

It is, therefore, of utmost importance that the new DVD in the series *The Good News About God* be in your home. In its two hours of footage you will learn who Ellen White is, and you will learn how she and James worked tirelessly for the growth and establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More importantly, you will be able to trace the work of God in establishing his truth on earth. The understanding of the doctrine of God was clear to our pioneers and this DVD is packed full of documentation about the understanding our pioneers, especially Ellen White, held on the doctrine of God. While it is two hours long, it is doubtful that you will lose interest!

The DVD is a lively one, with many visual aids, music, and color. Many hours have gone into its production. In this presentation you will find over sixty statements of Ellen White on the issue of God and answers to the common questions that arise concerning what some people believe to be conflicting statements from her pen on this vital doctrine. The DVD clearly portrays Ellen White's understanding of God to have been consistent and clear over time rather than evolutionary.

Continued on page 18, column 2

Spring Has Come

By Ellen G. White

(This article is taken from the March 1, 1871, issue of The Health Reformer.)

Spring has come again. The earth has thrown off her white shroud, and nature is waking to life. The birds are returning to cheer us again with their happy songs in the glorious sunshine.

All, both young and old, should be in the open air as much as possible. Those who are in health should share the benefit of employment in the open air, in order to keep well. But above all, should invalids, who have been unable to breast the chill winds of winter, make the most of these spring days of beautiful sunshine, and be out of doors all that they can, and rejoice with the happy songsters in the prospect of approaching summer. Those who cannot walk without great fatigue should ride out. Those who can engage in light employment should do so; for the muscles will be strengthened by exercise. Work out of doors, you invalids that can. But at all events do not remain shut up in your houses. Walk out. Ride out. And if you can do no more, sit out in the open air, where heaven's breezes can come to you in their freshness, and where you can view the sunshine and shadow upon the face of nature.

The trees, shrubs, and flowers, will soon be attractive to the eye, inviting all who delight in the beauties of nature to enjoy life out of doors. The flowers and green foliage have not appeared, but mother earth has thrown from her bosom her white mantle, and she even now bears a cheerful aspect in the bright sunshine and shadows. All should now seek employment some hours every day out of doors.

We have not now the bracing air of winter to stimulate the system. Many will feel a sense of languor. They will feel indisposed to exercise, or to engage in labor which requires exertion, especially if their employment has been sedentary. Such need the vitalizing, out-of-door air. This will be a more safe and successful tonic than any drug that physicians may prescribe.

Every family should have a plat of ground for cultivation and for beauty. Parents, a flower garden will be a blessing to your children. Your daughters would have better health in working a portion of each day upon the shrubs and flowers, than the delicate employment of embroidery and crochet, which confines them in doors. Your children need active exercise in order to be healthful and happy.


Parents, it will pay to expend a small sum yearly in purchasing flower seeds and shrubs. We have purchased these of James Vick, Rochester, N. Y., and have ever felt more than satisfied with the means we thus invested. You should help your children to arrange their gardens tastefully, and then assist them in planting their seeds and shrubs. Fathers should

take an interest in these things for the benefit of their children, if they themselves have not a natural love for them.

My husband takes as great a pleasure in my flower garden as myself and my children do. Frequently, when he has had hired help, has he left his labor, and set all hands to work in preparing my plat of ground in order for my plants and seeds. This manifest kindness and interest have encouraged a love for flowers and plants in the minds of our children, and many hours have they devoted to the pleasurable exercise of the cultivation of these flowers, which they might have spent in exciting amusements and in questionable society.

We can all take pleasure in beholding the many beautiful varieties of opening buds, and blossoming flowers, of every description and hue, which our Heavenly Father has created for the happiness and benefit of his children.

It is God's design that we should love the beautiful in nature. He made a garden for our first parents, and there planted with his own divine hand the trees for usefulness and ornament, and the beautiful vines bearing fruit, and the lovely flowers of every variety and color. This was for the pleasure and happiness of man. If parents would more closely follow the example of their Creator in this respect, I believe they would have less trouble in bringing up their children to usefulness and happiness. If parents would encourage their children to love the beauties of nature, they would throw about them a safeguard to preserve them from iniquity prevailing among the youth.

Parents can associate God with the works of nature. While beholding his works, the beautiful trees, and plants, and flowers, they can awaken an interest in their young minds for the glories of Heaven. By making home and its surroundings attractive, they will lessen the desire for exciting pleasures and amusements which are injurious to the physical, mental, and moral health of children. You can beautify your homes with fruit trees, and shrubs, and flowers, and encourage in the minds of your children a love for these things. You can teach them in relation to the better life, by connecting the beauties of nature, so marred, and imperfect, and short-lived, with the never-fading and immortal beauties of Eden restored. You can unite with nature's your lessons of the love and mercy of our beneficent Creator, who has given them all these things for their happiness. You should seek to draw their hearts from nature up to nature's God, and connect the mercy of God with the morning light, and the glories of the setting sun. His mercy is seen in the musical, murmuring streams, and even in frowning storms. Direct their minds to the mercy of God in the summer's heat and winter's cold. We can trace before them the mercy and wisdom of God in the falling of the blessed rain to refresh and enliven the parched earth and vegetation, and direct them to a love and wisdom that is infinite. Young hearts will respond to such lessons as these, and parents will be blessed in seeing the fruit of their labor in the physical, mental, and moral improvement of their loved ones. 

