

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 shew them his
covenant. Psalm 25:14

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He hath done all things well: (Mark 7:37)



How Historic is *Historic*?

By Allen Stump

What is historic Adventism?

The word *historic* is defined as “famous or important in history” (*New Oxford American Dictionary*). The term *historic Adventism* is generally associated with Adventism of an older or of an historic time. In fact, *Wikipedia* has an article for historic Adventism, but how historic is historic Adventism? This study begins with several direct quotations of paragraphs from the *Wikipedia* article on historic Adventism, with added clarifications and comments. The article begins by stating a definition of historic Adventism:

Historic Adventism is an informal designation for conservative individuals and organizations affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church who seek to preserve certain traditional beliefs and practices of the church. They feel that the church leadership has shifted or departed from key doctrinal “pillars” ever since the middle of the 20th century. Specifically, they point to the publication in 1957 of a book entitled *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*; which they feel undermines historic Adventist theology in favor of theology more compatible with evangelicalism. Historic Adventism has been erroneously applied by some to any Adventists that adhere to the teachings of the church as reflected in the church’s fundamental beliefs such as the Sabbath or the Spirit of Prophecy. They misapply those who hold to mainstream traditional Adventist beliefs as synonymous with Historic Adventist. (“Historic Adventism,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*)

This statement needs to be broken down and examined in the light of the author’s definition of *historic Adventism* to be within a specific range of time based upon a self-defined interpretation, rather than on an understanding the statement would naturally convey.

Within this article, the “Golden Age” of Adventism is said to be from the 1920s to 1950. The doctrines and teachings of this time, specifically up until the publication of the book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (also referred to as *Questions on Doctrine* in this article) in 1957, define what an historic Adventist is to most of the believers who accept the mantel of historic Adventism.

The key doctrinal pillars which are said to have been departed from concern mostly the incarnation and the atonement—specifically that the church had previously taught Jesus had accepted the fallen, sinful nature of man but after 1957 began to teach that Jesus had accepted the unfallen nature of man and that before there was an atonement in heaven after 1844 but now the atonement was completed at the cross.

On page 390 of *Questions on Doctrine*, we read: “Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement” (emphasis in the original). Dr. Donald Barnhouse was one of the leading evangelicals who was a part of the 1955, 1956 SDA – Evangelical conferences. Writing in reference to the great disappointment of 1844, he called the doctrine of the investigative judgment “a human face-saving idea” and “that any effort to establish it is *stale, flat, and unprofitable*” (Donald Barnhouse, *Eternity*, September 1956; emphasis in original)! Later, he called it “unimportant and almost naïve” (*Ibid.*). He also wrote the following of the impressions our leaders conveyed to him of their understanding of the investigative judgment:

It should also be realized that some uninformed Seventh-day Adventists took this idea and carried it to fantastic literalistic extremes. **Mr. Martin and I heard the Adventist leaders say, flatly, that they repudiate all such extremes. This they have said in no uncertain terms. Further, they do not believe, as some of their earlier teachers taught, that Jesus’ atoning work was not com-**

pleted on Calvary but instead that He was still carrying on a second ministering work since 1844. **This idea is also totally repudiated.** (Ibid.)

The church leaders of the mid-1950's repudiated the biblical teachings taught by James and Ellen White, Uriah Smith, etc. Those leaders also provided an answer to satisfy the Evangelicals about the atonement Christ is now making in heaven. Unfortunately, it was not a biblical answer. The brethren in *Questions on Doctrine* stated:

When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature—even in the writings of Ellen G. White—that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests (*Questions on Doctrine*, 1957 ed., pp. 354, 355; emphasis in original).

This agrees with the position that Barnhouse understood our brethren to have taken, for he wrote: “They believe that since His ascension Christ has been ministering the benefits of the atonement which was completed on Calvary” (Barnhouse, *Eternity*, September 1956). But what is meant when we read that Jesus is “making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross”? *Questions on Doctrine* gives the answer:

How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we realize that Jesus our surety entered the “holy places,” and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it for us on the cross. (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 381; emphasis in original).

This is the very language that is written into the current fundamental belief on the atonement.

This change in *Questions on Doctrine*, along with statements on the incarnation, certainly made Adventist theology more compatible with evangelicalism. Using subtitles like [Christ] “Took Sinless Human Nature” (Ibid., p. 650) helped to represent our theologians as pre-lapsarian. *Questions on Doctrine* stated that Christ “was exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam” (Ibid., p. 383).

The issue was not if Christ had a divine/human nature, but rather what kind of human nature did he take upon himself. Colin and Russell Standish noted:

... Barnhouse and [Walter] Martin were Calvinistic-oriented in their beliefs. John Calvin had learned the Augustinian theology which was riveted upon the belief that fallen man inherited the guilt of Adam's original sin. Thus for Seventh-day Adventists to proclaim that Christ took upon Himself sinful, fallen human nature was perceived by Barnhouse and Martin to be saying that Christ was born a sinner. (Colin D. Standish, Russell R. Standish, *The Theology of Questions on Doctrine, Fidelity or Compromise*, p. 41)

Thus, even the definition and understanding of sin becomes involved in the issue of what constitutes an historic Adventist.

One point the *Wikipedia* article makes clear is that being a mainstream Seventh-day Adventist of itself does not qualify one to be an historic Adventist.

The *Wikipedia* article continues:

Historic Adventists have tended to promote their message through independent ministries, some of which have had a strained relationship with the official church. “Last Generation Theology” shares some elements with Historic Adventism, yet considers itself to have “expanded” the beliefs of Adventism to their logical conclusion. Historic Adventists are seen as at the opposite end of the Adventist theological spectrum from Progressive Adventists. Prominent figures supporting some of the historic views include M. L. Andreasen, and Colin and Russell Standish. (“Historic Adventism,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*)

This presents a misunderstanding that last generation theology is something new to Adventism. Last generation theology is said to teach that God's people will stop from committing sinful acts before the close of probation and the time of trouble (Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 30:7; Isaiah 26:20). It further teaches that God will have a group of people, “the weakest of the weak” who will stand faithful and true in the last and most trying time of earth's history and that God's people will live without a mediator before Jesus comes. (See M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, page 318; 1947.)

But is this a new theology for Adventists? Of course, the Bible teaches that Christ is coming back for a church without “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). The 144,000 are said to be without “guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5). Daniel 12:1 speaks of a time when mediation will cease as Michael stands up. This is not new Adventism, but old Adventism.

Joseph Bates wrote:

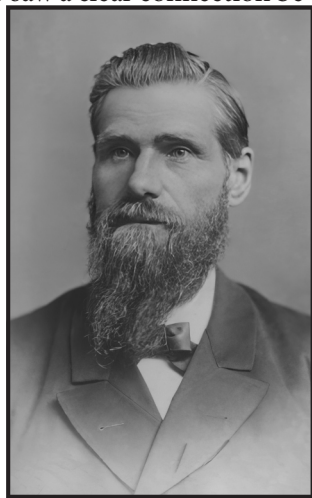
“And he shall make an atonement for the holy, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins.” Verse 16. Will the reader please read these eighteen words again, and see if he cannot tell the meaning of the cleansing of the Sanctuary. Oh yes!! You say, it was to cleanse the people, all of them, from their sins. Very well, do not forget it, when it comes down to you in the antitype. (Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 1850, p. 21.8)



Joseph Bates

Stephen Haskell, in 1856, also saw a clear connection between a prepared people and the completion of the gospel message:

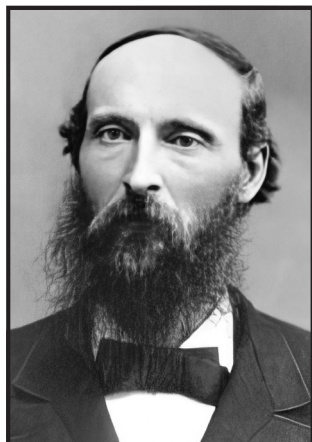
A theory of the Third Angel’s message never, no never, will save us, without the wedding garment, which is the righteousness of the saints. We must perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. (Stephen Haskell, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 6, 1856, p. 6.29)



S. N. Haskell

Daniel T. Bourdeau wrote a series of articles in 1864 for the *Review* in which he emphasized the special responsibilities resting upon God’s people preaching the three angels’ messages. These *Review* articles were compiled into the book *Sanctification or Living Holiness*.

But some do not see the necessity of receiving the truths applicable to the present time in order to be sanctified. They think they can be sanctified by living as other good Christians have lived. But how have good Christians in the past been sanctified? Have they not been sanctified by living up to the light that they had in their day? And if we are favored with more light



D. T. Bourdeau

than they were, if God has other duties for us to perform, can we be sanctified by merely living as they lived? Does God cause light to shine on his word in vain? (Daniel T. Bourdeau, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 2, 1864)

It will require a special preparation to meet the Lord when he comes. It will be necessary for the last church to look for Christ; for it is to them that look for him that he will appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Heb. ix, 28. (Ibid.)

Bourdeau was saying that the Advent people have had more light than any other people. Since 1844 we have had much greater light than any other generation has had—more light than Martin Luther, more light than John Calvin, more light than John Wesley or any reformer. Bourdeau is teaching that one is sanctified by living up to the light that one has—the more light that one has, the more that will be required of him or her.

