



GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT



*Delegates of the Indonesian Mission held on June 7, 1998,
at Akediri, Halmahera, Indonesia*

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The Reformation Herald

"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."

—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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Watchman, What of the Night

*From Orient lands and islands fair,
Long shrouded with the gloom of night,
Breathes, through the dark and silent air,
The cry of longing for the light.
O Watchman, who on Zion's hill
Dost search the skies with eyes intent,
What of the night, so long and chill?
When will the weary hours be spent?*

*What of the night of sin and grief,
The night of ignorance and fear?
Is there no dawning of relief?
Doth not some morning-star appear?
O, yes; lift up your longing eyes!
The morning cometh swiftly on;
The Sun of Righteousness doth rise;
The shades of night will soon be gone.*

*But, soul, thou must thyself awake,
And welcome His first dawning ray;
Else will the light thy heart forsake,
And leave thee to thy darkening way.
And, Christian, thou must not forget
To send afar the Gospel light,
Lest, tho "the morning cometh," yet
Of thee be said— "and also night."*

—Edward A. Collier

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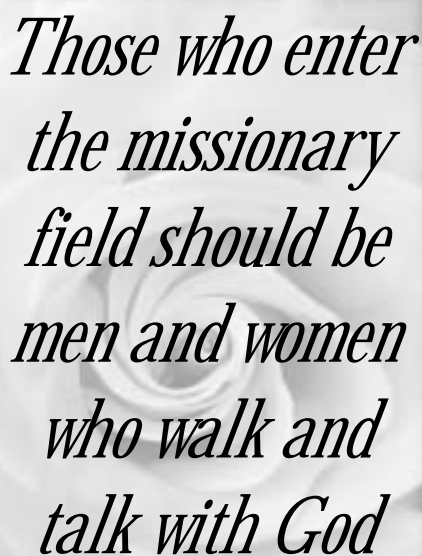
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MORALITY

THE standard of morality is not exalted high enough among God's people. Many who profess to be keeping God's commandments and standing in their defense are breaking them. Temptations present themselves in such a way that the tempted think they see an excuse to transgress. Those who enter the missionary field should be men and women who walk and talk with God. Those who stand as ministers in the sacred desk should be men of blameless reputation; their lives should be spotless, above everything that savors of impurity. Do not place your reputation in jeopardy by going in the way of temptation. If a woman lingeringly holds your hand, quickly withdraw it and save her from sin. If she manifests undue affection and mourns that her husband does not love her and sympathize with her, do not try to supply this lack. Your only safe and wise course in such a case is to keep your sympathy to yourself. Such cases are numerous. Point such souls to the Burden Bearer, the true and safe Counselor. If she has chosen Christ as a companion, He will give her grace to bear neglect without repining; meanwhile she should diligently do all in her power to bind her husband to herself by strictest fidelity to him and faithfulness in making his home cheerful and attractive. If all her efforts are unavailing and unappreciated, she will have the sympathy and aid of her blessed Redeemer. He will help her to bear all her burdens and comfort her in her disappointments. She shows distrust of Jesus when she reaches for human objects to supply the place that Christ is ever ready to fill. In her repining she sins against God. She would do well to examine her own heart critically to see if sin is not lurking in the soul. The heart that thus seeks human

sympathy and accepts forbidden attentions from anyone is not pure and faultless before God.

"The Bible affords many striking illustrations of the strong influence of evil-minded women. When Balaam was called upon to curse Israel, he was not permitted to do so; for the Lord 'hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.' But Balaam, who had already yielded to temptation, now became fully the agent of Satan; and he determined to accomplish indirectly what God had not permitted him to do directly. He at once laid a snare whereby Israel should be enchanted with the beautiful Moabitish women, who would lead them to transgress God's law. Thus iniquity would be found in them, and God's blessing



*Those who enter
the missionary
field should be
men and women
who walk and
talk with God*

would not rest upon them. Their forces would be greatly weakened, and their enemies would no longer fear their power, because the presence of the Lord of hosts was not with their armies.

"This is intended as a warning to the people of God living in the last days. If they follow after righteousness and true holiness, if they keep all the commandments of God, Satan and his agents will not be permitted to overcome them. All the opposition of their bitterest foes will prove powerless to destroy or uproot the vine of God's own planting. Satan understands what Balaam learned by sad experience, that there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither divination against Israel, while iniquity is not cherished among them; therefore his power and influence will ever be employed to mar their unity and defile the purity of their characters. His snares are laid in a thousand ways to weaken their power for good.

"Again I urge upon you the necessity of purity in every thought, in every word, in every action. We have an individual accountability to God, an individual work, which no one can do for us; it is to make the world better by precept, by personal effort, and by example. While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement, but for a purpose. There are souls to save. Come near to them by personal effort. Open your doors to young men who are exposed to temptation. Evil invites them on every hand. Seek to interest them. If they are full of faults, seek to correct these errors. Do not hold yourselves aloof from them, but come close to them. Bring them to your firesides; invite them to your family altars. There is work that thousands need to have done for them. Every tree in Satan's garden is hung with tempting, poisonous fruit, and a woe is pronounced upon everyone who plucks and eats. Let us

remember the claims of God upon us to make the path to heaven clear and bright and attractive, that we may win souls away from Satan's destructive enchantments." —

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 597–600. ❧

Historic Adventism

Part 13

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

by A. C. Sas

EVERYTHING in this life is measured by a pattern. When we go to buy something in the store, we do not accept any goods just by a rough estimate of size, weight or volume. We check it by the measuring system, to see if the size, weight or volume is correct.

Likewise, to measure one's character and life we have to compare them with the divine measurement—the law of God. The Bible speaks of this measuring rod:

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” Revelation 11:1.

The Spirit of Prophecy makes reference to this measurement:

“We are to compare our characters with the infallible standard of God's law. In order to do this, we must search the Scriptures, measuring our attainments by the word of God.”¹

“Let us study and eat the word of God, for we are built up from that which we eat. When we open the Bible, let us compare our lives with its requirements, measuring our character by the great moral standard of righteousness, God's holy law.”²

“The grand judgment is taking place, and has been going on for some time. Now the Lord says, Measure the temple and the worshippers thereof. Remember when

you are walking the streets about your business, God is measuring you; when you are attending your household duties, when you engage in conversation, God is measuring you. Remember that your words and actions are being daguerreotyped [photographed] in the books of heaven, as the face is reproduced by the artist on the polished plate.”³

The early Seventh-day Adventists considered the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus as of utmost importance. We read:

“The soul-saving message, the third angel's message, is the message to be given to the world. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are both important, immensely important, and must be given with equal force and power.”⁴

“Lift up the standard—the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Make this the important theme. Then, by your strong arguments, make it of still greater force.”⁵

“We are to raise the banner on which is inscribed, ‘The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Obedience to God's law is the great issue. Let it not be put out of sight. We must strive to arouse church members, and those who make no profession, to see and obey the claims of the law of Heaven. We are to magnify this law and make it honorable.”⁶

On the evening of October 5, 1861, the Seventh-day Adventist Church made a solemn pledge to

keep the commandments of God when they were associated together as a church. They declared:

“We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ.”⁷

The Seventh-day Adventists were organized as a General Conference in 1863. The following year, when they faced the problem of the American Civil War, they made another declaration, on August 2, 1864, as follows:

“We, the undersigned, Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, respectfully beg leave to present for your consideration the following statements:

“The denomination of Christians calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists, taking the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, are unanimous in their views that its teachings are contrary to the spirit and practice of war; hence, they have ever been conscientiously opposed to bearing arms. If there is any portion of the Bible which we, as a people, can point to more than another as our creed, it is the law of ten commandments, which we regard as the supreme law, and each precept of which we take in its most obvious and literal import. The fourth of these commandments requires cessation from labor on the seventh day of the week, the sixth

prohibits the taking of life, neither of which, in our view could be observed while doing military duty. Our practice has uniformly been consistent with these principles.”⁸