Bible Reading on Genesis 1-4

Over the last few years my faithful Bible has become excessively worn and in need of replacement. After searching a great deal to find what would be the best Bible for me, I choose a Cambridge Concord wide margin edition with goatskin leather. These excellently-made Bibles have wide margins on all four sides of the text on each page and allow reasonable room to insert notes and references. I am very happy with the layout and the workmanship of the Bible. If you need a new Bible, I would highly recommend this one. Some might consider these Bibles expensive; however, when you figure the cost over the many years of thorough use they are designed to give and realize that they may outlast other Bibles by an extra life or two, they are actually very reasonable.

Furthermore, there is no material possession of this earth that should be more important to one than the Word of God. Most families will spend several hundred dollars a month on physical food. Should we really regard our spiritual food as less valuable? So, I believe that all who possibility can should have a first quality Bible that can and will be well-used. Furthermore, as Seventh-day Adventists we have been blessed with the treasures in the Spirit of Prophecy writings of Ellen White. Sadly, these writings are absent in many of our homes. Why is this? Perhaps it is because we do not place the proper high value upon them that they deserve. I recently received a letter that was apparently sent out to many people calling for them to throw out their Ellen White books. Beloved, we dare not do this. God has given to his people spiritual gifts because they are needed! I urge you to read these precious books and I know that if you are seeking the blessing of God, he will not disappoint you.

If we will put first things first, we will realize that the money we spend on spiritual food is small compared to all the money we spend on things that will only decay, rust, or become corrupt. The complete published writings of Ellen White are available on CD for about \$100. And for those with Internet access, they can all be accessed free at the Ellen G. White Estate website (<http://www.whiteestate.org>).

This year, armed with my new sword, I want to know God better than ever before. I am reading through my Bible again this year and I have developed a spiritual exercise for this time through. Each day I read approximately four chapters and then I write short Bible readings or quizzes that parallel these Bible chapters. Some of these quizzes also have parallel references in the writings of Ellen White to complement them. These quizzes are an interesting way to encourage a study of the Bible while also being informative. Therefore, we will publish some of these quizzes as we are able in *Old Paths* each month. Our initial goal is to try to cover Genesis during the rest of the year.

These quizzes will contain some questions that merely require fact-finding and other questions that will require thoughtful searching and comparing of Scripture with Scripture to find the answers. I hope that they will be a

blessing to you. Let us know what you think. Please share your feedback with us soon so we can incorporate appropriate ideas as soon as possible into the future issues.

1. Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." How does the Bible first define "heaven" and what else is later said to give a more comprehensive view of heaven? How is the term "earth" first defined? (Also see *Education*, p. 134.)

2. What does Genesis 1:17 tell us about the preciseness of God's creation of the heavens?

3. Genesis 1:26 begins, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Who is speaking and to whom? What Bible evidence can be offered for this answer? Can you find a Spirit of Prophecy statement that helps to shed light upon the matter?

4. What did God specifically bless in Genesis 2:3? Why would this precise language be important in dealing with the Sabbath/Sunday issue at the end of time?

5. Do we know where upon earth that God created Adam? Do we know where he was not created?

6. Genesis 2:7 says that "God formed man of the dust of the ground." How did he create the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air?

7. After God took a rib from Adam, what did God yet need to do for Adam?

8. Did God tell Eve that if she touched the fruit of the tree of knowledge that she would die? (Also see *The Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874.)

9. What do we see being one of the first results of sin upon both Adam and Eve when confronted by God?

10. Of course God knew where Adam and Eve were when he called to them as recorded in Genesis 3:9, and he knew the answers to the questions he gave them in Genesis 3:11. So why did he ask?

11. Was the ground cursed as a punishment to Adam?

12. Genesis 3:24 from the RSV states: "He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life." What does this translation possibly tell you concerning the number of the cherubim stationed at the entrance to the garden?

13. What does the expression "in process of time" in Genesis 4:3 mean? Check your margin, if you have one.

14. What were the differences, in principle, between Cain's and Abel's offerings?

15. Cain tried to silence the witness of Abel, but what did God tell him about this?

16. What was the name of the first city mentioned in the Bible?

Bonus: Genesis 4:26 states, "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD." Did some men not call upon the name of the LORD before? What is meant by this?

