

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"*

Ezz. 7:6 (Moffan)

THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

Page 2

"Honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father"

Page 4

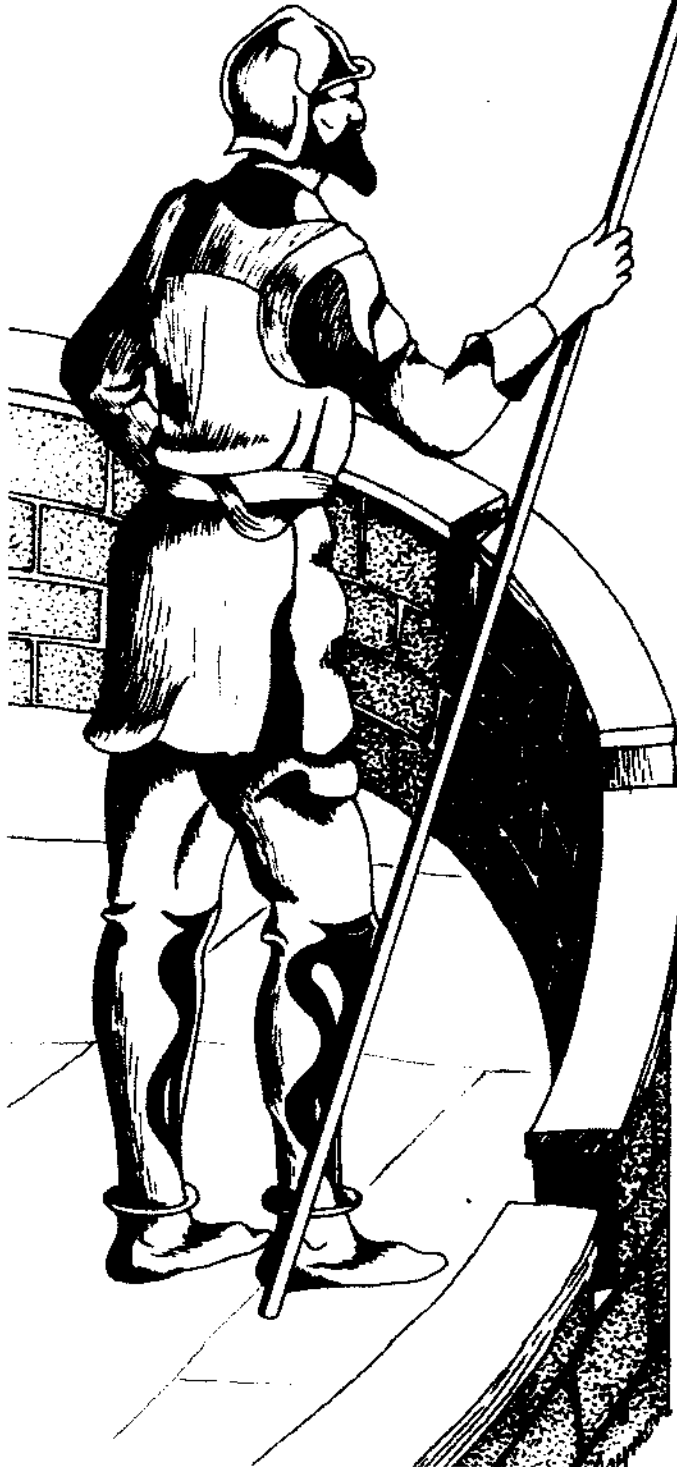
Let's Talk It Over - page 7

Editor's Preface

In this issue we discuss three different topics, each of vital concern in the community of Adventism. The first, seeks to clarify the "fall of Babylon" as given in the Second Angel's Message of Revelation 14. Unless we can place ourselves in the mind-set of those who lived at the time following the Great Disappointment, we can never clarify the Second Angel's Message as required linguistically by the text. John used the Greek past tense to express the message as it was revealed to him. This meant simply that when the message would be proclaimed Babylon had already fallen. However, this could not occur until the first message, announcing the hour of God's judgment, which was also stated in the past tense, had been fulfilled. This hour being October 22, 1844 means simply that these messages both came after that date. In the article, we discuss only the Second Message.