As we can see, the law of God was the measuring rod they used. This position to uphold God’s law was taught and practiced throughout the years. As a matter of fact, the early Adventists preached too much the law, forgetting Christ in the law. This is what the Lord’s servant said about it:

“You will meet with those who will say, ‘You are too much excited over this matter. You are too much in earnest. You should not be reaching for the righteousness of Christ, and making so much of that. You should preach the law.’ As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God.”⁹

“Let the law take care of itself. . . . Let us trust in the merits of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. May God help us that our eyes may be anointed with eyesalve, that we may see.”¹⁰

When by His mercy God sent a precious message to the church, at the 1888 General Conference Session held in Minneapolis, the main leaders rejected it. The message Christ Our Righteousness was accepted only by a very few. The servant of the Lord says:

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family.”¹¹

As the main leaders of the church continued to stick to the law, God tested His people, especially those in positions of trust who had rejected the message of 1888, exactly on this point—obedience to the ten commandments. What was the result? We quote from an official publication of the SDA Church:

“On the German mobilization, in August, 1914, the SDA’s of that country were faced with the necessity of making an immediate decision concerning their duty to God and country when called into the armed forces (see Germany, V; Noncombatancy). After counseling with the few SDA leaders locally available at the time, the president of the East German Union Conference informed the German War Ministry in writing, dated Aug. 4, 1914, that conscripted SDA’s would bear arms as combatants and would render service on the

the denomination ever since the American Civil War (1861-1865).”¹²

In our understanding, the leaders in Europe did not have to make any “immediate decision” whether they should obey the commandments of God or of men. The historic position was clear. Just two years before World War I, the church published a quarterly about the ten commandments. The people everywhere in Europe who had studied the Sabbath school lessons knew their duty to God. When men require of us obedience which conflicts with the law of God, we should follow the example of the apostles: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29. This is what the Spirit of Prophecy says:

“I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time

obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. They can appreciate no other. Worldly policy and public opinion comprise the principle of action that governs them and leads them to practice the form of rightdoing. But God’s people cannot be governed by these motives. The words and commands of God, written in the soul, are spirit and life, and there is power in them to bring into subjection and enforce obedience. The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good

laws. Those who love God’s commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?”¹³



Sabbath in defense of their country. . . .

“Admittedly, the three SDA leaders in Germany took a stand concerning the duty of SDA’s in military service that was contrary to the historic stand officially maintained by

As stated in the Bible, we all, who know the law of God, the ten commandments, will be judged by God's moral law. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:10-12.

It is Satan's plan to overthrow God's law. The work that he had begun in heaven, he endeavors to carry on unto the end. This is what we read:

"Satan grew bold in his rebellion, and expressed his contempt of the Creator's law. This Satan could not bear. He claimed that angels needed no law; but should be left free to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right; that law was a restriction of their liberty, and that to abolish law was one great object of his standing as he did."¹⁴

"From the first, the great controversy had been upon the law of God. Satan had sought to prove that God was unjust, and that His law was faulty, and that the good of the universe required it to be changed. In attacking the law, he aimed to overthrow the authority of its Author. In the controversy it was to be shown whether the divine statutes were defective and subject to change, or perfect and immutable."¹⁵

"Satan was the first transgressor of the law of Jehovah. We read in the Bible how sin entered into the world. Satan was the first one who ever questioned the holy will of God, and his very first work was to transgress God's law, and then he came to Adam and Eve in Eden, and through his temptations caused them to break the commandments of God."¹⁶

"Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while

secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish he charged upon the loyal angels."¹⁷

"Satan has a large confederacy, his church. Christ calls them the synagogue of Satan because the members are the children of sin. The members of Satan's church have been constantly working to cast off the divine law, and confuse the distinction between good and evil. Satan is working with great power in and through the children of disobedience to exalt treason and apostasy as truth and loyalty. And at this time the power of his satanic inspiration is moving the living agencies to carry out the great rebellion against God that commenced in heaven."¹⁸

In the judgment, the character of each person will be judged by the commandments of God. What question will be asked? The Spirit of Prophecy answers:

"The only question asked in the judgment will be, 'Have they been obedient to My commandments?'"¹⁹

Yes, the question of obedience to the ten commandments is historic Adventism. It is the great test for us today, and it will be the decisive factor in the final test to the whole world.

"To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for Sunday laws. But those who fear God, cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield will be fought the last great conflict in the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Today, as in the days of Esther and Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate His truth and His people."²⁰

"To be a Christian is to be far more than many understand. It means more than simply having your name upon the church records. It means to be joined to Christ. It means to have simple faith, unwavering reliance upon God. It means to have child-like confidence in your heavenly Father

through the name and merit of His dear Son. Do you love to keep the commandments of God, because the commandments of God are God's precepts, the transcript of His character, and can no more be altered than can the character of God? Do you respect and love the law of Jehovah?"²¹

"With pity and compassion, with tender yearning, the Lord is looking upon His tempted and tried people. For a time the oppressors will be permitted to triumph over those who know God's holy commandments. All are given the same opportunity that was granted to the first great rebel to demonstrate the spirit that moves them to action. It is God's purpose that everyone shall be tested and proved, to see whether he will be loyal or disloyal to the laws which govern the kingdom of heaven. To the last God permits Satan to reveal his character as a liar, an accuser, and a murderer. Thus the final triumph of His people is made more marked, more glorious, more full and complete."²²

¹ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 214.

² *The Home Missionary*, November 1, 1897.

³ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 972.

⁴ *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 184.

⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 61.

⁶ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 403.

⁷ M. E. Andross, *The Story of the Advent Message*, p. 105.

⁸ F. M. Wilcox, *Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War*, p. 58.

⁹ *The Review and Herald*, March 11, 1890.

¹⁰ *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 137.

¹¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92.

¹² *The SDA Encyclopedia*, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 10, pp. 1132, 1133 [1976 revised edition].

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 361, 362.

¹⁴ *The Signs of the Times*, January 9, 1879.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1908.

¹⁶ *The Review and Herald*, July 15, 1890.

¹⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 591.

¹⁸ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Gospel Workers*, p. 315.

²⁰ *Conflict and Courage*, p. 245.

²¹ *The Youth's Instructor*, May 18, 1893.

²² *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 414.

A Prophet Among You

Part 14

DOUBTING THE TESTIMONIES

by A. C. Sas

IN these last days of our world's history, the enemy of souls is going around with all speed to devour whom he can. He tries, if possible, to deceive and mislead the very elect, plunging them into skepticism and criticism, and implanting doubts in their minds. This is true in regard to the doctrines which stand as pillars of Adventism. The doctrine of the sanctuary, the ministration of Jesus in the most holy place, the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9, and the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the true church by the ministry of Ellen G. White, are all targets of the strong attacks of the enemy.

The apostle Paul warned the church at Ephesus to beware of different winds of doctrine that would blow around. He said:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to

and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:11-14.

Just before the apostle Paul departed from Miletus and met the brethren from Ephesus, he warned the believers against the rising up of perverse leaders from among them, clothed in sheepskin, but who inwardly were devouring wolves:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:28-30.

History repeats itself, above all in these last days. Modern methods of communication have advanced, and some of the opposers of the truth take advantage of these means, introducing their poison in the media (the Internet in particular) to deceive and mislead souls. Not only do they bring forth suggestions and doubts regarding the fundamental

truths of the Advent message, but they also strongly attack the position maintained for over 150 years by true Adventists, especially with reference to the Spirit of Prophecy manifested through the person of Ellen G. White. We must say, modern critics are not the first ones to do this work. The Spirit of Prophecy was already under attack in the last century. And who were the bitterest critics? Those who had once been strong defenders of the truth.

