

# "Watchman, what of the night?"

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

## THE GODHEAD STATEMENT

1872 - 1914 - 1931 - 1980

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## "Pioneers" ?

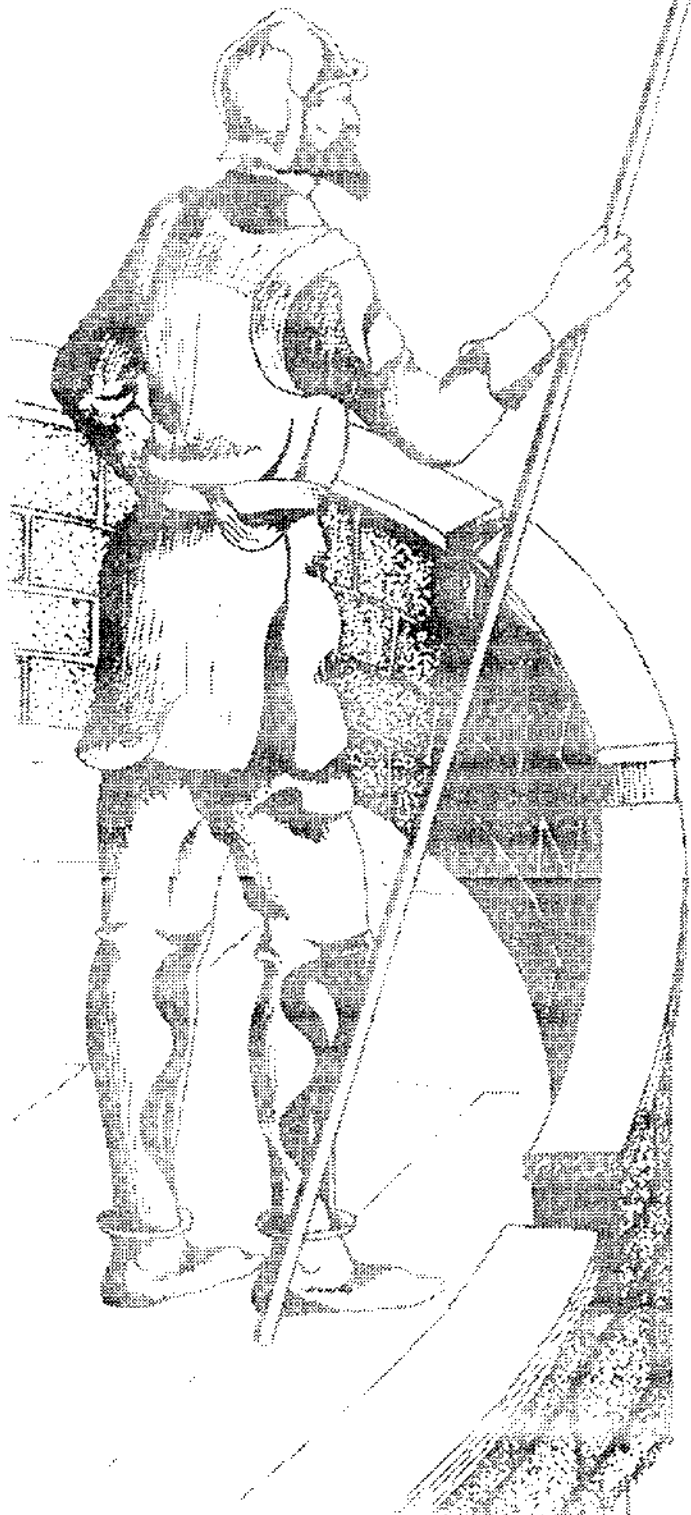
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### Editor's Preface

In this issue of WVN we carefully compare the major doctrinal statements which the Seventh-day Adventist Church issued from 1872 to 1980 in the area of one doctrine only; that is, the doctrine of God. This study and comparison has been most enlightening and stimulating to the editor, and we pray that you will find it likewise challenging. There are some unanswered questions. How could the unchanged statement on God from 1872 through 1914 be written as it was, and "thought" leaders - editors, theologians and writers - during the same period express concepts concerning God which did not harmonize with the Statement? Furthermore the concept held as to the "origin" of the pre-existent Christ by "many" changed from the belief that He was the first of the creation of God to the concept that in the remote eternity of the past He proceeded forth from the Father. Yet there is no reflection of this original concept nor the changed perception, expressed in the wording of the Statements of Belief during this period.