Presently in the community of Adventism there is agitation over the doctrine of the Godhead. Darren Lambert, who is assistant to the editor, discusses a facet of this issue. If we do not honor the Son, we do not honor the Father. The Jews clearly understood that when Jesus declared Himself the Son of God, He was claiming equality with God. One aspect of God is that He is eternal. Unless the Son is likewise eternal, He is not equal with God, and thus as the Jews of old, we do not honor the Son; and therefore, do not honor the Father. Old heresies which were introduced into the early Apostolic Church in the form of Gnosticism are again plaguing the Community of Adventism. This new Gnosticism, or neo-Gnosticism needs to be clearly discerned by those who want truth pure and unadulterated. We discussed it thoroughly at our annual fellowship, and will be addressing this in future issues of *WMN*.

Last month, after having written correctly in this preface the correct title of an article used by permission, I inadvertently captioned it wrongly. The admonition is still, "Spare the Rod..." and spoil the child, not, "Spare the Child..."



The Second Angel's Message

And there followed another angel, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." (Rev. 14:8)

The first two verbs of this verse - "followed" and "fallen" (repeated) are in the Greek past (aorist) tense, indicating a prior action. In others words, the first angel preceded this second angel; likewise, Babylon fell prior to the giving of this message. It announces what has taken place. The third verb, "has made drink" is in the perfect tense, indicating completed action.

We have traditionally placed the fulfilment of this message as coming during the summer of 1844. This was to be expected inasmuch as those who so believed, also believed that Christ was to come October 22, 1844; thus all prophetic events would have to had been fulfilled by that date. However, time continued, and thus the prophecy of Revelation can take its proper sequence governed by the language John used to relate the events revealed to him. Even the First Angel's Message, also stated in the Greek past (aorist) tense, indicates that when it sounded, the hour of God's judgment had commenced.

Based on the premise that Babylon fell because of its rejection of the First Angel's Message, what was rejected by the religious community which was either unique or basic to the first message?

Dr. Kai Arasola, President of the Finland Finnish Conference, wrote his dissertation for a doctoral degree from the Department of Theology at Uppsala University on Millerism, and which is published under the title of *The End of Historicism*. In his research, Arasola listed the characteristics of "historicism," some of which are:

The endorsement of the year/day theory and a preoccupation with prophetic time periods.

Continuous historical application of various apocalyptic symbols and calibrating of all prophecies with history.

The identification of the Papacy as the little horn/antichrist.

At the foundation of this method, its distinguishing feature, was the creation of a coherent system of independent synchronizations between prophecies.

Arasola observes that "the rationale" for this system of interpretation was to be found in a "biblicist concept of inspiration" which "believed that all parts of the Bible had equal value and that the Bible contained a mystical network of prophecies to be unfolded and harmonized by rational processes. It was the biblicist view of the Bible which empowered historicism." (p. 29)

This is the method used by Miller. He set forth fourteen rules by which to study the Bible. By the use of these rules, it was Miller's belief that none need "err far from the truth." But all of these rules, "whether they mention prophecy or not, are relevant within the frame work of continuous historical interpretation of prophecy. Several among Miller's hermeneutical precepts encourage Scriptural analogy. The idea of the Bible being its own expositor was the backbone of historicism from its beginning." (pp. 53-54)

"With the tools that historicism provided, William Miller exploited the Bible to produce a time for the *parousia* [Second Advent]. When the expectation ended in a disappointment, it was not only an end of a great revival but also that of a popular method of exegesis."

"Millerism is a watershed in the history of prophetic exegesis. Soon after Millerism, historicism was replaced by Darbyan futurism or the more scholarly preterism. Few outside the churches that stem from Millerism ventured to continue using the historical method of interpreting prophecies." (Back Cover)

It should be pointed out in passing that "Darbyan futurism" is a Protestant futuristic interpretation of the prophecies, a methodology which had its origins in the Roman Catholic counter reformation interpretations of the Jesuit Ribera.