"The most bitter opposers of truth today are found among those who profess to be its defenders."¹

"The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us."²

The servant of the Lord has warned us that in the last days the

special target of Satan's attack would be the Spirit of Prophecy. If the enemy of souls could implant doubts in the minds of the people of God by leading them to disbelieve the Spirit of Prophecy, his triumph would be great. We read:

By the grace of Christ, perform every duty that has been made plain to your understanding, and you will be enabled to understand and perform those of which you are now in doubt

"As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he will deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Human effort must combine with divine power, that we may be able to accomplish the closing work for this time."³

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Prov. 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them."⁴

Here are a few examples: Dudley Marvin Canright left Adventism in February 1887, and in 1889 he published a book entitled *Seventh-Day Adventism*

Renounced. His arguments and views were analyzed and refuted by William Henry Branson in his book entitled *In Defense of the Faith*. Albion Fox Ballenger began to spread his strange and erroneous ideas around the year 1905, espe-

cially about the ministry of Christ in the sanctuary. Ellen G. White had foretold the rising of men declaring that there is no sanctuary in heaven. See *The Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905. John Harvey Kellogg authored the book *The Living Temple*, which was permeated with pantheism; he left Adventism in 1907. In 1904 Ellen G. White warned the church about this great danger. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 204–206. The deceptions of these and others are now revived and used to confuse the minds of those who wish to discover some startling news. The writings of these critics, all men of renown among Seventh-day Adventists, were already dealt with in the past, their arguments have been refuted, and the messages of truth contained in the Spirit of Prophecy have made progress and exerted a powerful influence for good everywhere.

Many try today to speculate and to philosophize on certain doctrinal points from the Spirit of Prophecy; and because they do not understand them, instead of waiting patiently for the Lord to reveal the truth to them in His own appointed time, they begin to doubt their inspiration. We must admit that not everything can be understood, or will be understood to the full, either in the Spirit of Prophecy or in the Bible. There are many things which we will learn only in the hereafter. If we wish to know

the truth and whether the Spirit of Prophecy is indeed inspired by God, the best thing we can do is to prayerfully study the writings, and the Holy Spirit will convince us of the truth. But those who are looking to criticize will always find some sort of grounds for doubt. We have been forewarned:

"There are many things apparently difficult or obscure, which God will make plain and simple to those who thus seek an understanding of them. But without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them. There is much reading of the Bible that is without profit and in many cases a positive injury. When the word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer; when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God, or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubts; and in the very study of the Bible, skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct. Whenever men are not in word and deed seeking to be in harmony with God, then, however learned they may be, they are liable to err in their understanding of Scripture, and it is not safe to trust to their explanations. Those who look to the Scriptures to find discrepancies, have not spiritual insight. With distorted vision they will see many causes for doubt and unbelief in things that are really plain and simple."⁵

All that we need to understand for our salvation is clearly revealed in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The following paragraphs provide timely counsel about what our attitude should be when Satan assaults us with doubts:

Christ has said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." John 7:17, R.V.

"Instead of questioning and caviling concerning that which they do not understand, let them give heed to the light which already shines upon them, and they will receive greater light. Let them do every duty which has been made plain to their under-

standing, and they will be enabled to understand and perform those of which they are now in doubt.”⁶

“Light and darkness, truth and error, are before us. We are free to choose. God will never remove all excuse for unbelief. . . . It is far easier to suggest doubts than to inspire faith. Because the natural heart is at enmity with God, a greater effort is required to believe than to doubt the word of the Most High. And Satan himself opposes everything that would strengthen faith.”⁷

“While God has given ample evidence for faith, He will never remove all excuse for unbelief. All who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon will find them. And those who refuse to accept and obey God’s word until every objection has been removed, and there is no longer an opportunity for doubt, will never come to the light.”⁸

“If rational beings really desire the truth, God will give them sufficient light to enable them to decide what is truth. If they have a heart to obey, they will see sufficient evidence to walk in the light. But if they in heart desire to evade the truth, he will not work a miracle to gratify their unbelief. He will never remove every chance or occasion to doubt. . . . There are those who walk amid perpetual doubts. They feed on doubts, enjoy doubts, talk doubts, and question everything that it is for their interest to believe. To those who thus trifle with the plain testimonies of God’s word, and who refuse to believe because it is inconvenient and unpopular to do so, the light will finally become darkness; truth will appear to the darkened understanding as error, and error will be accepted as truth. When thus shrouded in error, they will find it perfectly natural and convenient to believe what is false, and will become strong in their faith.”⁹

“But others will be greatly helped by the messages. Though

not personally addressed, they will be corrected, and will be led to shun the evils specified. . . . The Spirit of the Lord will be in the instruction, and doubts existing in many minds will be swept away. The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture.”¹⁰

“I know your danger. If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the testimonies, should one be given crossing your track, correct-



ing your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed. God and Satan never work in copartnership. The testimonies either bear the signet of God or that of Satan. A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruit

ye shall know them. God has spoken. Who has trembled at His word?”¹¹

“My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand. Those who seek to lessen the faith of God’s people in these testimonies, which have been in the church for the last thirty-six years, are fighting against God. It is not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and reproofs.”¹²

“When you find men questioning the testimonies, finding fault with them, and seeking to draw away the people from their influence, be assured that God is not at work through them. It is another spirit. Doubt and unbelief are cherished by those who do not walk circumspectly.”¹³

¹ *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 279.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 463.

³ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁵ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 110, 111.

⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 528.

⁷ *The Signs of the Times*, June 8, 1882.

⁸ *The Great Controversy*, p. 527.

⁹ *The Review and Herald*, January 5, 1886.

¹⁰ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 42.

¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 98.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 234, 235.

¹³ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 45.



Baptism in Cova do Vapor, Portugal, in March 1998



Those attending the Bible seminar in France, April 1998



Delegates of Portugal Field session held in March 1998



Newly erected headquarters and church building at Kimchon, South Korea



Attendees at the conference held in Malaga, Spain, April 1998



Spiritual gathering at Kimchon, South Korea, June 1998, with the visit of Brethren A. C. Sas and G. S. Barros



Baptism in Los Angeles, California, USA, April 1998



Baptism in Shohola, Pennsylvania, USA, July 1998



Delegates of the Philippine Union session held at Cebu City, Philippines, in May 1998



Newly baptized members in Shohola, Pennsylvania, USA, July 1998



Church members from Bacolod, Negros Occidental, Philippines, ready to go out for missionary visiting



PICTORIAL



New chapel erected in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and dedicated in December 1997, which was a result of the 13th Sabbath offering collected during the first quarter of 1994



Chapel newly erected in Wombye, Queensland, Australia



Baptism in La Ceiba, Honduras, April 1998



Some of our brethren, sisters and children in Nigeria



Baptism in Sacramento, California, USA, July 1998



Participants of the 1998 Bible seminar for ministers, workers and church officers in Ndola, Zambia



The sanitarium which was opened in August 1998, situated in Breaza, Romania



Students of Isaac Newton Primary School, in Juquiá, São Paulo, Brazil



The first SDA Reform Movement group in Cathmandu, Nepal. The one standing in front is Bro. Natharaj, who was a professor of theology in the SDA Church in India, and now is a worker in the Reform Movement in South India



Ministers and workers of the Indonesian Mission, at the time of their conference in June 1998



Photo taken after prayer meeting held at Dindigul, Tamil Nadu State, India. The goat was brought by a sister as her tithe



Singing at the ceremony of ordination of a worker for the ministry, in Indonesia, June 1998

Christ Sought Me, and Found Me

by Bertha Rosa Diaz de Howell

IN reality, my life is a divine miracle. More than 25 years ago I became acquainted with the remnant church in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. I was born in Honduras, but now live in Panama.