“And he shall make an atonement for the holy, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins.” Verse 16. Will the reader please read these eighteen words again, and see if he cannot tell the meaning of the *cleansing of the Sanctuary*. Oh yes!! You say, it was to cleanse the people, all of them, from their sins. Very well, do not forget it, when it comes down to you in the antitype. (Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 1850, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 21.8; emphasis in original)

The *Wikipedia* article on “Historic Adventism” also notes:

It is widely accepted that present historic Adventism emerged in response to the Adventist-Evangelical discussions that occurred in the spring of 1955 to the fall of 1957. These dialogues were initiated by evangelicals Donald Barnhouse and Walter Martin, who sought clarification on what Adventists believed and took issue with a number of teachings, which at the time were generally thought to characterize Adventist theology. The most significant of these being: semi-Arian views on the Godhead; man’s sinful nature taken by Christ in his incarnation; an incomplete atonement at the time of Christ’s death on the cross; salvation by obedience to the law; and extreme sectarianism. At least one author considers the various streams existed earlier, as some Millerites came from churches holding Arian views, but this event polarized them.

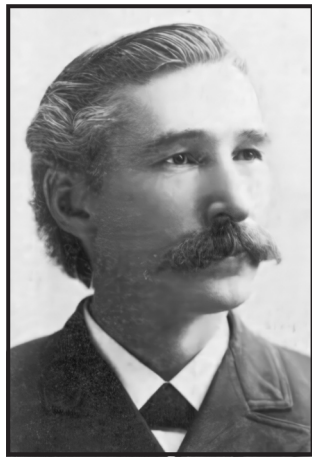
There are five areas of Adventist belief noted as being of significant concern to the evangelicals, the first being what

is called a semi-Arian view of the Godhead. By this it is meant that Jesus was truly the Son of God begotten by the Father. The early Adventists were not as concerned about labels as they were the truth. While they did not use the term *semi-Arian*, they certainly believed that Jesus was the Son of God, begotten of the Father, and they held to a view of God which would, by many, be considered to be semi-Arian. For example, Adventist pioneer Stephen Haskell wrote:

The rainbow in the clouds is but a symbol of the rainbow which has encircled the throne from eternity. Back in the ages, which finite mind cannot fathom, the Father and Son were alone in the universe. Christ was the first begotten of the Father, and to Him Jehovah made known the divine plan of Creation. (Stephen N. Haskell, *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pp. 93–94)

A. T. Jones wrote:

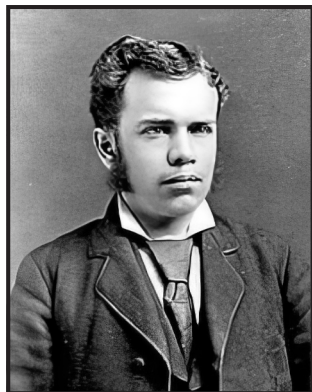
He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was *born again*. He came from heaven, God's first-born, to the earth, and was *born again*. But all in Christ's work goes by opposites for us: he, the sinless one, was made to be sin, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He, the living one, the prince and author of life, died that we might live. He whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity, the first-born of God, was *born again* in order that we might be *born again*. (A. T. Jones, *The Advent Review & Sabbath Herald*, August 1, 1899, page 487.2; emphasis in original)



A. T. Jones

E. J. Waggoner wrote:

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



E. J. Waggoner

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. (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 21.2)

James White, the husband of Ellen G. White, wrote:

The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed, viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God.” (James White, *The Day Star*, January 24, 1846)

Today most professed historic Adventists speak about the changes *Questions on Doctrine* made to the doctrines of the incarnation and the atonement but do not mention the doctrine of the Trinity as being problematic as opposed to having a semi-Arian view of God.

During the middle 1950s, while preparing his first book on Seventh-day Adventists, Walter Martin approached the brethren in the General Conference, asking for their official position on the Godhead. A Trinitarian position was essential to removing Seventh-day Adventism from the status of being a cult. Roy Allan Anderson gave a window into the mindset of the evangelicals who participated in the discussions that led up to the book *Questions on Doctrine*.

“What do you folk believe about the Trinity?” was a question put to me some years ago by two gracious Christian gentlemen who came unannounced to the General Conference headquarters in Washington, D. C. It took only a minute to discover the purpose of their visit. Having been welcomed by the receptionist, they quickly were ushered into my room, which was the editorial office of *The Ministry* magazine and the council room of the Ministerial Association. Most inquiries of that kind ended up there.

Both men were Christian college professors who had read much about Adventists, but all from detractors, and one of them was commissioned to write a new book about Adventist beliefs. However, they felt they should contact the headquarters to discover what we *actually* believe on points of vital interest rather than just quoting from others.

The answers to their earnest questions lengthened into days of prayerful discussions. Our answer concern-

ing the Godhead and the Trinity was crucial, for in some of the books they had read that Adventists were classed as Arians; that is, those who claim Christ was not one with the Father from all eternity, but was a created being.

We reassured the visitors when we turned first to the Scriptures, then to the “Fundamental Beliefs” of Adventism. They discovered that we were in harmony with sound Biblical scholarship, not only on the Trinity but on every other cardinal doctrine of Christianity. (Roy Allan Anderson, “Adventists and the Trinity,” *Adventist Review*, September 8, 1983, p. 4; emphasis in original)

So, while the so-called historic Adventists of today protest the changes in Adventist doctrines concerning the incarnation and the atonement, those changes would never and could never have happened, if there had not been a change in the doctrine of God first.

The General Conference issues a challenge in *Issues*

The height of independent ministries might have been in the early to mid-1980s. During that time the General Conference became alarmed at the rate with which the members of the church began to withdraw support both in attendance and financially from the General Conference. The General Conference responded, in part, by publishing a book in 1984 entitled *Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Independent Ministries*. The third chapter discusses historic Adventism and contrasts the movement at the time with the early, true historic Adventists. After quoting the preamble of the 1872 statement of fundamental principles, the authors of *Issues* wrote:

The nonbinding noncreedal status of the statement is of special interest. Even more significant, however, is the fact that the statement is distinctly non-Trinitarian. Jesus is described as Creator and Redeemer but is nowhere identified as God or as eternal. He simply is “the Son of the Eternal Father.”

For those who would wish to define “historic Adventism” in terms of specific doctrinal content, the 1872 date presents a real dilemma. To accept what Adventists considered binding at that time would exclude any reference to the nature of Christ or to a particular type of obedience. If one wishes, however, to claim additional content from that era and make that content binding in our day (even though Adventists from that earlier era refused to be bound by additional content), the question is: Would one be willing to accept *all* the content from that earlier era? Are the modern defenders of so-called historic Adventism really prepared to return to a non-Trinitarian position? (*ISSUES: The Seventh-day Adven-*

tist Church and Certain Private Ministries, p. 39; emphasis in original)

This challenge of accepting all the content (including the doctrine of God) was never accepted by the independent ministries towards which the book was directed, nor have many since accepted the challenge.

The prevailing belief among many of the historic Adventists is that the pioneers of the movement were doctrinally correct on most things, but they had the doctrine of God wrong and taught a very erroneous view on God and that Ellen White, on the other hand, always knew the truth about God but had to teach it slowly over time so the brethren could accept it. Many date her coming out with a trinitarian concept around the turn of the twentieth century, especially with the publication of the book *The Desire of Ages*. However, if this theory were true, she certainly waited too long to teach her own husband before he died. She was too late to teach Joseph Bates or J. N. Andrews. But does this theory hold weight in the light of Ellen White’s own statements? No, it certainly does not. She clearly believed that all the major fundamental points of doctrine were established early in the movement’s history.

The weight of evidence bears heavily that the main points of our faith were established early.

*In the early days of the message, when our numbers were few, we studied diligently to understand the meaning of many scriptures. At times it seemed as if no explanation could be given. My mind seemed to be locked to an understanding of the Word; but when our brethren who had assembled for study, came to a point where they could go no farther, and had recourse to earnest prayer, the Spirit of God would rest upon me, and I would be taken off in vision, and be instructed in regard to the relation of scripture to scripture. (Ellen White, “Notes of Travel—No. 1,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 14, 1906, p. 8, par. 2; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)*

Writing in 1903 of her early experience, she spoke of her mind being opened so that she could understand the Scriptures as an “open book”:

For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to the Scriptures. . . . It was some time after my second son was born [July 1849] that we were in great perplexity regarding certain points of doctrine. I was asking the Lord to unlock my mind, that I might understand His Word. Suddenly I seemed to be enshrouded in clear, beautiful light, and ever since, the Scriptures have been an open book to me. (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 413.2; Ms 135, 1903)

For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to an understanding of the Scriptures. In the course of our labors, my husband and I visited Father Andrews, [December 1850] who was suffering intensely with inflammatory rheumatism. We prayed for him. I laid my hands on his head, and said, "Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole." He was healed instantly. He got up, and walked about the room, praising God, and saying, "I never saw it on this wise before. Angels of God are in this room." The glory of the Lord was revealed. Light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel's hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this I have been able to understand the Word of God. (Ellen White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 57.2; 1904)

*I know and understand that we are to be established in the faith, in the light of the truth given us in our early experience. At that time one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error. (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 319.2; Letter 50, 1906)*

All these differently dated testimonies portray the same picture. The establishment of the main points of our faith occurred while Sister White's mind was locked. Sister White says she was in this condition "until all the principal points of our faith were made clear" (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 207.1). She testifies that her mind was unlocked after her visit with Brother Andrews in December 1850; therefore, the main points of our faith were established by December 1850. Thus, we received as a people "a line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God" (Ellen White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 56.4).