Regarding the Great Disappointment, October 22, 1844, Dr. Arasola makes a very telling comment:

As the morning of October 23 dawned it was again true that "the hour knoweth no man." Millerism came to an end. As it died it gave birth to Adventism." (p. 17)

We believe that to the Seventh-day Adventist Church was committed the trust of the Three Angels' Messages. It was this movement that corrected the error of Millerism in regard to the "sanctuary," but who held as valid the interpretation of Daniel 8:14 relating to the time period which would mark the "hour" when His judgment began. In so doing, they held to the historicist method for the interpretation of prophecy.

Further, the sabbatarian Adventists were considered by Miller as "illegitimate children." (p. 19) Why? Because they also continued to hold as valid the exegesis of "the seventh month movement." And it is "the seventh-month movement" which was "the real exegetical watershed that marked the end of historicism and made futurism and preterism attractive." (*ibid.*) Arasola could conclude that "Seventh-day Adventists owe their hermeneutic and emphasis in particular to the seventh-month movement." (p. 20)

After the first disappointment in the Spring of 1844, Miller wanted to tone down the emphasis on time, and simply cling to the concept that the *parousia* was imminent. However, his supporters would not buy this generalizing of prophecy. He

lost control of the movement, and it passed to other hands. George Storrs and Samuel Snow entered the picture. Snow corrected the time line of Miller showing the error of calculation because there was no year Zero. This brought the end of the 2300 Day prophecy to the fall of 1844. Applying the dating of the Jewish Day of Atonement - the tenth day of the seventh month - the exact date, October 22, was determined. Miller objected to this specific date until a fortnight before the actual time. By introducing the timing of the events of the Jewish festal year into the understanding of the prophecy of Daniel, a new element of interpretation was united with the historicist methodology of prophetic interpretation, that of typology.

Arasola comments on this new element. He writes:

Typology has a background distinct from that of general historicism. The Christian church has from its beginnings seen many Old Testament images and passages as types and prophecies of Jesus Christ. As one looks back further one finds a pattern in the writings of the Old Testament. The prophets were the first to use typology. As Israel was facing national disasters "they looked for a new David, a new Exodus, a new covenant, a new City of God: the old became a type of the new and important as pointing forward to it." This pattern was taken up by the NT writers who saw the Old Testament as a prefiguration of the Christ-event. (pp. 161-162)

This understanding of typology presupposes the unchanging nature of God, as well as the conviction that the past acts of God will be repeated on a greater scale than in the past. Such a conviction was a part of the first Christian faith.

Typology in the New Testament is two dimensional - horizontal and vertical. The horizontal dimension was used by Snow. The date for the annual Day of Atonement - the tenth day of the seventh month - was a type of the day of the cleansing of the sanctuary in reality. A Biblical example of the use of horizontal typology is found in I Corinthians 10, where Paul regards events of the Exodus experience of Israel as symbols reflected in the Christian experience. An example of the vertical dimension is the book of Hebrews. The priests served unto the example and shadow of the heavenly reality. (8:5)

"During the period of Protestant orthodoxy 'Types were regarded as Old Testament facts which were ordained by God to adumbrate or foreshadow aspects of Christ or the Gospel in the New Testament.' This view has in succeeding centuries been accepted as the traditional understanding of Biblical typology. It is still regarded as the true concept on the subject by many with a Biblicist view of the Scriptures." (*ibid*, p. 163)

Modern Protestant scholarship disassociates itself strongly from this type of typology. It is basic to Adventism. Thus in two areas - the methodology of prophetic interpretation, and typology, which is the key to the understanding of the work Christ as the High Priest is doing for us now - "Babylon"

fell. These aspects of the "fall of Babylon" are now being echoed in the corridors of Adventism.

Disregarding the fact that the understanding of prophecy from Adventism's very inception was founded on the historicist hermeneutic, many voices in the Community of Adventism today have adopted a form of Jesuitical futurism and have produced many speculative concepts of the fulfillment of what the book of Revelation is saying. Why should we fall with the Babylonians?