The brethren of the SDA Reform Movement were just beginning the work in Honduras, and a brother from Peru by the name of Silvestre Cabanillas, who was traveling by bus, tried to initiate a friendly conversation with me. The meeting place for worship was three blocks away from my house. So, on various occasions we met on the bus. This brother, whom I specially prize, was very insistent. One day while on the bus, he asked me if I knew the Word of God, and I answered Yes, and that I had a Jerusalem Bible, and delighted to read it because reading was my special hobby. Then he asked me if I would accept a visit in my home to study the Word. I told him that I would ask permission from my family.

After consulting my family, they acceded to the request. This brother came to my house with his Bible. Then I realized that it was not the same as mine, and I became very worried. Very many questions were asked of Brother Cabanillas, and he was able to answer all of them, and I realized that he was quite knowledgeable and that I really knew nothing of what I believed. In the evenings, although tired, I could not sleep because he had spoken to me about Sabbathkeeping, health reform, and about all the ten commandments. I was impressed with the knowledge of that man. We made a holy friendship, and he invited me to visit his home. There I met his wife, Teresita, and his son, Daniel. Our friendship was so close that I felt myself as a part of that family. There I attended many of their meetings and I learned a lot. There I began to be a vegetarian. God was being wonderful

to me. But Satan does not sleep. A theologian from the SDA Church visited me in my house and invited me to a series of cultural lectures. As I had a desire to increase my education, I fell into their net, together with my family. As they baptize people without any preparation, they immersed me in the water, and I believed that I was in the right place. I left my work as an educator in the school, and they offered me employment in their college, and thus I was sent to Panama. Here in Panama I got married, and I have a son born in the SDA Church. He is very well educated, and I am praying that he may come to the remnant church.

So, for a while I lost sight of the remnant church. By God's great mercy, I also met others from the Reform Movement: Bro. C. Palazzolo in Honduras, as well as Brethren F. Devai, J. Romero and E. Cabanillas.

Christ sought me and found me. Here in Panama there were no members of the Reform Movement. But a little over two years ago, Bro. Francisco Rodrigues moved to this country. He has two children. He tried to locate my address, until Bro. Gerson Barros came to Panama and brought my address from my family in Honduras. They called me up and I told them that we could meet in the SDA Church where I was attending. On that Sabbath I was assigned to lead out in the Sabbath school meeting. They came there and everything started anew, for the glory of the Lord. Brother Rodrigues did not leave me alone. He continued with studies, and I must say that it was not hard for me to understand the doctrine because I love reading. The Spirit of Prophecy was the help that kept me faithful in the SDA Church for 25 years. I held positions in different departments of the church, but I acted mostly in the missionary work, going from house to house. It is painful to me that many souls are

left there in the wrong place. It was not easy to face the great pastors of the church and show them their errors and mistakes, but the Lord gave me power to tell them that if they do not change they will be lost.

The study which was presented by Bro. Rodrigues—and that impressed me deeply—was the subject of the sealing of the 144,000, because I had learned it in a different way. Another point was the subject of the organization of God's church according to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. But what most worried me and caused me pain was when Bro. Rodrigues showed me in the Spirit of Prophecy that the presence of God is no longer leading the SDA Church as a body.

I then said: Why tarriest thou, Bertha Rosa Diaz de Howell? Arise, redeem the time, and be baptized. And here I am very happy. I was baptized on October 20, 1997, and on Sabbath, the 25th we had a very blessed Lord's supper. Thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ I am now a part of God's family here on earth.

Bro. Rodrigues has made a close friendship with my husband, and I hope that some day in the near future he and our son, Elijah, may belong to this peculiar people.

Here the work is in its beginning. Bro. Rodrigues has much to do. There are many new people interested in the message. We need a colporteur or someone who volunteers to do missionary work and help Bro. Rodrigues to do the service that angels would delight to do.

I thank God from all my heart for His great love and mercy, but I thank also Bro. Rodrigues and all those who in one way or another helped the brethren to find me, especially Bro. Palazzolo who has known my family for a long time. May God help us all to be faithful and holy, and that nothing and nobody should sever us from the great love of Christ. Amen.

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what about me

by Pam Stemmler

IN these last days, as the intensity of the spiritual battle grows, we hear a variety of responses from human hearts.

Increasingly, we can see and hear the Laodicean state as described in Revelation 3—"I'm all right; I don't need any help or correction; I'm fine just the way I am."

There is also an overwhelming amount of the population who are apparently just indifferent. They do not really care to know anything more of the claims of God; they do not want their lifestyle interrupted.

I write not to those described above, but instead to a small group—a precious group, whose call from the heart is heard not only here, but on high.

Their cry is "What about me?" They know something of the message of salvation, they have heard of the love of God for mankind; they have read of the sacrifice of Christ for sinful beings; they have sorrowed and cried and repented of their sin. They study the Bible and seek to bring their lives into conformity to the Bible standard, but they face a relentless foe—one who delights in distraction, destruction, and discouragement; one who brings, with an almost overwhelming surge, the past—its sin with its ugliness—and says: "Yes,

God can save some but not you, you are too bad!"

These people are often the sensitive, the struggling, and tenderly viewed of our Father. They agonize and cry, asking, "What about me? How can I be saved?"

It seems we must go through this agonizing, pleading time. We search and cry out for answers to the only One who can help. And when He answers and gives His peace and assurance to the soul, then we are comforted and fitted to give the glorious message of salvation to others. We can comfort in the way we have been comforted.

We need a strong faith in the merits of our Redeemer—stronger than we have yet had, to take us through the trying days ahead. But how is faith developed? The Scripture answers, "By hearing the Word of God." But let us dig deeper. A muscle is not strengthened unless used; it does not grow unless progressively stretched. Our faith is similar—it needs to be used and stretched.

How difficult is it to have faith in God's healing power when you are well? How difficult to believe in God's provision when you have all you need? How is your faith stretched to hold on to God's strength when you feel strong and life goes along smoothly? Do you begin to understand with me the

need for trials, for stretches, for pain and sorrow in order that we can cry out to God for help?

We can praise God, for He has already provided us with the answers, the help. It is contained in little packages throughout the Word of God. They come by the tens and hundreds and possibly thousands. They are the promises of God.

Promises to read, promises to pray, promises upon which to place our whole weight. Promises to believe, promises to relieve our burdens and cares, promises to increase our faith.

So when all is dark and trying, pray for the Lord to direct you to the promises specifically for the circumstances in which you happen to be. And when you find them, write them out, read them often, memorize them and, most of all, believe them. They are God's cords to hold us fast to His heart—the evidences of His love and care for His beloved children.

Look up with me and believe that God loves you and, yes, even me. This is the character of God who delights in mercy, who longs to forgive, who awaits to dwell with us in that heavenly abode.

Look up, not at ourselves, not at our circumstances, not at others, but at our precious Saviour, Jesus Christ. Believe that He loves you and can save you.

LOOK UP!



THE SIREN SONG

by Ruffo Lopez

THE first part of the Israelites' campaign in conquering the Promised Land was over. The victorious armies had overcome Sihon, king of the Amorites, and had taken Heshbon with all her villages; Jaazer was swiftly occupied and all her cities were taken; they had defeated Og, king of Bashan, a giant among a race of giants, and taken all his cities and villages.