The leading of the Lord

This line of truth was light which helped the pioneers "to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood" (Ibid.). Furthermore, we have been counseled:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as

*we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. (Ellen White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196.2)*

This statement, first penned in 1892, was sent to the General Conference sessions of 1893 and 1899.¹ Later, the statement was published in *The Review and Herald* of October 12, 1905, and in books, such as *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* and *Selected Messages*, Book 3. The latter part of this statement deserves emphasis. It has two important points. We must remember, firstly, *the way the Lord has led us* and, secondly, *his teaching in our past history*.

The phrase *his teaching in our past history* would refer especially to that time period before December 1850, when the brethren came together for study and prayer. While we have nothing to fear for the future if we remember our past history, the contraposition would be equally true that *if we do not remember the past, we would, indeed, have much to fear!* This is much more than just historical knowledge but also a putting into action that system of beliefs.

It is clear by her own testimony that Ellen White believed that the major doctrines were established early in truth and righteousness. It is impossible with this evidence to believe that she believed something totally out of harmony with the brethren and yet refused to come into line with the brethren.

Writing the year her husband, Elder James White, died (1881), Ellen White stated:

*It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot change the truth of God into a lie. While the great adversary will try his utmost to make of none effect the word of God, truth must go forth as a lamp that burneth. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 595.4)*

Notice very carefully Sister White did not say it is certain that *I* have the truth and *all the brethren* are in error! She used the plural pronoun *we*, speaking of the church as a whole. Ellen White grouped her belief in the fundamentals exactly with that of the rest of the brethren who held to a non-trinitarian position, just as the book *Issues* states.

Foundational points not to be moved

David asked, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do" (Psalm 11:3)? Clearly if God gave to our pioneers truth, we should "buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). The foundation of a building is the most important feature of its construction. If the foundation is

1. See Letter 32, 1892 and the *General Conference Daily Bulletins* for January 29, 1893, and February 20, 1899

not set levelly and on a firm surface, the structure will have problems. God knew that in the establishment of the Advent Movement, the foundation was of the utmost importance. If the foundation was correct, then the light would be able to shine “more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

New light will ever be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God. Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God. (Ellen White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 34.1; original source *The Sabbath School Worker*, March 1, 1892)

Old truths will grow brighter, and new truths will be discovered in God’s word; yet, those new truths will never contradict the established truths already set.

When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained. (White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 161.1; 1905)

Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. *But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His word and the testimony of His Spirit.* He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority. (White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 59.1; 1904)

As a people we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time had not lessened their value. (Ibid., p. 51.2)

We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God’s word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sus-

tained these fifty years, is a great mistake. (White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 161.2)

No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 17.2)

I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps,—the first, second, and third angels’ messages. Said my accompanying angel, “*Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.*” I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 258.3; 1858)

The statement of 1858 in *Early Writings* carries quotation marks! Sister White is not writing down her impressions or her thoughts alone, though they be inspired, but words straight from heaven!

New light is to come without contradicting established light! New light will simply build upon the foundation, as a carpenter builds upon the foundation that the mason has prepared. The foundation is not changed or altered; yet, a more complete building arises. This very principle is explained by Sister White:

The Lord has made his people the depositaries of sacred truth. He has set them on an elevated position, above the world. He declares of them: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” And again he says: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.”

Upon every individual who has had the light of present truth devolves the duty of developing that truth on a higher scale than it has hitherto been developed. (Ellen White, “Ye Are the Light of the World,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 21, 1897, par. 1, 2)

This statement tells us that it is not some new truth, in the sense of something totally different, for which we are to

search, but, more precisely, we have the “duty” to develop “that truth” which the Lord has already entrusted to us “on a higher scale than it has hitherto been developed” (Ibid., par. 2).

God designs that the light from his throne is to shine with purity and clarity. He illustrated this with an object lesson to the children of Israel. God instructed Moses: “And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” (Exodus 27:20). Not any oil would be sufficient in the services of God. This pure olive oil “was prepared from unripe fruit ‘beaten,’ or pounded in a mortar rather than crushed in a mill. As a result, it was clear and colorless and burned brightly, with little smoke” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 644). God desires that his truths shine “more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18) and not as a flame of the “hellish torch of Satan” (White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 409.3).

New light will come from a study of the Scriptures. “When a doctrine is presented that does not meet our minds, we should go to the word of God, seek the Lord in prayer, and give no place for the enemy to come in with suspicion and prejudice” (Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 301.3). We are counseled that when discussing differences with the brethren, “the only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God’s word, which will reveal truth and unmask error” (Ellen White, “The Necessity of Dying to Self,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 18, 1889, par. 5). New light is not to be shunned, for there are areas of study that need clarifying today. There are many topics that are not foundational points, such as Daniel 11 and 12, that should be finely tuned; however, the foundation, which was delivered by study, prayer, and revelation, stands sure.

Triune?

The documentation is very clear that the early pioneers did not accept the doctrine of the trinity and, in fact, wrote strongly against that teaching. There is another teaching concerning the doctrine of God which is taught by many of the professed historic Adventists. They usually do not call it the trinity but, rather, “the Godhead.” This teaching, tritheism, rejects the trinity, which calls for three persons or centers of intelligence in one being, and, instead, teaches three persons in three separate beings. While the trinity teaches three persons within one god, tritheism unashamedly teaches three separate gods within a collective deity of three beings. The oneness of tritheism comes from the unity and the same goals of the three members of

the godhead. This is polytheism and cannot be honestly labeled as monotheism.

This is the teaching of historic Adventists such as the publishers of *The Eternal Gospel Herald* of the Florida Mission. The writers and editors no doubt wish to faithfully promote what they believe is truthful and honest historic Adventism. Their sincerity is not questioned, but will even very sincere beliefs, though wrong, qualify one to be a part of the 144,000 when the Bible says that “in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5)?

In the volume 18, number 2 issue of *The Eternal Gospel Herald* is published the 1872 fundamental principles of Seventh-day Adventists. The editors note on page 1:

The Eternal Gospel Herald is dedicated to “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3. This faith is none other than the 1872 SDA Statement of Principles. It is high time that we bring them to notice and proclaim to the world that the Eternal Gospel Mission stands clear from the ecumenical 1980 Gen. Con. Statement of Beliefs and firmly upon the 1872 SDA Principles of Truth as an organization. Written by James & Ellen White, Uriah Smith, Hiram Edson, and other, it is presented below: (emphasis in original)

On the back page is a condensed timeline of how Seventh-day Adventist beliefs have changed. In this section they quote from Roy Allan Anderson, whom we quoted earlier, concerning the visit of Martin and another evangelical to the church headquarters to ask about belief in the trinity doctrine, but the paper did not clarify if the editors quoted this to state they are in harmony with the trinity or against that doctrine. So, on the morning (11:13 a.m.) of June 21 of this year, I called to talk to a representative of the ministry. They assured me they did not believe in the *trinity* but rather in the *godhead*. When asked for a clarification, I was told that means God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three separate and different Gods!

But is this doctrine of polytheism better than the doctrine of the trinity? Both trinitarianism and tritheism deny that God the Father is the literal Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, they both deny the atonement of John 3:16. They deny that Jesus is a begotten Son whom the Father gave to die for the sins of the world.

Further, both doctrines teach that Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, that he is a part, either in nature or in unity, of the only *one true God*. But this teaching takes Jesus away from us as our mediator. Paul notes, “Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (Galatians 3:20). A mediator cannot

be a mediator between himself and another. If Jesus is a part of the one true God, he cannot mediate between himself and man, thus the atonement in heaven is corrupted also with either trinitarianism or tritheism.

“The last fifty years”

If we really wish to be historic we should go back to the faith that was first enumerated by our pioneers in 1872 and then in 1889. To attempt to only go back part of the way is semi-historic at best.

Ellen White wrote in 1881 that we had the truth. She never advocated looking for a new vital truth because we already had the truth that would take us from her time into the kingdom. In fact, she strongly advocated in the early part of the twentieth century to not adopt a new faith but, rather, to hold onto the faith that was given in the first fifty years of the movement:

Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way, and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, March 3, 1904, par. 13)

In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years? (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905, par. 28)

Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 297.1)

Concerning the omega of heresies which Ellen White predicted, she wrote in in 1906:

The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error.

(Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Messages of Warning and Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 39.3)

Those fundamental principles did not include trinitarianism nor tritheism. She also wrote in 1897:

The Lord was constantly instructing me that we should carefully and strictly avoid harmonizing with their ideas and course of action [Those who “carried no burden except that terrible load of criticizing and accusing.”] A straightforward course must be pursued. Special efforts must not be made to remove the cause of their temptations and disaffection, for the very object in locating the school on these grounds was not to concede to the varied experiences that have been brought in and composed the religious life and character of these individuals. These must be cut away from them, or they had far better choose some other place than these grounds for their home. And God will work with our efforts in giving correct principles, line upon line, and precept upon precept, as revealed in His Word, in correcting the wrong through the light given in the testimonies during the last fifty years; in making manifest that which God would approve and that which He would condemn. (Ellen White, *Letters & Manuscripts*, vol. 12, Lt 16, 1897, par. 5)

Certainly, God did not need fifty years to use the Testimonies to correct the movement on the most fundamental doctrine taught in the Bible! Instead of calling for a change, Ellen White repeatedly called for us to stay with the teachings that we had had for over fifty years!

Today there is a terrible state of affairs within society with the current transgender situation—biological men claiming to be women and biological women claiming to be men. We look at that situation and wonder how something so easy to understand is declared to be so complicated; yet, within Adventism we have a group of neo-Adventists who claim to be historic Adventists but do not accept what the word *historic* means. They, like the transgender movement, choose to define the term *historic* just as the transgender movement uses its own definition for *men* and *women*. It is true confusion and lacks an identity that is crystal clear, as much as we see in the transgender movement. Beloved, it is time to see the issues more clearly now than ever before. May we have the spiritual eyesight to know the truth for this time.

1889 HSDA stands for full HISTORIC Seventh-day Adventists because we believe in the historic message of the church going back to the time of Ellen White’s life and the early establishment of the movement. If you are truly historic in the literal sense of the word, we invite you to join with us in helping to spread the historic three angels’ messages! 卐

MADE OF A WOMAN

By A. T. Jones

(The following study is from Chapter 6 of Jones's book, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*.)

By what means was Christ made flesh? Through what means was He partaker of human nature?—Exactly the same means as are all of us partakers: all of the children of men. For it is written: “As the children [of the man] are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.”

Likewise signifies “in the like way,” “thus,” “in the same way.” So He partook of “the same” flesh and blood that men have in *the same way* that men partake of it. Men partake of it by birth. So “likewise” did He. Accordingly, it is written, “*Unto us a Child is born.*”

Accordingly, it is further written: “God sent forth His Son, *made of a woman.*” Galatians 4:4. He, being made of a woman in this world, in the nature of things He was made of the only kind of woman that this world knows.

But why must He be made of a woman? why not of a man?—For the simple reason that to be made of a man would not bring Him close enough to mankind as mankind is, under sin. He was made of a woman in order that He might come, in *the very uttermost*, to where human nature is in its sinning.

In order to do this, He *must* be made of a woman, because *the woman*, not the man, was *first* and originally *in the transgression*. For “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived *was in the transgression.*” 1 Timothy 2:14.

To have been made only of the descent of man would have been to come short of the full breadth of the field of sin, because the *woman had sinned* and sin was thus *in the world before the man sinned*.

Christ was thus made of a woman in order that He might meet the great world of sin at its very fountain head of entrance into this world. To have been made otherwise than of a woman would have been to come short of this and so would have been only to miss completely the redemption of men from sin.

It was “the Seed of the woman” that was to bruise the serpent's head; and it was only as “the seed of the woman” and “made of a woman” that He could meet the serpent on his own ground, at the very point of the entrance of sin into this world.

It was the woman who, in this world, was originally in the transgression. It was the woman by whom sin originally entered. Therefore, in the redemption of the children of men from sin, He who would be the Redeemer must go

back of the man to meet the sin that was in the world *before the man sinned*.

This is why He who came to redeem was “made of a woman.” By being made of a woman He could trace sin to the very fountain head of its original entry into the world by the woman. And thus, in finding sin in the world and uprooting it from the world from its original entrance into the world till the last vestige of it shall be swept from the world, in the very nature of things He must partake of human nature as it is since sin entered.

Otherwise, there was no kind of need whatever that He *should* be “made of a woman.” If He were not to come into closest contact with sin as it is in the world, as it is in human nature; if He were to be removed one single degree from it as it is in human nature, then He need not have been “made of a woman.”

But as He was made of a woman—not of a man; as He was made of the one by whom sin entered in its very origin into the world—and not made of the man, who entered into the sin after the sin had entered into the world; this demonstrates beyond all possibility of fair question that between Christ and sin in this world and between Christ and human nature as it is under sin in the world there is no kind of separation, even to the shadow of a single degree. He was made flesh; he was made to be sin. He was made flesh as flesh is and only as flesh is in this world and was made to be sin only as sin is.

And this must He do to redeem lost mankind. For Him to be separated a single degree or a shadow of a single degree in any sense from the nature of those whom He came to redeem would be only to miss everything.

Therefore, as He was made “under the law,” *because they are under the law* whom He would redeem, and as He was made a curse, *because they are under the curse* whom He would redeem, and as He was made sin, *because they are sinners*—“sold under sin”—whom He would redeem, precisely so He must be made flesh and “the same” flesh and blood, *because they are flesh* and blood whom He would redeem and must be made “of a woman,” because sin was in the world *first* by and in the woman.

Consequently, it is true, without any sort of exception, that “*in all things* it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” Hebrews 2:17.

If He were not of the same flesh as are those whom He came to redeem, then there is no sort of use of His being made flesh at all. More than this: Since the only flesh that there is in this wide world which He came to redeem is just the poor, sinful, lost, human flesh that all mankind have; if this is not the flesh that he was made, then He never really came to the world which needs to be redeemed. For if he came in a human nature different from that which human nature in this world actually is, then, even though He were

Continued on page 21, column 2

The Mediator Between Heaven and Earth

By Onycha Holt

Paul states there is only one mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus:

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

The word *mediator* is mentioned three times in the book of Hebrews:

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:15)

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel.* (Hebrews 12:24)

And it is found in total only seven times in the New Testament—the four instances above and thrice in Galatians 3:19–20, one of which is a supplied word. The Greek word translated *mediator* in these verses is *mesítēs* and in the secular world at the time, *mesítēs* represented someone who mediated between “two parties to remove a disagreement or reach a common goal,” William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 634. The mediator between God and men seeks reconciliation of God and man.

Walter F. Specht, former Dean of Division of Religion at Loma Linda University and a contributor to the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on the first ten chapters of the book of Jeremiah, explains a mediator in this way:

What is a mediator and why is a mediator between God and man necessary? The English word *mediator* is taken over from the postclassical—specifically, ecclesiastical—Latin. The term is derived from the adjective *medius*, meaning “middle” or “midst.” A mediator is one in the middle, a go-between for two parties. The Greek word *mesítēs*, found in 1 Ti 2:5, is also derived from an adjective, *mesos*, meaning “in the middle.” A mediator is one who establishes a relation that otherwise would not exist. A mediator represents each of the two parties to the other and brings them together.

But why is a mediator between God and men necessary? In the first place, this need is due to the tremendous differentiation that exists between the nature of God and the nature of man. God is infinite, all powerful, transcendent, and highly exalted above His creatures. Paul refers to Him in 1 Timothy as “the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God” (1 Ti 1:17). Again, he describes Him as “the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can seen (1Tim 6:15–16).

How can finite, weak, and puny man have communion with a God like that? Moreover, God is pure, righteous, and holy, but man is sinful, unclean, and wicked. Man’s sins have dug a gulf between him and God. How then can man approach his Maker?

. . . this gulf has been bridged through a divinely appointed go-between, a mediator. Through him is communion between the two. (Walter F. Specht, “Christ’s Session, Enthronement, and Mediatorial and Intercessory Ministry,” *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, Arnold Walenkampf, W. Richard Leshner, eds., pp. 327–328)

And Christ provides this reconciliation by his perfect life:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . . 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: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1, 3–4)

A concept similar to mediation is intercession, and this word is also used only a few times in the New Testament, mostly in Romans 8. It is also used in Hebrews 7, where we read:

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

The word translated *intercession* comes from a Greek word transliterated *entunchano*, which means to *appeal*, to *intercede*, to *petition*, to *plead*, or to *approach*. When we approach or petition God, the Greek word is translated *pray*. In Acts 25:24, it is translated “have dealt,” meaning the Jews had petitioned, approached, or dealt with Felix about Jesus:

And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt [*entunchano*] with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. (Acts 25:24)

Jesus also indicated that he is the only mediator and intercessor for man when he stated that no one comes unto the Father except by him:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

In the June 2023 issue of *Old Paths*, we discussed perfection of character and the definition of sin, but we did not address the obvious need of a mediator between sinful man and the heavenly Father. Remember, no man can approach the Father except by Jesus Christ. The Greek preposition translated *by* in John 14:6 also means *through* or *because of*. We all know that none of us is worthy in any way to come into the presence of the Father. We are sinful and cannot exist in his presence. In a nanosecond we would be destroyed, but the righteousness of Christ can be substituted in our behalf so that we can be seen and heard by the Father.