Equally as tragic is what we have done in the area of sanctuary typology. While there are those who have gone to extremes and find typical significance in every socket and board of the earthly sanctuary model, others have nullified the basic type by compromise. This latter is exemplified by the infamous conferences between the Evangelicals and Seventh-day Adventist leadership in 1955-56. The book, *Questions on Doctrine*, confirmed a part of the extent of the compromise. One example will suffice:

In seeking to reflect Evangelical thought that the atonement was completed on the Cross, the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, reads - "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." (p. 354-355; emphasis theirs) Further, this is enlarged in another section of the book. Indicating that Christ "our surety [has] entered the 'holy places,' and appeared in the presence of God for us." The book states: "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." (p. 381, emphasis theirs) Where is the "final" atonement which formed the basic pillar of the structure of Adventism?

The type taught a dual atonement, one at the Altar in the Court (Lev. 4); and the other on the Day of Atonements (Heb) which began in the Most Holy apartment and closed at the Altar in the Court (Lev. 16). This type prefigures the Lamb of God as the sacrifice on the Cross, and as High Priest ministering that one sacrifice in a final atonement ministry. The book, *Questions on Doctrine*, unequivocally declares - "Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement. 'Christ hath redeemed us' (Gal. 3:13) 'once for all.'" (p. 390 emphasis theirs)

To proclaim the fall of Babylon is one thing; but to fail to recognize what caused the fall of Babylon, and, therefore, to fall into the teachings of Babylon is another thing. This tragedy is applicable whether adopting the prophetic hermeneutic of Babylon, or accepting their version of the atonement. Both have produced dire consequences in the community of Adventism.

To say that all interpretations of the prophecies which have been drawn, using the historicist methodology, are correct

would be nothing but a manifestation of blind ignorance. However, you do not correct error by changing to another alien hermeneutic which is known to have been formulated to evade truth. Neither do you combine two hermeneutics, applying one to the book of Daniel and a different one to the book of Revelation. This is total self-deception and ignorance.

The same problem faces us in noting our sanctuary theology. To conclude that the sanctuary teaching as perceived by "historic" Adventism is infallibly correct, again shows one's ignorance of the problems that have surfaced due to a more thorough searching of the Word. But to throw the "baby" out with the bath water as was done through the compromises made with the Evangelicals is sheer folly. How can one proclaim that "Babylon" is fallen, and in the next breath pronounce one's acceptance of the very concepts which led to the fall of Babylon in the first place? You cannot accept the theology of Babylon, and proclaim the Second Angel's Message. If one will but observe carefully the final call of Revelation 18, it is a call to the people of God who have either ignorantly fallen into "Babylon" or who have in blind loyalty followed their leaders into Babylonian captivity. It is time now to proclaim the message - "Come out of her my people" - and to declare plainly wherein "Babylon" itself first fell. You cannot do so by adopting "Babylonian" hermeneutics of prophetic interpretation, nor by blurring the typology of the sanctuary either by over-kill, or by false assumptions. #

"Honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father"

John 5: 23

During the last few years, if there has been one volatile subject above others which has divided the community of Adventism, it has been the Doctrine of the Godhead. During this time we have seen many and varied perversions of what is supposed to be the ultimate truth on this subject. It is surprising that with the limited number of "Gods" involved, that so many "truths" can be proposed. Although in many cases the major difference is in relegating one or both of the "other" Gods to "lesser" Gods. As a result great confusion continues to divide and splinter the independent community of Adventism today! It is our hope, as we address some basic principles and understandings, that some of this confusion may be dispelled and those with teachable spirits blessed. (Heb. 5:12)

No one as yet, that we are aware of, has had a problem with accepting the fact that the Being we call our Father, is God - "self existent, ever existent". However, many are unable to place "The Word" (John 1:1) as "self existent, ever existent," let alone identifying the Holy Spirit as a personal Being. Why is this?

We have found that it is primarily due to a misconception of what constitutes the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. The assumption is that there are three Gods, a Trinity, when a closer view of the theological meaning of the word Trinity is ONE GOD, with three generations or emanations. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Fifth Edition)* defines Trinity as, "The union of three persons or hypostases (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) in one Godhead, so that all the three are one God as to substance, but three persons or hypostases as to individuality." (Emphasis mine) Many while seeking to distance themselves from the Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity have, in fact, drawn closer to what Catholicism has taught for centuries. The Catholic position can be found in 1 John 5: 7, 8: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." Interestingly, the part of these verses which reads "In heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth," cannot be found in any Greek manuscript prior to the sixteenth century. However, late manuscripts of the Vulgate have them word for word. (See footnote: *The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*, p. 714)

The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine (p. 31), by Geiermann reads:

Q. What does the Catholic Church teach about God?

A. About God the Catholic Church teaches as divinely revealed, that:

(1) There is one God, infinitely perfect, who exists of Himself from all eternity.