Armies made up of numerous and skillful warriors of many battles, disciplined and well-supplied forces, strongly walled cities thought to be unassailable, people of astonishing stature, strength and cruelty—all these terrible obstacles had been easily overcome by the people led by the Lord of hosts. The Son of God surrounded by the pillar of cloud showed them the way and they, full of faith and hope, did what God had commanded them.

Now the Israelites were in a condition of ease and security. They had encamped in the fields of Moab beside the Jordan and across Jericho, with the purpose of planning the second part of the conquest of the land which God had promised them. This plain of several miles in width extended some distance along the river. The valley had a tropical climate; it was full of acacia groves and provided an abundance of fruits—the ideal environment to have a short break before continuing the conquest.

Under these circumstances the king of Moab solicited the help of Balaam, who claimed to be a prophet of God, to curse the invading people. Balaam tried to do it in different ways, but every attempt was useless. Israel was under the protective power of the Most High, and no enchantment nor spell, no

people nor nation—although helped by all the powers of Satan—could prevail against it.

After repeated failures, Balaam understood that the prosperity of these people depended on their obedience to God's commands, and that the only way to provoke their ruin was to induce them to sin. Therefore he devised a scheme and presented it to the king of Moab. The two together carried out a deadly plot that would succeed in separating the people from their God. The purpose was to induce Israel into idolatry by enticing them to participate in the licentious worship of Baal and Ashtaroah, thus causing a rift between them and their Omnipotent Protector. Then they would be easy prey for the ferocious and warlike nations that dwelled in the surrounding areas.

The scheme began with a stealthy introduction of Midianitish women into the Hebrew camp; then very subtly, innocent friendship was shown, and later a festival was appointed which Balaam, "prophet of God," induced the Israelites to attend. Many accepted the invitation and came to the festival, venturing upon forbidden ground without perceiving the snare that was being prepared. There, the alluring music, the intoxicating beverages that appeared little by little, and the beauty of the heathen vestals had the expected effect. "Mirth and feasting, indulgence in wine beclouded their senses and broke down the barriers of self-control. Passion had full sway; and having defiled their consciences by lewdness, they were persuaded to bow down to idols. They offered sacrifice upon heathen altars and participated in the most degrading rites. It was not long before the poison had spread, like a deadly infection, through the camp

of Israel."¹ The confederation of evil exulted over this temporal triumph.

Likewise, as we today approach the end of time, standing at the very borders of heavenly Canaan, Satan, as of old, lays his snare for every soul. He uses the same agencies as he did 3,500 years ago: worldly friends, the charm of beauty, the seeking of pleasure, excessive mirth, feasting, wine, riches, and desire for power. Satan first induces to licentiousness and then to idolatry. Sensuality enfeebles the mind and degrades the soul, which then "becomes a blackened and desolate waste, the habitation of evil spirits, and the 'cage of every unclean and hateful bird.' Beings formed in the image of God are dragged down to a level with the brutes."²

This is the great danger which looms in today's world—the great plot of the powers of evil is being carried out. All the powers of darkness are united in a single purpose: TO SEPARATE MAN FROM GOD. The planet spins in an atmosphere of deception and seduction, and the master of liars and murderers himself is steering the vessel of death and destruction.

The havoc of this inconceivable scheme is seen everywhere. The end-of-century individual must battle untiringly to survive under a host of circumstances that consume and exhaust all his energies. Drugs, alcoholism, prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism—once merely vices of minuscule minorities—have now spread and generalized to the point of becoming desirable attitudes and respectable habits, worthy of approval and praise. But in reality these immoral deeds sink the individual into a swamp of despair, misery, pain and death.

Marriage, that marvelous cell of the great web of humanity, is now

undermined, minimized and ridiculed by the new social concepts. Divorce and remarriage have become an industry on a large scale; free love, marriage of same-sex beings, radical feminism, and the like, all present a depressing and slack picture of what should be the anvil on which the fitting of characters for the kingdom of heaven should be forged.

Society as a whole seems to multiply its harmful effects by inciting people to pursue quick ways to wealth, ease, fame and power. Limitless desires, longings for glory and notoriety mislay principles, lower standards, and debase and degrade man, the gem of creation.

This decrepit, battered and putrid society has not been brought to this situation all at once by the work of one man alone with evils presented openly; on the contrary, it has been eroded by an efficiently elaborate, subtly interwoven, skillfully disguised, patiently introduced work.

Man, with his glorious design, has been degraded to the condition of a dumb victim in the great end-of-century festival—a binge sponsored by the prince of this world who has fooled millions of beings, and is making extraordinary efforts to especially fool those who are still resisting his spell.

Parties, dazzling lights, music, frenzies, vivid colors, fantasies, false science and education, strange art, corrupt politics and a manipulated economy are all combined with fiendish method. Fashions, diet, amusements, cinema, television, news, toys, marketing, pagan customs, false religions, eastern philosophies, sports—everything seems to serve the purposes of the most astute and perverse of beings to enslave all of humanity, to immerse man in the scariest moral decay, to bring him to complete and absolute ruin, to snatch away his last vestige of hope and faith in God. This is the malicious plan of Satan and the reason why he prodigiously exerts himself

with his siren song, to attract us to the world, out of our city of refuge, out from under the divine protection, out of the tender care of a loving God.

Today's world, enslaved by its cravings, degenerated by its practices, bewitched in its perceptions, cleverly orchestrated and led by its lord and prince, insinuates and manifests itself in trying to lure us into its net. It utilizes all the power of suggestion that it can to present itself to us as sublime, clean and worthy, although it is actually unclean, low and depraved. It invites us to partake, to drink of its enchanted fountains, to plunge ourselves into its poisonous waters, and is doing it as it has always done it with millions of careless souls—skillfully, with keenness, subterfuges and remarkable patience. Whoever yields to its influence will be seduced and drawn into its dense

"Our only safety is to stand as God's peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age."

spider web and imprisoned therein, to be molded to the dimensions and shape that today's society imposes. He will lose his identity and will gladly unite with the masses that indulge in pleasures and enjoyments, thus forever straying from the true God, to acknowledge and praise the god of this world.

Brethren and sisters, this "siren song," this subtly decorated attraction towards anything evil or corrupt, is in danger of taking root and sprouting even within our city of refuge. Spirituality, respect, high standards and reverence are affected; the keen sensibility that discerns

sin is blunted due to a continual exposure to "apparently innocent" worldly influences.

"Satan will insinuate himself by little wedges, which widen as they make a place for themselves."³

This gradual work weakens our resistance; the enchantments lull us. Little by little, patiently, a little bit of leaven here and there, a whit of liberality, another of vanity—all these errors are justified with the argument of "love for souls." Some close their eyes, shut their mouths and become tolerant. The enemy continues to sow a little bit today, a little bit more tomorrow, and the tide of evil gradually grows.

"The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It begins in apparently small things."⁴

The devil's plan is not for us to suddenly abandon our platform and principles, no; he manages the mind with the power of suggestion and association. He introduces words, ideas, practices that are hard to be censured because they look inoffensive, small, without any transcendence—they can even have commendable traits and qualities.

Why do we hold our peace? Why not loudly denounce this deadly enticement, this macabre conspiracy to which we may be sur-

rendering, this terrible danger into which many who would carelessly dally with it are going to fall?

"We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own."⁵

In the days of the Advent pioneers, this was already a fact: "The distance is widening between Christ and His people, and lessening between them and the world."⁶

"Our only safety is to stand as God's peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but

stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices.”⁷

Could we have such a powerful reason to hold our peace when something as valuable as our eternal life—our salvation—is at stake?