So far, most would probably not disagree, but a problem has arisen with the following statements:

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God *without an intercessor*. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.1; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord *without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble*. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 71.1)

Dr. Woodrow Whidden has written the following, concerning the issue of living without an intercessor:

God's sealed and faithful people are regarded as perfect in the sense that they are no longer cherishing sin or committing overt sins—sins that are deliberately or willfully performed. They will be imperfect in the sense that they still have sinful natures, so all that they do is less than the best. *They still have unavoidable deficiencies*, but they do not indulge in or commit premeditated acts of sin. *Jesus is still making up for their "unavoidable deficiencies," "defects," "shortcomings," "mistakes," and "errors," but He is no longer mediating for the unsealed—the rebellious, willful, high-handed, sin-excusing sinners.*

(Woodrow W. Whidden II, *Ellen White on Salvation, A Chronological Study*, p. 136; accessed at <http://sdanet.org/atissue/books/wws/salv15.htm>)

What Whidden is saying is that Jesus will continue to mediate for “God’s sealed and faithful people” after probation ends, but for the “unsealed—the rebellious, willful, high-handed, sin-excusing sinners”—he “is no longer mediating” and this is the group of people that will live without an intercessor.

First of all, does Jesus ever mediate for the rebellious, willful, high-handed, sin-excusing sinners who claim to be Christians? The purpose of Christ’s mediation is to reconcile man with God (Hebrews 2:17), and can this be done for a rebellious, determined, sin-excusing sinner? No, of course not.

As our Intercessor, His office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters. Christ intercedes in behalf of those who have received Him. To them He gives power, by virtue of His own merits, to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 363.3)

He fulfilled one phase of His priesthood by dying on the cross for the fallen race. He is now fulfilling another phase by pleading before the Father the case of *the repenting, believing sinner*, presenting to God the offerings of His people. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 16, Ms 42, 1901, par. 25)

Mediation is needed as we recognize our great need as a sinner and as we confess our sins, ask forgiveness, and determine to turn from them. Jesus then steps in as our substitute and forgiveness is offered.

A full, complete ransom has been paid by Jesus, by virtue of which the sinner is pardoned and the justice of the law is maintained. All who believe that Christ is the atoning sacrifice may come and receive pardon for their sins; for through the merit of Christ, communication has been opened between God and man. (Ellen White, *Faith and Works*, p. 93.2)

This does not mean we cannot return to our old ways, but if this should happen, then we come again to our Saviour, repentant and sorrowful, seeking forgiveness again, and it is tenderly given. Thus we make stepping stones to a victorious life out of our mistakes.

Let the child and the youth be taught that every mistake, every fault, every difficulty, conquered, becomes a stepping-stone to better and higher things. It is through such experiences that all who have ever made life worth the living have achieved success. (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 296)

But what about the unavoidable deficiencies Whidden mentions? In 1891, Ellen White made a reference to unavoidable deficiencies in a letter written to Brother and Sister Ings and Elder Fulton. It has been republished four times, including in a manuscript. The unavoidable deficiencies we have can only be the epigenetic/genetic deficiencies we inherit from our parents. These are completely unavoidable by us. We have no choice in the matter, but we are to overcome them through the grace of God, just as we are to overcome cultivated deficiencies:

While you have been walking in meekness and lowliness of heart, a work has been going on for you, a work which only God could do; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. And that good pleasure is to have you abide in Christ, rest in His love. . . . Giving up one's life to Him means much more than we suppose. We must learn His meekness and lowliness before we realize the fulfillment of the promise, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is by learning the habits of Christ, His meekness, His lowliness, that self becomes transformed,—by taking Christ's yoke upon you and then submitting to learn. There is no one who has not much to learn. All must come under training by Jesus Christ. **When they fall upon Christ, their own hereditary and cultivated traits of character are taken away as hindrances to their being partakers of the divine nature.** When self dies, then Christ lives in the human agent. He abides in Christ, and Christ lives in him. (Ellen White, *Bible Training School*, August 1, 1903, par. 2)

They will be taken away (!) because they are hindrances to being a partaker of the divine nature. What a wonderful promise. Even in the secular world something similar is taught in order for one to be a powerful leader.

Fred Kiel is a psychologist who has studied chief executive officers (CEOs) of highly placed companies, people typically considered ruthless and uncaring, focused only on making their companies successful and highly profitable. We may have met these kinds of people—selfish, driven, and with a me-first mentality. Kiel scored each CEO and compared the results with their company's physical and financial growth. What he found was that the leaders who exhibited qualities of care and concern, of flexibility for employees' unexpected urgent needs, and of approachability and kindness were the leaders of companies that grew the most; whereas, the leaders who were cold, selfish, aggressive, and distant were leaders of companies that were lowest in growth and in profit gain. It was character that made the difference, and Kiel believes good character can be learned. So, also, do we believe. We are to culti-

vate our characters, we are to train our characters, and we are to form our characters through the grace of God:

A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 331.1)

If I asked you to think of your favorite president of the United States, what person would come to mind? If you are like 80% of the United States's population, you would have thought of Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln did not have charisma or a commanding presence and was not handsome. He was not a military genius nor a new-dealing politician. So, what has made him so popular?

The Russian literaturist, Leo Tolstoy, explained it during an interview he gave in 1909. He stated:

Once while travelling in the Caucasus I happened to be the guest of a Caucasian chief of the Circassians, who, living far away from civilized life in the mountains, had but a fragmentary and childish comprehension of the world and its history. The fingers of civilization had never reached him nor his tribe, and all life beyond his native valleys was a dark mystery.

I was received with the usual Oriental hospitality and after our meal was asked by my host to tell him something of my life. Yielding to his request I began to tell him of my profession, of the development of our industries and inventions and of the schools. He listened to everything with indifference, but when I began to tell about the great statesmen and the great generals of the world he seemed at once to become very much interested.

"Wait a moment," he interrupted, after I had talked a few minutes. "I want all my neighbors and my sons to listen to you. I will call them immediately."

He soon returned with a score of wild looking riders and asked me politely to continue.¹

And Tolstoy continued. He covered the lives of Russian czars, of Napoleon, and finally of Abraham Lincoln. The

1. Leo Tolstoy, in an interview with Count S. Stakelberg, as published in *New York World*, February 7, 1909; condensed and with slight edits; accessed at <https://mclane65.tripod.com/lincoln.html>

men were deeply impressed with Lincoln, so much so that they asked to see a picture of him, which Tolstoy promised to obtain for them the next day. Tolstoy continued explaining in the interview:

Now, why was Lincoln so great that he overshadowed all other national heroes? He really was not a great general like Napoleon or Washington; he was not such a skillful statesman as Gladstone or Frederick the Great; but his supremacy expresses itself altogether in his peculiar moral power and in the greatness of his character. He had come through many hardships and much experience to the realization that the greatest human achievement is love. He was what Beethoven was in music, Dante in poetry, and Raphael in painting.

It is natural that before Lincoln reached his goal he had to walk the highway of mistakes. But we find him, nevertheless, in every tendency true to one main motive, and that was to benefit mankind. He was one who wanted to be great through his smallness.

If he had failed to become President he would have been, no doubt, just as great, but only God could have appreciated it.

The highest heroism is that which is based on humanity, truth, justice and pity; all other forms are doomed to forgetfulness. Lincoln's example is universal. Washington was a typical American, Napoleon was a typical Frenchman, but Lincoln was a humanitarian as broad as the world. He was great through his simplicity and was noble through his charity. (Ibid.)

This is misplaced praise, for only God is great, but Tolstoy was a professed Christian, and perhaps what he meant was that he saw in Lincoln a reflection of God's goodness, love, and truth. Lincoln was a mediator with heavy responsibilities. He struggled long and hard to keep the states united as one nation and to give men, women, and children freedom from the bondage of slavery, and Jesus is mediating a oneness for us with our Father and freedom for us from the oppressive bondage of sin.

In 1903, six years prior to Tolstoy's interview, delegates assembled for the General Conference session in Oakland, California, and on Sunday, March 29, Elder L. R. Conradi presented the morning sermon. It was about the spread of truth throughout the world, and in one part he focused on Russia:

As I came, into the country, I knew it was difficult, but the peasants flocked and came by scores [to hear the word of God preached], although it was harvest time. They laid down their work at night and sometimes came as late as half past nine or ten o'clock, and they didn't go

to sleep either. They kept awake. And the next morning they would go again to work in harvest. Until one night the windows flew in [due to a storm]. Then I said, "Never mind; it may be worse." But I didn't know what I said. It took but a few days longer, and we were inside a Russian jail. And the accusation was "Jewish heresy." On the way to the place where the jail was, I asked a lawyer what does the Russian law say about this? "Why," he says, "if your accusation is Jewish heresy, if that is the complaint against you, you go to Siberia without grace. That's the law."

The worst crime is Jewish heresy. Well, what could I do? The doors were locked behind us. At night when we knelt down to ask God to help us, a jailer who walked up and down would look in the little hole in the door—they called it the 'Judas hole'—to see if we were there; and he would now and then see us kneeling and praying, and he used to say scoffingly, "Your God does not hear you." But I tell you we have a God that hears us. . . .

. . . years ago, the Adventists were not so well known in the United States as they are at the present time. There were not as large numbers as there are today; and the minister of America might have been from California, Louisiana, or Kentucky, or Maryland, or somewhere else, for we did not have many Sabbath keepers at that time, and they were never heard about, and when the American minister got my letter he said, "I don't know those people. What am I concerned about those Adventists?" [But] He wrote me. "Your case is a very difficult one. That is one of the worst things to do in Russia. I shall do my best." From what place do you think that man was? Detroit, Michigan. Mr Lathrop, from Detroit, Mich. Now you know there is not a State in the United States itself today where Seventh-day Adventists are better known than Michigan. Well now, God had that man right there, and when he got the news he did not write to the Russian minister, but he went there personally.