"Some of the earliest SDA's - for example James White and Joseph Bates - had formerly been members of the 'Christian Connection,' a church that at that time held to a form of the Arian belief concerning Christ's nature.... Upon becoming SDA's they retained this belief, which found expression in their writings." (*SDA Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pp. 286, 287; 1976 ed.*) Thus these earlier concepts cannot be considered as "pillars" of the Adventist faith, because they never originated with Adventism such as the sanctuary teaching and the Three Angels' Messages. Technically, it could be stated using Adventist terminology that these concepts came from "Babylon," the same as the Trinitarian teaching expressed in the Nicene Creed and made a part of the 1980 Statement.

We are hearing much about what the "Pioneers" taught. The word is misapplied. In a published booklet there are omissions which, had they been included, would have altered the deduction drawn. We would be hesitant to judge this as intentional, rather it represents a "zeal without knowledge."



# The Godhead Statement

1872 - 1914 - 1931 - 1980

In comparing these statements certain factors must govern our thinking. Changes made from a previous statement do not necessarily make the new statement apostate; it could be a reflection of a deeper insight into truth. However, such changes could reflect apostasy from truth. Any given statement is not the ultimate enunciation of truth of a doctrinal position; the Holy Scriptures must remain the final word. A Statement of Beliefs is what a group of people perceive truth to be at a given time in their corporate experience. There is no question but that the 1980 Statement on the subject of God is not saying the same thing that the 1872 Statement did. Further, it will be observed that all statements, official and unofficial, from 1872 through 1914 did say the same thing in the same way concerning God.

This data also means that during the lifetime of Ellen G. White, the stated position of the Church not only on the doctrine of God, but in all other major areas of doctrinal thought, remained constant. This is not saying that sincere men, devoted to the work of the Church were saying the same things on the subject of God. They were not. From Uriah Smith, theologian, prophetic writer and editor of the Review & Herald, who stated that Christ was the first of all created beings, to Dr. E. J. Waggoner, who perceived of Christ as having proceeded forth from the Father so far back "in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man," these men reflected beliefs not stated in the published statements of the Church. In fact the authorship of the 1914 Statement is assigned to Uriah Smith. The tragedy of this present anti-Trinitarian agitation is that men are selecting from among the "pioneers" those who wrote what they want to believe, and present these "pioneer" positions as the basis for belief. The fact remains you cannot find in any Statement of Beliefs from 1872 through 1914 a position on Christ's origin which stated what either Uriah Smith or E. J. Waggoner taught.

Would it not be the point of wisdom just to take the two statements defining the Godhead which did not vary in any published statement from 1872 to 1914, and read these carefully to find out what the Church said it believed at that time. When the 1872 Statement was published in Battle Creek, the preface read that it was not being "put forth as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them,

as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity held by them." Two years later when James White launched the Signs of the Times, his first editorial was the 1872 Statement with the same preface note. When the 1914 Statement of Beliefs credited to Uriah Smith first appeared in the 1889 Year Book, it was prefaced by the assertion that "the following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principle features of [the Church's] religious faith, upon which there is, so far as is known, entire unanimity throughout the body." It is interesting to note that from the 1872 Statement, though to be largely the work of James White, to the 1889 Statement, the work of Uriah Smith, the phrase was changed from "great unanimity" to "entire unanimity" as far as the acceptance of the stated beliefs "throughout the body."

What did the two statements on God actually state? Article #1 reads:

**That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit.**

Article #2 as it states the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Godhead reads:

**That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist....**

What is not stated is as consequential as what is stated. The eternal Deity of Christ is not affirmed. Either Christ was innately divine, the I AM, or His was a derived divinity. The statement affirms that He was before all creation for by Him "God created all things." Jesus is declared to be "the Son of the Eternal Father" which would infer that at some point in eternity, He was derived. It does not say, "the Eternal Son of God." The "how" is left unstated. The word, "birthed," used by the neo anti-Trinitarians is not used, neither the word, "generated."