Actually, there are two substantial fears that scare the most steadfast. Because of these fears, these vital subjects are not spoken of in clarity. First, the fear of hurting the feelings of those who are living below the Bible standards. But is it not more important to consider the feelings of God? The second and more serious fear is that of being considered a fanatic—judgmental, legalistic, without any love for souls. These fears paralyze and congest our nerves, placing us as accomplices of evil, excusing our lack of courage to denounce that which needs to be denounced, which would in reality be tokens of true Christian love.

“And as false shepherds are crying, Peace, and are preaching smooth things, the servants of God must cry aloud, and spare not, and leave the result with God.”⁸

“Sins exist in the church that God hates, but they are scarcely touched for fear of making enemies. . . . When the church depart from God they [the members] despise the plain testimony, and complain of severity and harshness. It is a sad evidence of the lukewarm state of the church.”⁹

These “warnings . . . worldly conformity has silenced.”¹⁰

The Lord in His word clearly warns us about the danger of worldly enchantments. His will is a marked separation between His children and the children of darkness, between His people and the things of this world.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1 John 2:15.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4:4.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” 2 Corinthians 6:17.

The Lord would have His people keep away from these unwholesome influences that later will lead us to abominable practices, even from those that, to the naked eye, seem apparently good and innocent.

“For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” Luke 16:15.

Let us examine our hearts and pray that this sentence will not be pronounced against us as individuals: “You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.”¹¹

The moral contamination of today’s world is in clear contrast to what God expects from His people. The decadent and polluting practices which prevail require a behavior patronized by, and a conduct in tune with, the guidelines of the world at large. But even the smallest deviation from them is considered to be irrational, fanatical and stupid. That is why the Lord, foreseeing these terrible pressures which we would have to face, encourages us to persist in doing good.

“When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, strait-laced extremists.”¹²

Unfortunately, we can be sure that the fatal attraction of the world, the masterpiece of the devil, will have a harvest. Many of us, some consciously, others unconsciously, will go after modern Baals. The “siren song” will benumb the perceptions, unhinge the senses, alter the desires and finally cause them to enlist in the ranks of those bewitched by her hypnotizing tune. In the early days of the message, Sister White wrote: “I would say that we are living in a most solemn time. In the last vision given me, I was shown the startling fact that but a small portion of those who now profess the truth will be sanctified by it and be saved. Many will get above the simplicity of the work. They will

conform to the world, cherish idols, and become spiritually dead.”¹³

My dear brethren and sisters, only those of us that will stand firm and faithful will be counted among the saved. To those who will resist the devil with all his illusions, who will separate from all his spells of the world and will be sanctified by the truth, who will place their hope and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ and persevere—to those His marvelous promises will be precious realities.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10.

Fidelity to God implies a tenacious resistance, with the help of our mighty Lord, to the intoxicating siren song, a flat “no” to its influence, and a constant and growing attachment to the loving will of our gracious Father.

“Come out of her, my people”, come out of the charm, out of the spell, come out of the world of fables and tinsel that our enemy deceitfully offers us, that we be not partakers of her sins, and that we receive not of her plagues.

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.” Revelation 2:26.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.” Revelation 3:12.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.” Revelation 3:21.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” Revelation 21:7.

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 454.

² *Ibid.*, p. 458.

³ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 21.

⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 718.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 578.

⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 1., p. 277.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 78.

⁸ *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 285.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 284.

¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 463.

¹¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 413.

¹² *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 289.

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 608.

MIRACLES

Still Happen

by Larissa Simonova

IN 1987 a problem occurred in my home. I was afflicted with a paralysis while I was living in Ekaterinburg, Russia. The doctors gave me a frightful diagnosis—multiple sclerosis. After the second attack, my illness became severe, and I was declared an invalid, meaning I needed constant care. I would no longer be able to walk. I lost my job which I loved very much, and my best friends also left me. My interest in life was vanishing away. Life had no more meaning to me. My apartment, located on the fourth floor, became a prison cell, being in a building without any elevator. I was restricted to my wheelchair and could do very little. I was not able to go out to contemplate nature, to breathe the fresh air, and listen to the warbling of the birds.

However, God did not forsake me. I prayed to Him who could help me and I felt His presence near me. In answer to my prayers I had a dream in which a voice said to me: "I will heal you among My people."

I was attending an evangelical church before I became ill. Afterwards, I was visited by Protestants and Catholics. I had not enough knowledge to differentiate between truth and error, and so I could not tell who were God's people. I was continually concerned about this problem, and I insistently asked God in prayer, that He would put me in contact with His people. One day I opened the Bible in Revelation 14 and read verse 12, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus." I read and reread this verse and the

reference to the commandments of God called my attention. Then I understood that the true people of God are identified by the keeping of the divine commandments, and I also understood that those who do not keep all ten are considered as despising all of them (James 2:10). I also saw that the fourth commandment, which is a part of the Decalogue, could not have been done away with on the cross.

With this revelation God opened the way for me to find His people. In 1994 I became a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement in Russia. I read the writings of Ellen G. White on the value of natural healing, and was informed of the existence of a naturopathic sanitarium in Curitiba, Parana State, Brazil. I requested more information about it from the brethren of the General Conference (Roanoke, Virginia, U.S.A.) and through them I contacted the sanitarium. I arrived in Curitiba on December 29, 1997, in the evening. Brother Josif Tuleu was waiting for me at the airport, and he transferred me from my wheelchair to his car.

The next morning I had a consultation with the physicians of the sanitarium, and they prescribed a treatment for five months. I was treated as a little sick child—with much attention, kindness and love. The sanitarium became my second home; the physiotherapy room, my lounge room. The physiotherapist, Brother Luiz Farit, applied his methods with great patience and skill. First he taught me to crawl. Then he taught me to stand on my feet. After that he taught me to take my first steps. It was not easy for my paralyzed feet to move!

At the beginning, while I still could not move, I wept often like a child—so great was my desire to walk. I did my exercises daily, two hours in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. After awhile my legs began to have feeling (before they were numb), and for the first time I was able to stand firmly, on April 6, 1998. All those around me shed tears of joy, especially me.

On May 16, God performed a miracle. I rose up from the wheelchair and did not need it any longer, because I was able to walk. How happy I was! God had promised to heal me and He fulfilled His promise. Let His name be praised forever! When I entered the dining room of the sanitarium, walking, I was greeted with a round of applause. All those present approached me and greeted me astonished for the miracle that God had performed, with the help of the physicians and nurses who, with self-denying efforts, had done all that was humanly possible to do.

I am very thankful to God for His great mercy extended towards me, making it possible for me to go to Brazil, where He performed the promised healing. I also take this opportunity to thank all the medical team, nurses, and administrators of *Hospital Oasis Paranaense* for their love and self-denial. I thank, too, the brethren and sisters who prayed for me, having compassion and understanding towards me. I also thank the brethren of the General Conference that have shown great interest in my case. My feelings are described in Psalm 145:7–9 and in Proverbs 17:17. There is no doubt, the merciful hand of God still performs miracles.

The Nature of Christ in the Godhead

Historical Development

by Peter D. Lausevic
(emphasis supplied throughout)

BEFORE we enter into the study on the historical aspect of this subject as it was taught in Catholicism, I would like to summarize the past articles on this topic. You may want to review those articles in previous issues before you go into this historical material.

We saw that the God we worship is eternal and self-existent, and that Jesus Christ is not only our Creator, but is also eternal. There never was a time when the Father and the Son were not together. When Jesus came into this world, He did not in any way lose His divine nature. He was no less God when He walked on earth than when He created the worlds. Although we have proven that He has the full right as the second person of the Godhead, eternal and distinct from the Father, equal in power and majesty, this eternal God so loved the world that He came to the earth to rescue mankind. He did so by another mystery; He fully became man. He took our human, sinful nature upon Himself, yet never for one moment did He sin in thought or action. He always maintained purity of thought as well as life. All this was done so that we—erring, sinful human beings—can have a life that measures in character with the life of God.