And that Russian minister said to him, "Here is the complaint; it is Jewish heresy; he is trying to seduce people to Judaism." Well now, supposing that Russian minister had known nothing farther about us, what could he have said? They keep the Sabbath. They are Jews. They are not Christians. But the American minister, Mr. Lathrop, said "I know these people, and I know they are Christians and believe in Christ." And as he gave his testimony, the Russian minister said, "Can you on your honor say that the Seventh-day Adventists are a Christian people?" And as Mr. Lathrop said it, the message flew over the wires, thousands of miles, to St. Peters-

burg, to the very South—the Crimea, “Let that man go.” The jailer, everybody, had said “Your God does not hear you.” But the electric wire brought the message, “Let that man go.” And as that jailer led us out from the prison, he said to me, “I am not worthy to lead you.” I said, “Why?” “Oh,” he said, “Your God has heard you.”²

Mr. Lathrop became a mediator between Elder Conradi and the Russian government, and:

Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God. He clothed His divinity with humanity, He associated with the human race, that with His long human arm, He might encircle humanity, and with His divine arm grasp the throne of Divinity. And this, that He might restore to man the original mind, which he lost in Eden through Satan’s alluring temptation, that man might realize that it is for his present and eternal good to obey the requirements of God. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 12, Lt 121, 1897, par. 4)

Paul points out in Romans, Galatians, First Timothy, and Hebrews Jesus’ work of mediation. Paul understood this important need of ours, and his example was to pray or intercede for many of the people to whom he wrote:

To the Romans:

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers [*prōsēuchē*]; (Romans 1:9)

To Timothy:

I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; (2 Timothy 1:3)

And to the Colossians:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray [*proseuchomai*] for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (Colossians 1:9)

In addition, Paul instructed us to pray:

Pray [*proseuchomai*] without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

I will therefore that men pray [*proseuchomai*] every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. (1 Timothy 2:8)

Praying [*proseuchomai*] always with all prayer [*prōsēuchē*] and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:18)

Jesus stated:

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer [*prōsēuchē*], believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)

Jesus also prayed for us, as recorded in Chapter 17 of John:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (John 17:20)

The Greek word translated *pray* in many of these examples is *prōsēuchōmai* or a form of it, and means to *pray* to God, to *supplicate*, to *worship*, to *request*. It is a derivative of the Greek word we considered earlier, *entunchano*, which has the similar meanings of to *petition*, to *plead*, or to *approach unto*.

Ellen White often used the words *mediator* and *intercessor* interchangeably:

By this brightness [the brightness in the face of Moses which had to be veiled] God designed to impress upon Israel the sacred, exalted character of His law, and the glory of the gospel revealed through Christ. While Moses was in the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was prefigured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age; and it was the heavenly light streaming from Calvary, no less than the glory of the law of God, that shed such a radiance upon the face of Moses. That divine illumination symbolized the glory of the dispensation of which Moses was the visible **mediator**, a representative of the one true **Intercessor**. (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 330.2)

Moses was a type of Christ. As Israel’s **intercessor** veiled his countenance, because the people could not endure to look upon its glory, so Christ, the divine **Mediator**, veiled His divinity with humanity when He came to earth. (Ibid., p. 330.4)

There is but **one Mediator, one Intercessor**, who can help wisely and not make one indiscreet move. I point you to the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” In Him is all-sufficiency. Tell Him your failings, and receive instruction from His words. This is eating His flesh and drinking His blood, becoming par-

2. L. R. Conradi, Sermon March 29, 1903; <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCSM/1903/GCRS19030329.pdf>

takers of the divine nature. Oh, let every one who nameth the name of Christ depart from all iniquity! (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 196.2)

At other times she referred to mediator and intercessor as separate concepts. In the following references, we read about a mediator **and** an intercessor:

He bridged the gulf between heaven and earth, and thus made finite man of value in God's sight. Through Christ, our Mediator and Intercessor, the human race has been placed on vantage ground. (Ellen White, *Australasian Union Conference Record*, July 28, 1899, Art. A, par. 2)

He took our nature that he might become acquainted with the trials wherewith man should be beset, and he is our mediator and intercessor before the Father. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, June 10, 1890, par. 9)

He took our nature upon him that he might become acquainted with our trials and sorrows, and, knowing all our experiences, he stands as Mediator and Intercessor before the Father. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, November 24, 1887, par. 10)

These two words have been used by Ellen White independently as well as interchangeably, and we do the same. They can stand alone or intertwine. Today we use the phrase *intercessory prayer* to indicate times when we pray for others, but these prayers are different from the intercession Jesus does for us. When we pray, we have nothing worthy in ourselves that would commend us to God that he should listen to our prayers and answer them. Ellen White describes it this way:

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin, ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they **are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God**. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the intercessor who is at God's right hand presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censor of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censor the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and **with these He puts His own spotless righteousness**. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 15, Ms 50, 1900, par. 17)

It is not that the Father does not love us or want to help us. We know he does because he gave his only begotten Son for us, but our prayers, praise, and confessions of sin are defiled, she says, and this defilement is because they are tainted with earthly corruption. This is why we are to pray in the name of Jesus.

In Christ's name our petitions ascend to the Father. He intercedes in our behalf, and the Father lays open all the treasures of His grace for our appropriation, to enjoy and communicate to others. "Ask in My name," Christ says. "I do not say I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved me. Make use of My name. This will give your prayers efficiency, and the Father will give you the riches of His grace. Wherefore ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." [See John 16:26, 27, 24.] (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 13, Lt 22, 1898, par. 4)

We are always in need of the intercession of Jesus in whatever we bring to God in worship or in prayer because all that we do is tainted with corruption. Our heavenly Father is so righteous, pure, and holy that the minutest amount of sin is offensive to him and prevents him from hearing us. Only when Jesus mingles his prayers with our prayers will the Father listen because Jesus is just as righteous as he is. Without Christ's intercession our prayers would not reach the throne of grace, but he adds his merits to our sincere, penitent prayers, and this the Father accepts, and whatsoever we ask with a pure heart in the name of Jesus is granted:

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. (John 16:23)

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16)

This is what Christ's intercessory work is, and it is only possible because of his sinless character.

When Jesus pleads our cases before the Father in the investigative judgment, he presents his perfect life of obedience as a substitute for our sinful lives.

This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above. (Ellen White, *Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 157.1)

While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being re-

moved from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14. (Ibid., p. 153.1)

And as long as our sinful deeds are confessed, repented of, and have forgiven written beside them, we will be granted the robe of Christ's perfect righteousness to cover them when our cases are presented before the Father in the judgment when Jesus mediates for us.

Intercession occurs when Christ supports a spiritual function that we do, such as prayer, worship, and confession, and he supports it because by itself it is tainted with corruption and, thus, cannot come into the presence of the Father, no matter how sincere we might be. Mediation, on the other hand, involves nothing that we can present to the Father, not even in a small amount. Mediation is solely the work of Christ, and therein lies the difference. In intercession, Jesus mingles his merits **with** our spiritual reaching out to God, but mediation is the work of Jesus and Jesus only. Some aspects of intercession and mediation seem to be overlap, and this results in many people, including Ellen White, using the terms interchangeably at times. We also cooperate with Christ in the work of salvation, he gives us the desire and the power to do so, but we must choose. As long as we are willing to be made willing, we will become overcomers (*The Signs of the Times*, May 18, 1904, par. 9)! God has promised to complete the good work he has begun in us (Philippians 1:6), and all glory and honor and praise will go to him that sitteth upon the throne of Revelation 4:2–3 and to the Lamb of Revelation 5:6. When Jesus pleads our cases before the Father in the investigative judgment, he offers his perfect life as a substitute for our sinful lives, his righteousness as a substitute for our unrighteousness, and his merits in the place of our lack, and this wonderful work of mediation brings us into oneness with the Father.

The Saviour presents the virtue of His mediation before the Father, and pledges Himself to the office of personal Intercessor. By proclaiming Himself as our Intercessor, He desires us to know that He places in the golden censor His merits and efficiency, that He may offer them with the sincere prayers of His people. How essential, then, that we pray much, for as our prayers ascend to the throne of God, they are mingled with the fragrance of Christ's righteousness. Our voice is not the only voice heard. Before it reaches the ear of God, it blends with the voice of Christ, whom the Father always hears. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 14, Lt 231, 1899, par. 6)

William Johnsson is a former editor of the *Adventist Review*, and in an article entitled "The Mediator," which he wrote for the *Review*, he stated:

One mediator—only one! No one else can bridge heaven and earth. No one else can forgive our sins. No one else can or should claim for themselves what Jesus alone can be and do. (William G. Johnsson, "The Mediator," *Adventist Review*, Week of Prayer Issue, September 22, 2011, p. 13)

A person reading these four sentences could be impressed with the good words about Christ in most of this quotation. Yes, he is our only Mediator. Yes, no one should claim for themselves what Jesus alone can do. Yes, no one else can bridge heaven and earth, but to state that Jesus is the only one who can forgive our sins is error and is just one example of why the Adventist people as a whole can be confused on so many things.