(2) In God there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in all perfections.

(3) The Son proceeds from the Father by generation, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

(4) God loves to show His goodness and mercy to mankind.

Sadly, there are those in Adventism teaching a concept very close to this. Especially is this true among some prominent independent voices, who in their fear of being tainted as "Trinitarian," have led many to the very doors of Babylon. Unfortunately in arriving at their conclusions, the character of our Creator is denigrated. Although most acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God, for some incomprehensible reason, He cannot be "as God" as the Father. They claim that He must have had an origin. Whether it be in the remote eternity, or just prior to the creation of this earth, really makes little difference.

These "Seventh-day Papists" must then twist some basic statements of New Testament Scripture. Recently we received several tracts, in each of which were quoted a portion of 1 Tim. 6:16; "Who only hath immortality ..." and this was attributed to the Father. But notice the preceding verse; "Which in His times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." The

context of this verse reveals that it is Jesus Christ who "shall show," the Father as King of kings and Lord of lords. Scripture also declares Jesus Christ to be King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) But this is ignored. This is less than honest!

We find a similar problem in the declaration to John in Revelation. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. 1:8) Jesus also declares Himself to be the Alpha and the Omega. (Rev. 22:13) This Biblical factor wherein God and the Word can both claim the same titles and prerogatives, is not given due weight by these independants.

Unfortunately many have chosen to take an eisegetical view of Scripture, resulting in a Doctrine that conforms beautifully to *their* opinions, and only incidentally to God's Word. They would have Isaiah mistaken, when in referring to the Messiah, he declares Him to be "Immanuel - God with us." (Isa. 7:14; 8:10 & Matt. 1:23) Or worse still, to consider Isaiah confused when he declares this Messiah to be "The mighty God," and "The Father of Eternity." (Isa. 9:6 Heb.)

What has not been fully understood is the duality that comes across in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, such as the word, Elohim, as Gods; and in the Shema of Israel which linguistically reads - "Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy Gods is one Lord." (Deut. 6:4)

These same ones are promulgating the heresy that Christ was "begotten," "generated" or "birthed" prior to the incarnation. Regardless of what they want to call it, whether it be a generating, an emanation, or a "birthing," it comes back to the point that the Word is less than a "self existent, eternally existent" Being. The *how* is irrelevant. Out of the three descriptions above, "begotten" is the only term found in Scripture in reference to Christ, other than the virgin birth at Bethlehem. (Matt. 1:18, Rev. 12:2)

We find in John 1:14 that the words "only begotten" are translated from the Greek word "μονογενής" (monogenos). Thayer states in regard to "only begotten" that; "He [Jesus Christ] is spoken of by John not because the Word ... was eternally generated by God the Father (the orthodox interpretation), or came forth from the being of God just before the beginning of the world (subordinationism), but because of the incarnation." (*Thayer's Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament* p. 417, 418; emphasis mine)

Ellen G. White makes the correct position transparent, when she writes; "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, un-derived." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530)

If one alleges that the Word had an origin, then He automatically becomes the literal Son of God. While recognizing that to the human mind, a father - son relationship is always associated with procreation, is this what Scripture reveals happened with God? Is this what Deity seeks to reveal for

man's salvation? We do not believe so. In humanity, it is often recognized, that there is no closer relationship or bond than that between a father and his son. We believe that it is this bond or oneness that God seeks to reveal to mankind, thereby "bringing many sons unto glory." (Heb. 2:10) It is this oneness between Himself and the Father, that Jesus sought to reveal at every opportunity. Comparing the oneness of Their relationship, with the oneness that we may have with the Father through Him (John. 10:30; 17:11), we desire such a oneness with the Father and therefore receive the Son that we might have the privilege of sonship (John 1:12). For it is only in being one with the Son that we can be one with the Father, and thus be "made perfect in one". (Jn. 17:23)