Although these points are very clear in the Bible, other ideas have nonetheless managed to enter Christendom, ideas which were used to establish the papacy. In this article we will analyze this historical aspect of the subject.

The Original Dispute

An argument regarding the nature of the Son of God arose in Alexandria, Egypt, between Alexander, a bishop, and a presbyter, Arius, who was in charge of a parish church. The bitter debate of that subject has lasted all these centuries and is no less argued today. What has amazed me is that the same debate is carried on in Adventism—even though we have been flooded with plenty of light in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

I remember first hearing a presentation in Nashville, Tennessee, on the idea that there is no Trinity. After I heard the individual explain his ideas, he then made a striking statement. He said that those who believe differently than he does on the subject of the nature of Christ, believe in the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and that it was this very doctrine that had established the papacy. I then asked him, What is the actual Catholic doctrine of the Trinity? I was surprised when he did not truly know what the Catholic Church believes.

As I had listened to his presentation and the evidences he gave from the pioneers of Adventism, I realized that what the pioneers opposed as the “Trinity” was something totally different from what I understood as the heavenly Trio. [In future articles we will also address the nature of the Holy Spirit.]

His answer, or lack thereof, led me to research into the historical belief of Catholicism on this subject. Let us now analyze that research specifically concerning the nature of Christ in relationship to the Father—since we have already covered these points from a biblical perspective.

A. T. Jones wrote about the original debate between Alexander and Arius: “There was no dispute about the fact of there being a Trinity, it was about the *nature* of the Trinity. Both parties believed in precisely the same Trinity, but they differed upon the precise relationship which the Son bears to the Father.”¹ This was the crux of the issue. Both groups always believed in the Trinity. This makes it clear that the establishment of the papacy was not based on the existence of the Trinity but, rather, the nature of that Trinity.

The Two Views

The view of Alexander eventually became the doctrine that estab-

lished the papacy and is the official doctrine of the Catholic Church. This view is as follows: “‘The Son is immutable and unchangeable, all-sufficient and perfect, like the Father, differing only in this one respect, that the Father is unbegotten. He is the exact image of his Father.

Everything is found in the image which exists in its archetype; and it was this that our Lord taught when he said, ‘My Father is greater than I.’ And accordingly we believe that the Son proceeded from the Father; for he is the reflection of the glory of the Father, and the figure of his substance. But let no one be led from this to the supposition that the Son is unbegotten, as is believed by some who are deficient in intellectual power: for to say that he was, that he has always been, and that he existed before all ages, is not to say that he is unbegotten’ (Theodore’s *Ecclesiastical History*, book i, chap. iv).”²

Arius’s belief caused a big rift which resulted in heavy bloodshed. His view is expressed as follows: “‘We say and believe, and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way unbegotten, even in part; and that he does not derive his subsistence from any matter; but that by his own will and counsel he has subsisted before time, and before ages, as perfect God, and only begotten and unchangeable, and that he existed not before he was begotten, or created, or purposed, or established. For he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say that the Son had a beginning, but that God was without beginning. This is really the cause of our persecution, and likewise, because we say he is from nothing. And this we say, because he is neither part of God, nor of any subjacent matter’ (Theodore’s *Ecclesiastical History*, book i, chap. v).”³

These are the two views. A. T. Jones, in his book *The Two Republics*, makes a very important observation: “From these statements by the originators of the respective sides of this controversy, it appears that with the exception of a single point, the two views were identical, only being stated in differ-

ent ways. The single point where the difference lay was that **Alexander held that the Son was begotten of the very essence of the Father, and is therefore of the same substance with the Father**, while Arius held that the **Son was begotten by the Father, not from his own essence, but from nothing**; but that when he was thus begotten, he was, and is, of precisely the *like substance* with the Father.”⁴

Both groups believed the false assumption that Christ had come into existence at one time in eternity in the past. The difference was that Arius believed that Christ was actually created and then was elevated to being God while Alexander believed that Christ was begotten from the very substance of the Father. It was this belief that He was begotten of the very substance of the Father that would make Him eternal God. Since the substance of the Father was eternal, then Christ, although existing later by being begotten, would also be considered “eternal” since the substance was eternal.

And more than this. Their whole struggle was over one letter in a word. They argued between *Homoousion* (representing Alexander’s side) and *Homoiousion* (representing Arius’ side).

What is this *Homoousion* that was defended by the Catholic side? “In English the word is ‘consubstantial,’ connoting that **more than one person inhabit the same substance without division or separation**. The original term in Greek is *homoousios*, from *homos*, meaning ‘identical,’ and *ousia*, the word for ‘being.’”⁵

Catholics actually teach that there really is only one substance that we call God (therefore they believe in only one God), but that that one substance is actually made up of two persons – three when you include the Holy Spirit. One substance, more than one person.

When you add one more letter and change the “o” to “u”, *Homoiousion*, the meaning changes somewhat. This word comes from the Greek “*homoios*, meaning ‘similar’ or ‘like unto.’”⁶ One group believed that

there is only one substance that they called God. That substance can be divided but always remains that exact same substance. The other group believed that that substance is similar but not exactly the same.

In reality, it doesn’t really matter. If you accept either belief, you have room for the papacy. One group creates another God, the other divides that same God and then has another “God”. Maybe this is the way that they came to the conclusion that the pope is another “God”. There is no difficulty in adding one more person to the process.

If the end result was exactly the same, what was all the problem about? Why so much bloodshed? “The difficulty was that each disputant required that all the others should not only believe *what* he believed, but that they should believe this precisely as he believed it, whereas just *how* he believed it, he himself could not define.”⁷

This was an attempt “of the finite to measure, to analyze, and even to dissect, the Infinite. It was an attempt to make the human superior to the divine. God is infinite. No finite mind can comprehend him as he actually is. Christ is the Word—the expression of the thought—of God; and none but he knows the depth of the meaning of that Word.”⁸

Our human mind can never fully comprehend the relationship between the Father and the Son. “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” Matthew 11:27. It is only as God reveals it to us that we are able to understand some of it, for it will require eternal ages for man to understand “the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:7.

“Therefore the only thing for men to do to find out the Almighty to perfection, is, by true faith in Jesus Christ, to receive the abiding presence of this Spirit of revelation, and then quietly and joyfully wait for the eternal ages to reveal ‘the depth

of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.’”⁹

Constantine Gets Involved

All this inner church trouble caused great concern to Constantine since he was in the process of seeking to unite the whole world into one government and one church. Therefore, in the latter part of May or the first part of June, 325 A.D., he called the first Ecumenical Assembly of the so-called Christian Church in the city of Nice, which was composed of 318 bishops with additional presbyters and deacons. This assembly was supposed to settle this question once and for all.

The first draft of the verdict was proposed by Eusebius of Caesarea. The party of Arius immediately agreed to the wording of that belief written as follows: “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, the only begotten Son, the First-born of every creature, begotten of the Father before all worlds, by whom also all things

have existed, the Father, only the Father; and the Son, only the son; and the Holy Ghost, only the Holy Ghost: as also our Lord sending forth his own disciples to preach, said, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” concerning which things we affirm that it is so, and that we so think, and that it has long so been held, and that we remain steadfast to death for this faith, anathematizing every godless heresy. That we have thought these things from our heart and soul, from the time that we have known ourselves, and that we now think and say thus in truth, we testify in the name of Almighty God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, being able to prove even by demonstration, and to persuade you that in the past times also thus we believed and preached’ (Stanley, *History of the Eastern Church*, Lecture iii, par. 22).”¹⁰

But the party of Alexander, and his ardent supporter Athanasius, wanted to place some form of wording that the Arians definitely could not support. Keep in mind that each party wanted not only to control the

their side. Since the majority of the bishops were on the side of Alexander and Athanasius, they finally won the emperor over to their side. With the help of the emperor, the original Nicene Creed came into existence as follows:

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, **only begotten, that is to say, of the substance of the Father**, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, **begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father**, by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down, and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, went up into the heavens, and is to come again to judge the quick and dead. . . .