While dying on the cross, Jesus prayed:

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. (Luke 23:34)

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to ask our heavenly Father for forgiveness:

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

First John 1:9 is speaking of the Father, for the antecedent of "he" is found in verse 7.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

In Ephesians 1:7, the forgiveness of sins is made possible through the blood of Jesus Christ:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (Ephesians 1:7)

In case you are not sure who the "in whom" is in this quotation, here is another translation of the verse: "He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins" (Ephesians 1:7 New Living Translation).

God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins. God cannot forgive sins at the expense of His justice, His holiness, and His truth. But He does forgive sins and that fully. There are no sins He will not forgive in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sinner's only hope, and if he rests here in sincere faith, he is sure of pardon and that full and free. There is only one channel

and that is accessible to all, and through that channel a rich and abundant forgiveness awaits the penitent, contrite soul and the darkest sins are forgiven. These lessons were taught to the chosen people of God thousands of years ago, and repeated in various symbols and figures, that the work of truth might be riveted in every heart, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. . . . Justice demanded the sufferings of man; but Christ rendered the sufferings of a God. He needed no atonement of suffering for Himself; all His sufferings were for us; all His merits and holiness were open to fallen man, presented as a gift. (Ellen White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 102.4)

He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal. (Ellen White, *Faith & Works*, p. 104.1)

Let the mind awaken to gratitude that through Christ Jesus, the Father is faithful to fulfill the promise to forgive all sin. His mercy and His love are forever an assurance as we look upon Christ uplifted upon the cross of Calvary. Will we individually rise to the appreciation as far as we have capacity to comprehend the truth, that God Jehovah loves and forgives us if we believe in and love Jesus? (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 106.2)

But Jesus also has the authority to forgive sins:

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and walk*? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) *Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house*. (Matthew 9:2–6)

Christ is the connecting link between God and man. He has promised His personal intercession by employing His name. He places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. Christ pleads for man, and man, in need of divine help, pleads for himself in the presence of God, using the power of the influence of the One who give His life for the world. As we acknowledge before God our appreciation of Christ's merits, fragrance is given to our intercessions. . . . As we ap-

proach God through the virtue of Christ's merits, we are clothed with His priestly vestments. He places us close by His side, encircling us with His human arm, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the infinite. He puts His merits, as sweet incense, in a censer in their hands, in order to encourage their petitions. He promises to hear and answer their supplications. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 13, Lt 22, 1898, par. 5)

Let us now go back to our first Spirit of Prophecy quotation, "When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God **without an intercessor**" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.1).

The reason the righteous will live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor is because they **are** righteous in the sight of a holy God. Not through any power or righteousness of their own, but by the power of God. All sins have been confessed and repented of and cleansed from the heavenly record. The heart, as well, has been made clean by the power of God, not that they feel righteous, for they are troubled on every side, are in perilous situations, and feel they may have been left to the mercy of the wicked. Heavenly angels, however, are only waiting for the command to rescue them, but first their earthliness must be consumed. This earthliness is not a sin, for if it were, they would still need a mediator to stand between them and the Father, and they do not. They are able to stand before God alone without an intercessor or a mediator for the first time ever—all praise and honor to our Father and to his Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour—and yet they bow low on bended knee before God, fearful they have failed to confess and forsake every sin. Ellen White uses both terms in describing this event—intercessor above and mediator below:

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God **without a mediator**. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 425.1)

It has been stated that the doctrine of living without a mediator/intercessor after the close of probation is not found in the Bible, but let us consider the third angel's message:

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:9–12)

We are told in these verses that at this time God's people will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and it is also at this time that the wrath of God is to be poured out, also known as the time of Jacob's trouble. Probation has closed; therefore, there is no mediator, no intercessor, no high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Most of the world has received the mark of the beast, but God's people have been sealed and are described as keeping the commandments of God, i.e. they are not only guarding the commandments, but they are also observing them. They, therefore, are not in need of a mediator or an intercessor, so, yes, the doctrine is scriptural.

This does not mean, however, that God's people live without his presence during this time. God will never forsake us. The words, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5) are always true.

God's people face other misconceptions about the work of Christ in the most holy place. In his book published in 1996, Morris Venden claims that one of the purposes of intercession is to keep people, angels, and unfallen worlds from transgression. In *Never Without An Intercessor* he quotes a purported portion of an article by Ellen White published in *The Signs of the Times*:

"Christ is the high priest of the church. And He has a work to do which no other person can perform. By His grace, He is able to keep everyone from transgression" (Signs of the Times, 14 February 1900). (Morris L. Venden, *Never Without An Intercessor: The Good News About the Judgment*, p. 62).

And then he immediately states:

Part of His work in heaven is to keep people from transgression. Angels, unfallen worlds, and saints who have accepted of His grace are included in His intercessory work (salvation from falling).

The portion from *The Signs of the Times* actually states:

He is the High Priest of the church, and He has a work to do which no other can perform. By His grace (ST February 14, 1900, par. 9)

He Is Able to Keep Every Man from Transgression

His ambassadors, those who receive Him, are born again, and are thus fitted to represent Him.

"He Is Able to Keep Every Man from Transgression" is an editorial subheading that is dividing the paragraph. It is a poor place to put a subheading because it not only divides the paragraph but also the sentence, but that is what the editors have done. The complete sentence by Ellen White reads: "By His grace His ambassadors, those who receive Him, are born again, and are thus fitted to represent Him" (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900, par. 9).

The purpose of intercession is to mingle the beauty of Jesus' perfect character of righteousness with our imperfection when we, for example, pray, worship, and/or confess our sins, and it then becomes a sweet savor to our heavenly Father. The primary purpose of intercession is not, as Venden states, to keep people, other worlds, and angels from sinning, although there is some overlap, and not sinning is crucial, but the two are different processes. Here is another way Ellen White describes the intercession of Christ:

And now, not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a Conqueror claiming His victory. His offering is complete, and as our Intercessor He executes His self-appointed work, holding before God the censer containing His own spotless merits and the prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving of His people. Perfumed with the fragrance of His righteousness, these ascend to God as a sweet savor. The offering is wholly acceptable, and pardon covers all transgression. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 156.2)

Paul was given a view of the spiritual city of God and of the building stones of gold, silver, and precious stones:

Paul laid himself upon the true foundation, and brought every stone, whether large or small, polished or unhewn, common or precious, to be connected with the living foundation-stone, Christ Jesus. Thus slowly ascended the temple of the church of God. The apostle says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." . . .

Paul had, in vision, a view of the city of God, with its foundations; and he represents the true Christian con-

verts to be gold, silver, and precious stones. But the Jews made the work of Paul exceedingly difficult. They were continually claiming to be the only true children of Abraham, and therefore the only legitimate building-stones for God's house; and when the Gentiles accepted the gospel, and were brought to the true foundation, the Jews murmured about this material. Thus they hindered the work of God; nevertheless, the apostle unflinchingly continued his labors. (Ellen White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 156.2)


But,

One after another of the noble builders fell at his work by the hand of the enemy. Stephen was stoned; James was slain by the sword; Paul was beheaded; Peter was crucified; John was exiled. And yet stone after stone was added to the building, the church increased in the midst of the terrible persecutions that afflicted her, and new workers on the wall took the place of the fallen. (Ibid., p. 157.1)

We want to be the gold, silver, and precious stones in the city of God. We do not want to fall by the hand of the enemy, nor do we want the clearness of truth to be dimmed by uncertainty, so it is necessary to keep our eyes on Jesus, our great Mediator. Even now he is presenting before the heavenly tribunal cases of those who have professed belief in him, and he is claiming for the faithful ones his death as the substitute for their decreed death. He is the bridge linking these humble brothers and sisters into an eternal fellowship with the Father, and he is the only one in the universe who can do this. This is why the redeemed will cast their crowns at Jesus' feet and why John heard:

... the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:11-14)

Intercession can also be seen as a subsidiary of the process of mediation. The intercession of Christ allows our prayers, confessions, and praise to come into the presence of the Father because it adds the beauty of Christ's righteousness to our spiritual reaching out to God and makes

our efforts a sweet savor to the Father. It combines our feeble efforts with the beauty of our Saviour, but in mediation only the work of Christ is seen. We have no part in it and nothing to add to it. Jesus presents his righteous life and says to the Father, I will that this person be with me in our kingdom. Accept my sinless life in place of his life of sin, and let him come in. And the Father agrees. Jesus is our substitute, example, and surety, and in all of this he is the great Mediator. While the terms *mediator* and *intercessor* can at times be used interchangeably because some aspects overlap, both are the unfathomable work of Christ. To him be glory, honor, and praise forever. 

“Made of a Woman,” continued from page 11
in the world, yet for any practical purposes in reaching man and helping him, he was as far from him as if He had never come, for, in that case, in His human nature He was just as far from man and just as much of another world as if He had never come into this world at all.

It is thoroughly understood that in His birth Christ did partake of the nature of Mary—the “woman” of whom He was “made.” But the carnal mind is not willing to allow that God in His perfection of holiness could endure to come to men where they are in their sinfulness. Therefore endeavor has been made to escape the consequences of this glorious truth, which is the emptying of self, by inventing a theory that *the nature of the virgin Mary was different* from the nature of the rest of mankind; that her flesh was not exactly such flesh as is that of all mankind. This invention sets up that by some special means Mary was made different from the rest of human beings, especially in order that Christ might be *becomingly* born of her.