"By His obedience to all the commandments of God, Christ wrought out a redemption for man. This was not done by going out of himself to another, but by taking humanity into himself. Thus Christ gave to humanity an existence out of himself. To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption. Christ took human nature that men might be one with him as he is one with the Father, that God may love man as he loves his only begotten Son, that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete in him." (*Review and Herald*, April 5, 1901)

We find that in Gabriels disclosure to Mary, he declares more than just the birth of the Messiah, but proclaims also what He shall be called: "... therefore also that holy (thing) which shall be born of thee shall be called (future tense) the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) It becomes apparent that the Word was not previously known as "the Son."

The Bible reveals a decree wherein God says "thou art My Son this day have I begotten Thee." (Ps. 2:7) Paul quotes this in connection with his comparison of the pre-eminence of Christ above the angels. Further, Paul quotes God (the Father) as addressing this decreed Son as God, quoting again from Psalms - "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Heb. 1:8) Here in connection with the decree of sonship is introduced the fact that two Beings are equally God. This decree does not declare that the Son was inferior to the Father, or that the Father was superior to the Son. It was an arrangement whereby One would be as a father and the other as a son. This arrangement is also noted by Zechariah. He wrote that "the *counsel of peace* shall be between them both." (6:13) This was the objective of the plan of redemption. "We have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

Apostle John put the duality concept in as simple language as is possible, when he wrote that: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) The word was in the Greek is ην; it is a verb in the imperfect tense, which expresses continuous action in past time. What John is telling us is that there never was a time that the Word was not, or that there never was a time that the Word was not with God, or that there never was a

time that the Word was not God. Both God and the Word are eternal. It is this Word which "was made flesh and dwelt among us, ... full of grace and truth."

John, having introduced the Word as God, and as always with "the God" (Gr.), quotes that Word as defining the nature of God. "God is Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth." (John 4:24 Gr.) Paul also understood the original status of the Godhead, as well as the results of the incarnation. He wrote; "Who being in the form of God [Spirit], thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a slave, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:6, 7 Gr.) The word "equal" which Paul uses here, ἴσῶς means equal in "quality and quantity." Paul is stating categorically, that the Word lacked nothing in comparison with "the God."

It is critical to understand the factors of the Godhead correctly, if we are to understand what actually took place during the incarnation, and to properly recognize the huge sacrifice that was made by God to obtain man's salvation.

There are many texts in reference to the Father and Son in the New Testament, and yet how many of us fail to recognize what the Pharisees understood in the Father - Son relationship. They understood perfectly what Jesus was claiming when He referred to Himself as the Son of God. Because Jesus healed on the Sabbath a controversy arose, at which time Jesus responded, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17) The response of the Jews to this assertion is immediately recorded: "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:18) Again this word is ἴσῶς - equal in quality and quantity. The Jews understood what Jesus claimed.

Even those who would soon crucify their Messiah, who killed and stoned their prophets, could recognise what was meant by calling Jesus the "Son of God". John does not record the Pharisees words - perhaps they were unprintable - but he does record Jesus' response. He then explained the condition of the incarnation. "Jesus ... said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son." (John 5:19, 20)

The Word was continuing to reveal while in the flesh, what He had tried to reveal, while as the Spirit. We find in Moses' conversation with Jehovah at the burning bush, that He had described Himself as; "I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary records that this name has specific meaning; "In Hebrew as in English, this name is a form of the verb 'to be,' and implies that its possessor is the eternal, self existing One." (1 BC p.511) While on earth He was continuing to reveal Himself, though incarnated, as the "eternal, self existing One."

In a continuing encounter with the Jews, Christ left no question as to who He was and identified Himself as the One who appeared to Moses at the burning bush. He declared; "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24; Gr.)

The Pharisees responded "Who art thou?" In the continuing heated exchange, Jesus frankly proclaimed; "Before Abraham was, I am," thus removing all doubt that He indeed was the eternal, self existent One. It was then that they took up stones to render the proscribed punishment for blasphemy. How many independent Adventists today are spiritually stoning their Creator, by not acknowledging His eternal, self existence? As Christ proclaimed, these same ones "will die in their sins."