“But those that say, “There was [a time] when he was not,” and “Before he was begotten he was not, and that he came into existence from what was not,” or who profess that the Son of God is of a different person or “substance,” or that he is created, or changeable, or variable, are anathematized by the Catholic Church’ (Stanley, *History of the Eastern Church*, Lecture iii, par. 29).”¹¹

As a result, all but 17 bishops accepted this creed. Constantine then used bribes and persuasion to win all but four. Two of them, Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nice, could not agree to the curse pronounced at the end of the creed and therefore were banished and removed from their bishoprics and Catholics were put in their places. The other two refused the creed altogether. They were Theonas of Marmarica in Libya and Secundus of Ptolemais, and they were banished.

“The burning question of the decades succeeding the Council of Nicaea was how to state the relations of the Three Persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The council had decided, and the papacy had appropriated

If you did not agree to the exact wording of the creed, . . . you were considered a heretic

were made. Who for our salvation was made flesh, and lived amongst men, and suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come in glory to judge the quick and the dead. And we believe in one Holy Ghost. Believing each of them to be and to

church but they also wanted the influence of the emperor in order to use the state to enforce its decrees and thus have the power of both church and state. This was the whole reason for the dispute.

So, both sides worked on Constantine in order to win him to

the decision as its own. The personalities of the Trinity were not confounded, and the substance was not divided.”¹²

“Thus, it came to pass that, out of an assembly which partook more of the character of a political convention than a religious convocation, there emerged that **Nicene Creed, which to this day is the standard of orthodoxy** in the Roman, Eastern, Anglican, and some other churches.”¹³

“From this period we may date the introduction of rigorous articles of belief, which required the submissive assent of the mind to **every word and letter of an established creed**, and which raised the slightest heresy of opinion into a more fatal offense against God, and a more odious crime in the estimation of man, than the worst moral delinquency or the most flagrant deviation from the spirit of Christianity’ (Milman, *History of Christianity*, book iii, chap. iv, par. 1).”¹⁴

If you did not agree to the exact wording of the creed, including the omission of an “I”, you were considered a heretic in need of being executed. But the problem with a creed is a lack of conviction and therefore a lack of power. If a person wants true power in the belief they hold, they must be convinced that it is the truth based on the inerrent word of God. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32. “And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.” Luke 4:32.

“Even though the decision of the Council of Nicaea had been absolutely, and from honest conviction, spontaneously unanimous, it never could rest with the slightest degree of obligation or authority upon any soul, who had not arrived at the same conclusion from honest conviction derived from the free exercise of his own power of thought. **There is no organization, nor tribunal, on earth that has any right to decide for anybody what is the truth upon any religious question.**”¹⁵

We may hear a presentation on a subject or a decision of a council, but we must decide for ourselves

what is the truth. “God has given us His word that we may become acquainted with its teachings and know for ourselves what He requires of us. When the lawyer came to Jesus with the inquiry, ‘What shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ the Saviour referred him to the

science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any

“God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.”

Scriptures, saying: ‘What is written in the law? how readest thou?’ Ignorance will not excuse young or old, nor release them from the punishment due for the transgression of God’s law; because there is in their hands a faithful presentation of that law and of its principles and claims. **It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul’s salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself. However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation.** He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything.”¹⁶

God wants to have a people on this earth who will know, by their own personal conviction, what is the truth. “But **God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.** The opinions of learned men, the deductions of

doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support.”¹⁷

We can here agree with Neander that **“The truth itself, forced on man otherwise than by its own inward power, becomes falsehood.”**¹⁸

Although the council finalized that decision, it did not settle the issue by any means. In the continuation of this article, we will look at how the Catholic doctrine was established in the empire, and glean important lessons for ourselves today. ❧

¹ A. T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, pp. 332, 333.

² Ibid., p. 333.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ B. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 92.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ A. T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, pp. 335, 336.

⁸ Ibid., p. 334.

⁹ Ibid., p. 335.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 348.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 350.

¹² B. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 91.

¹³ *SDA Bible Student's Source Book*, p. 673.

¹⁴ A. T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, pp. 352, 353.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 598.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 595.

¹⁸ A. T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, p. 354.



The Little Latch-Key

It was March and midnight. The air was full of driving sleet, and the streets were vacant. Not even the form of a policeman broke the monotony of slippery pavements glittering under the waving shadows of electricity. Presently a boyish form emerged from a

dark corner, and crept slowly up the steps of a corner house. It was a large, handsome residence, now utterly dark and quiet.

What business had one to creep stealthily into that house at that hour? Was the boy a burglar?

He fumbled in his pocket, and drew forth a tiny key. Yes, it opened the door, and he stood within. The hall was dark, but warm. He moved eagerly to the heating vent—he seemed to know just where to find it—and crouched shivering over its delightful warmth. After some moments he started up the stairs, oh, so carefully, lest there should be a sound. But the steps were padded and carpeted, and his old wet shoes sank into them noiselessly. At the head of the stairs he felt his way to the door. It was closed, and he hesitated, leaning against the frame, and breathing heavily. At last he laid his hand on the knob, then turned it a little. Was the door locked?—No, it swung open quietly, and the boy stepped in.

The street light shone upon a dainty bed all made, and turned open ready for an occupant. A dressing-gown hung on a chair near the bed, and a pair of slippers stood before it. The rest of the room was in darkness. The boy gave a great sob, and fell on his knees by the side of the bed.

No, he was not a burglar, only a sick boy stealing home under cover of midnight.

Nearly two years had past since he last knelt by that bed. His mother had died; he had thought his father stern and cold, so he had run away to live as he liked. Once in his

miserable wanderings a much-forwarded letter from home had reached him. It contained no writing, just the tiny latch key to the home door. For months the little key had burned as it lay in his pocket. It had reminded him that, though a prodigal, he still had a home. It had reminded him of the Saviour whom his mother trusted, and in time of his deepest distress he had said, I will trust him. Still he was afraid; but the little key had still lain in his pocket, and at last had drawn him home.

The next morning Mr. Kane opened his son's door, as he always did since he had sent the latch-key. He expected nothing, but it had become a habit, so he opened the door. Did his eyes deceive him?—No, it was true. Ralph was in the bed asleep. The face was thin and worn. The father fell on his knees, and the boy opened his eyes.

"O Dad!" he sobbed, "I've come home to die. I've been wicked, wicked, wicked. Can you forgive me?"

"Indeed I can. And God—have you asked His forgiveness?"

"Yes, and I wanted to tell you before I die."

"Die!" said the father, gathering him into his arms. "No, indeed."

"The doctor at the hospital said that I would not live long."

"We'll see about that," said Mr. Kane, stepping to the phone.

When the family physician had looked Ralph over, he smiled. "The hospital doctor knew that you had little chance wandering about with no care," he said, "but we'll send you off to _____; and if you lead a sensible, pure life, you'll live to be the stay of your father's old age."

When the physician had gone, Ralph turned to his father. "I'm so glad you sent the latch-key. I never would have come home by daylight. But when I was out in the cold, wet night, I could not resist the comfort at the end of that key," he said.

"It was God who gave me the thought, my boy. I asked Him what to do."

"How good God is!" replied Ralph.

"And you have your whole life before you in which to show your love for Him," replied the father.

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