This invention has culminated in what is known as the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Many Protestants, if not the vast majority of them as well as other non-Catholics, think that the Immaculate Conception refers to the *conception of Jesus* by the virgin Mary. But this is altogether a mistake. It refers not at all to the conception of Christ by Mary but to the conception of *Mary herself* by her mother.

The official and “infallible” doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, as solemnly defined as an article of faith, by Pope Pius IX, speaking *ex cathedra* on the 8th of December 1854 is as follows:—

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.

Wherefore, if any shall presume, which may God avert, to think in their heart otherwise than has been defined by us, let them know, and moreover understand, that they are condemned by their own judgment, that they have made shipwreck as regards the faith, and have fallen away from the unity of the Church.—*Catholic Belief*, page 214.

This conception is defined by Catholic writers thus:—

The ancient writing, “*De Nativitate Christi*,” found in St. Cyprian’s works says: Because (Mary) being “*very different from the rest of mankind, human nature, but not sin, communicated itself to her.*”

Theodore, patriarch of Jerusalem, said in the second council of Nice, that Mary “*is truly the mother of God, and virgin before and after childbirth; and she was created in a condition more sublime and glorious than that of all natures, whether intellectual or corporeal.*”—*Id.*, pages 216, 217.

This plainly puts the nature of Mary entirely beyond any real likeness or relationship to mankind or human nature as it is. Having this clearly in mind, let us follow this invention in its next step. Thus it is, as given in the words of Cardinal Gibbons:—

We affirm that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of God, who in His divine nature is, from all eternity, begotten of the Father, consubstantial with Him, was in the fulness of time again begotten, by being born of the virgin, thus taking to himself from her maternal womb a human nature of *the same substance with hers*.

As far as the sublime mystery of the incarnation can be reflected in the natural order, the blessed Virgin, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, by communicating to the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, as mothers do, a true human nature of the same substance with her own, is thereby really and truly His mother.—*Faith of Our Fathers*, pages 198, 199.

Now put these two things together. First, we have the nature of Mary defined as being not only “*very different from the rest of mankind,*” but “*more sublime and glorious than all natures:*” thus putting her infinitely beyond any real likeness or relationship to mankind as we really are.

Next, we have Jesus described as taking from her a human nature of the same substance as hers.

From this theory it therefore follows as certainly as that two and two make four, that in His human nature the Lord Jesus is “*very different*” from the rest of mankind; indeed, His nature is not human nature at all.

Such is the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the human nature of Christ. The Catholic doctrine of the human nature of Christ is simply that that nature is not human nature at all, but divine: “*more sublime and glorious than all natures.*” It is that in His human nature Christ was so far separated from mankind as to be utterly unlike that of mankind, that His was a nature in which He could have no sort of fellow-feeling with mankind.

But such is not the faith of Jesus. The faith of Jesus is that “*as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.*”

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 behooved 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.*”

In the quotations of Catholic faith which in this chapter we have cited, we have presented the faith of Rome as to the human nature of Christ and of Mary. In the second chapter of Hebrews and kindred texts of Scripture there is presented—and in these studies we have endeavored to reproduce as there presented—the faith of Jesus as to the human nature of Christ.

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. 卐

Youth's Corner — Look Up

By Ellen G. White

(From *The Youth's Instructor*, October 23, 1902)

Several years ago, while journeying from Christiania, Norway, to Goteborg, Sweden, I was favored with a sight of the most glorious sunset it was ever my privilege to behold. Language is inadequate to picture its beauty. The last beams of the setting sun, silver and gold, purple, amber, and crimson, shed their glories athwart the sky, growing brighter and brighter, rising higher and higher in the heavens, until it seemed that the gates of the city of God had been left ajar, and gleams of the inner glory were flashing through. For two hours the wondrous splendor continued to light up the cold northern sky,—a picture painted by the great Master Artist upon the shifting canvas of the heavens. Like the smile of God it seemed, above all earthly homes, above the rock-bound plains, the rugged mountains, the lonely forests, through which our journey lay.

Angels of mercy seemed whispering: “Look up! This glory is but a gleam of the light which flows from the throne of God. Live not for earth alone. Look up, and behold by faith the mansions of the heavenly home.” This scene was to me as the bow of promise to Noah, enabling me to grasp the assurance of God’s unfailing care, and to look forward to the haven of rest awaiting the faithful worker. Ever since that time I have felt that God granted us this token of his love for our encouragement. Never while memory lingers, can I forget that vision of beauty, and the comfort and peace it brought.

As God’s children, it is our privilege ever to look up, keeping the eye of faith fixed on Christ. As we constantly keep him in view, the sunshine of his presence floods the chambers of the mind. The light of Christ in the soul-tem-

ple brings peace. The soul is stayed on God. All perplexities and anxieties are committed to Jesus. As we continue to behold him, his image becomes engraved on the heart, and is revealed in the daily life.

But if, after conversion, we allow worldliness to creep into the heart, if we cherish it as a welcome guest, there is an entire change. The view of Jesus is eclipsed. The vision of his purity, his goodness, his matchless love, is dimmed. Peace is gone. No longer is the soul committed to him in simple, perfect trust. The whole Christian life seems uncertain.

My dear young friends, ever keep Christ in view. Thus only can you keep the eye single to ‘glory. Jesus is your light and life and peace and assurance forever. By beholding him you are changed from glory to glory—from character to character.

“If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.” “Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.” In Him is no darkness at all.

When the soul is illumined by God’s Spirit, the whole character is elevated, the mental conceptions are enlarged, and the affections, no longer centered upon self, shine forth in good works to others, attracting them to the beauty and brightness of Christ’s glory.

⌘

**Sunset at Lofoten
Islands, Norway.
Perhaps it is such a
scene of which Ellen
White wrote.**



Family Spiritual Retreat

October 5–8, 2023

The Maranatha 7th-Day Chapel is teaming up with 1889 HSDA to hold a family spiritual retreat October 5–8 at Fall Creek Falls State Park near Spencer, Tennessee.

There will be different activities, such as hikes, campfire singing, testimonies, and events, as well as studies from the word of God.

The retreat will be held at the Cane Creek camping area of Fall Creek Falls State Park, the same location where the 1889 HSDA camp meeting was held this last spring. The GPS coordinates are 35.64827° N, 85.34806° W. The facilities are older and rustic but are adequate for camping. There are twenty cabins in three loops which are centered around a large meeting building. The cabins hold six to eight people. **IMPORTANT:** Everyone will need to bring their own bedding, such as sheets, blankets, pillows, and/or sleeping bags.

There are small bath houses in each loop, and two loops have smaller meeting buildings. The main meeting building has a large kitchen with a large room that will be used for dining and for main meetings.

There will be no cost for staying at the camp, but it would be helpful to know how many will be attending so appropriate plans can be made. We have a link to register at <https://smyrna.org/2023-family-spiritual-retreat-survey/>

Meals will not be provided other than a light supper each day and a plant-based Sabbath lunch. Please plan accordingly. Any volunteers who would like to help with the kitchen duties and/or with clean-up afterwards for the food provided would be greatly appreciated.

Fall Creek Falls State Park is a beautiful place with several waterfalls, a large lake for boating, and many hiking trails. There is also a golf course which is very near the Cane Creek camp ground and is a helpful landmark to be able to locate the camp. The temperatures in early October will be moderate throughout the day and cool to cold at night.



Western USA 1889 HSDA Camp Meeting

October 11–14, 2023

Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). This key verse will be the theme for a mini camp meeting hosted by 1889 HSDA, to be held near Monterey, California, October 11–14. The specific location will be the Hampton Inn & Suites Marina, 120 Reservation Rd, Marina, CA.

We have a reduced and subsidize rate for those who wish to stay at the Hampton. The cost for a double bed room will be \$100 nightly. This is less than 50% of the normal rate. The hotel is very new and should provide a nice stay for those wishing to attend. The hotel is only ½ mile from the beach and has a gym.

The first meeting will be Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. PDT. Some of the speakers will include Martin Barlow, Daniel Mesa, and Allen Stump.

For more information you may contact us at: allen@smyrna.org / 304-732-9204 or contact Pastor Daniel Mesa at: (DanielRMesa3@gmail.com). More details soon.



Schedule of Smyrna Services

Please join us at: join.onstreammedia.com/live/smyrna/go
or 1-805-744-6450, conference code 73407721#

- * **Sabbath** morning, 9:10 EDT—Smyrna Sabbath School
- * **Sabbath** morning, 11:00 EDT—Smyrna Worship Service
- * **Sabbath** evening, 6:00 EDT—Evening vespers with Mike Brown. Use 1-605-475-4300, access code 755896# to join.
- * **Monday** evening, 7:30 EDT—Story hour with Onycha Holt—*Charles S. Longacre: Champion of Religious Liberty.*
- * **Tuesday** morning, 6:00–6:30 EDT—Prayer group with Michael Woodward.
- * **Wednesday**, 7 pm EDT—Smyrna Prayer Meeting
- * **Thursday**, 7:30 pm EDT—Bible study with Pastor Allen Stump.

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Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org
Associate Editor Onycha Holt—onycha@smyrna.org