Many years have passed since the agitation arose resultant from the book *Questions on Doctrine* wherein the true humanity of Christ was questioned. The book claimed that God did not play fair and favoured His Son by exempting Him from "the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam." (*Q on D* p. 383) As then, even now Satan is attacking with the same objective, but from the opposite direction. He is seeking to undermine just how great the sacrifice made by God on man's behalf was, and thereby deplete the drawing power of our uplifted Saviour. (John 12:32) This time it is not His equality with man that is brought into question, but His equality with God the Father.

Just as there were those who have refused to acknowledge that Christ became truly man, in fallen sinful nature without sinning, so there are those today who refuse to acknowledge that He is truly God, eternal and self existent. They are just as devoid of the "divine nature" and cannot be "complete in him," as those who deny that He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh". (Rom. 8:3)

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Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God.

Let's Talk It Over

During a trip West in June, I kept facing various facets of an issue which has become a hallmark of "historic" Adventism and by which every "voice" in the community of Adventism is judged. However, this issue is not confined to them alone. The question, what is your view of Ellen G. White, completely overshadows the question, "What think ye of Christ?" In fact, one would think that the latter question is irrelevant, if only the first question is given the answer expected by the "historic" Adventist.

I have been aware for some time of the position held by the Standish brothers, published in Spear's publication, that it is their "expectation that in the kingdom Sister White will be seen to have been a major prophet." (*OFF*, April 1989, p. 15) This places her in the canon of Scripture next to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. I have heard it expressed that the corpus of the writings of Ellen G. White constitutes a third canon of Scripture. However, I was not prepared to hear from a friend of many years that even as the New Testament is an interpreter of the Old, so Ellen G. White is an inspired interpreter of the New, thus when one studies a question in theology, or any other issue, he first goes to what Ellen G. White has written, and then works back to the Old Testament. This comes close to what Ferrell holds that the Scriptures consist of the Bible and the Writings of Ellen G. White. I was faulted by one that in presenting a study on the Godhead I used only the Bible as counseled by Ellen G. White herself. (See *The Great Controversy* p. 595) One must recognize that if he really believes the Bible, he must accept the doctrine of spiritual gifts; and the evidence is clear that Ellen G. White did possess a spiritual gift, perhaps several. But surely, one must also recognize how God indicated she was to be set before the people. She, herself, stated what her position was: "I am not to appear before the people as holding any other position than that of a messenger with a message." (Signed communication from St. Helena, California, November 17, 1903)

In a meeting two and one half years previously in the Battle Creek College library, Ellen White plainly told the workers assembled:

Don't you quote Sister White. I don't want you ever to quote Sister White until you get your vantage ground where you know where you are. Quote the Bible. Talk the Bible. It is full of meat, full of fatness. Carry it right out in your life, and you will know more Bible than you know now. (Spalding & Magan Collection, p. 174)

One is reminded of the testimony to a "Bro. R" that "if you had made God's word your study, with a desire to

reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies." (Vol. 5, p. 665) There is much spiritual blessing to be derived in reading the messages God sent by His messenger, but the Bible must be basic in our study of, and search for, truth.

While on the trip West, I stayed one night in the Wiemar Inn. While there I took advantage of the opportunity to talk via telephone with Dr. Herbert Douglas. He is writing a book on the writings of Ellen G. White. In it, he will be dealing with current questions which have surfaced relating to these Writings. For example, I asked him about the letter W. W. Prescott wrote to W. C. White questioning the way he was handling his mother's Writings. Douglas told me he was incorporating this question into the material which will be discussed in his book.

Also, while on the trip West, I learned of another publication that is in the "works." Dr. J. R. Zurcher has written a book in French on a historical review of the doctrine of the Incarnation as it has been altered in recent Adventist teaching. It is being translated with a foreword by Elder Kenneth Wood. From what I was told of the book by one who has previewed it, Zurcher contends that the doctrine of the Incarnation is a major and decisive issue in Adventism. This, with another recent publication on the subject, should bring the doctrine of the Incarnation again to a front.

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