Allen Stump

Youth's Corner—Count Zinzendorf

During the early 1700's, Count Nicolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf allowed families who were persecuted for their religious beliefs to settle on his land in Austria. He cared for them as a shepherd would care for his flock, and he instructed them in the Scriptures. Later, Zinzendorf went to other countries as a missionary, the West Indies, for example, and countries in Europe, and he even went to America because he wanted to teach the Native Americans about Jesus. He spent fourteen months in America, and he is probably the first missionary the Native Americans ever had. He arrived in America in 1742, and he is said to be the first white man to have ever set foot in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania. His interpreter piloted him, his daughter, and a few other companions to an Indian village in the Wyoming Valley and then promptly turned around and left them in the wild!

Count Zinzendorf, his daughter, and the other people traveling with them were left alone among the Shawnee Indians. All they could do was pitch their tents and try to make friends with the Shawnee, but the Indians were suspicious of them. Count Zinzendorf, along with each of the rest of the party, lived in little tents, and the only door of Count Zinzendorf's tent was a blanket he had hung upon pins at the front of his tent. They had pitched camp near the edge of the woods, and all was quiet around them. The only sound of nature was the gentle murmur of the rapids in the river about a mile below them.

Our story takes place on a September evening. Temperatures were starting to fall in the evenings in Pennsylvania and were cool enough that Count Zinzendorf needed a fire to help him stay warm while he wrote sermons and letters. I am not sure how, but in his tent he built a fire, just a little one, to keep the temperature of the air warm.

Now, the Shawnee Indians did not like the fact that Count Zinzendorf and his traveling companions were staying in their territory. They did not like the reason why Zinzendorf had come and they decided among themselves that they would assassinate the whole group. The Shawnee were very knowledgeable about how to travel in the woods quietly, and they could move around so quietly that even animals in the woods were not disturbed. So, on this particular evening, they crept up very quietly to Count Zinzendorf's tent, but

they were not the *only* visitors to Count Zinzendorf's home away from home!

As I said, it was September. The days were still warm, but the nights were getting cool, and outside the tent on this night, lying in the brush, was a big rattlesnake that had not yet hidden himself away for the winter. The snake felt the warmth of the evening fire that Count Zinzendorf had built, and the warmth felt very good to him, so good that he decided to get closer to it. He slowly and silently made his way toward the tent. This big rattlesnake had no trouble sliding under the blanket door and into the tent. He came closer to



Count Nicolaus Zinzendorf

the fire to warm himself because snakes are cold-blooded animals and they need a warmth outside of themselves with which to heat their bodies. That is why they like to bask in the sun. Do you know what happened next? The snake slid right up on Count Zinzendorf's leg, which was stretched out by the fire because Count Zinzendorf wanted to stay warm too! The Count was so deep in thought and so busy writing that he did not notice the rattlesnake. There they were, the two of them, Count Zinzendorf and his new "friend," the rattlesnake, which was draped over his leg enjoying the new-found warmth, when the Indians crept up to the doorway!

The Shawnee peeked ever so carefully and quietly into the tent, and they saw Count Zinzendorf thoughtfully writing, but they were very surprised to also see a big rattlesnake draped over his long, out-stretched leg! They looked at each other, slowly put the blanket door down, and quietly backed away. As soon as they could talk among themselves, they said, "That big rattlesnake did not hurt Count Zinzendorf! His tail wasn't even rattling. He was lying peacefully on his leg by the fire, just as peacefully as Count Zinzendorf was lying by the fire!" And they said, "We cannot do anything to hurt this man! Even rattlesnakes don't bother him, so we cannot either!" And they kept right on walking back to their village! And not only that, they started to listen to what Zinzendorf had to say! They thought Zinzendorf must be a very special man if rattlesnakes will not bite him, for one thing, and if he is not even *afraid* of them, for another! Zinzendorf was not even trying to get away from the snake but was calmly writing and thinking. The Shawnee were very impressed. And do you know what? The Shawnee learned about the God in heaven. They learned about their Saviour, Jesus Christ, and Count Zinzendorf learned about what had happened at his tent on

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Noble men have lived and worked in tents, even with rattlesnakes as their companions!

that September evening when it was very cool and very quiet. He learned how God protected him from a rattlesnake and from the Shawnee Indians, for the Indians later told him the whole story of what had happened that evening in September.

Ellen White tells us that Count Zinzendorf is one of God’s noble men, part of the royal line of God’s people. (See *Education*, pp. 254-255.) We also know that Count

Zinzendorf observed the seventh day Sabbath, honoring God’s holy day. God has had people all through the ages, his royal line, that are his noble men and we can be part of that line too. We can trust God just like Count Zinzendorf did!

The noble men Ellen White spoke of were men who trusted God even though the whole world was against them, men like Noah and Daniel. One day the whole world will be against God’s people again, and even now God’s people are struggling and have troubles in different parts of the world. We can join God’s royal line of noble men if we will but trust him day by day now.

Onycha Holt

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