In setting forth the Word as Lord and the Father as "one God" there was Biblical precedence (Eph. 4:5-6). However, the word, "God" and the word, "Lord" as used in the Scriptures are synonyms. The issue turns on worship. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8). Yet "the Lord thy God" whom Jesus referenced in this verse, commanded the angels at His birth to worship Him (Heb. 1:6).

In this 1872 Statement, the Holy Spirit is defined as the "representative" of the "one God." The word, "representative" does not mean "force," "power," nor "influence," nor is it a synonym of any of these words. In Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, (2nd Edition) the word is defined:

1. a person or thing enough like the others in its class or kind to serve as an example or type of the class or kind.
2. a person duly authorized to act or speak for another or others; agent, delegate, deputy, etc. ...

A group of synonyms are given:

**Syn. -- agent, commissioner, proxy, deputy, substitute, embodiment, personation, delegate, vicar, vicegerent, principal.**

An analytical reading of the 1872 number one statement on God reveals that of the three attributes usually assigned to Deity - omnipotence (all-powerful), omniscience (all-knowing) are ascribed to "the one God," while omnipresence ("everywhere present") is manifest in a "representative, the Holy Spirit."

Two decades later this same dichotomy would be used by Ellen White to describe the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. She wrote:

**Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for [the disciples] advantage that He should leave them, go to His Father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent. (Letter 119, 1895)**

Some of the "pioneers" were very specific in what they believed relative to the Holy Spirit. For example, Uriah Smith, in answer to the question from a reader of the Review and Herald, who asked, "Are we to understand that the Holy Ghost is a person, the same as the Father and the Son?" replied:

**This Spirit is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit being the same whether it is spoken of as pertaining to God or Christ. But respecting this Spirit, the Bible uses expressions which cannot be harmonized with the idea that it is a person like the Father and the Son. Rather it is shown to be a divine influence from them both, the medium which represents their presence and by which they have knowledge and power through all the universe, when not personally present. (October 28, 1890, p. 664)**

Here we have a conundrum. The 1872 Statement on God declared the Holy Spirit to be "His representative," yet in his answer Smith uses terms - "medium" and "influence," which are neither synonyms nor definitions of the word, "representative." Besides this, in the Statement of Beliefs which first appeared in 1889 and continued intermittently till 1914 authored by himself, Smith retained without change the statement on God as is in the 1872 Statement.

The conundrums do not end with Smith in 1890. This same question was basic in the controversy which developed over the book, The Living Temple, which J. H. Kellogg published in 1903. In a letter which he wrote to George I Butler on October 28 of that year, Kellogg plainly stated - "As far as I can fathom, the difficulty which is found in Living Temple, the whole thing may be simmered down to this question: Is the Holy Spirit a person?" Kellogg's solution, if A. G. Daniell's interpretation of a letter sent to him the same day by Kellogg can be relied upon, was that "it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father that filled all living space." (Letter from Daniells to W. C. White, October, 29, 1903) This same distinction is found in the 1872 Statement. Omnipotence and omniscience are attributed to the "one God," while omnipresence is assigned to His "representative, the Holy Spirit." According to Daniells, Kellogg in his letter opted for the Trinity doctrine, and used Trinitarian terminology, "God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost."

Earlier in 1903 (March 16), Ellen White had written to Kellogg and cautioned him - "You are definitely not clear on the personality of God." (Letter 300) Late in 1905, she would cite "spiritualistic representations" which those of the "medical fraternity" were using to define God. While condemning these representations by stating that "God cannot be compared with the things His hand have made," she emphatically wrote - "There are three living persons of the heavenly trio." (Special Testimonies, Series B, #7, p. 62)

In plain English, this is what the 1872 Statement and the succeeding statements from 1889 through 1914 said about God - there is "one God," and "one Lord Jesus Christ." These with the "Representative, the Holy Spirit," make a Trio, and are declared to be "living person." It is true that the "pioneers" did not perceive of the Holy Spirit as a "person" even though they used the word "representative" to define His work in the Statement of Beliefs. Neither did they profess the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This they declared by omis-

sion. Does this then make the writings of these "pioneers" the basis of our faith, and what Ellen White wrote on this point, error"? Keep in mind that she used the word, "trio," not "trinity" nor "triune God." There is a difference.

### What Makes a Statement Official?

As we pass to the consideration of the 1914 Statement, which in reality first appeared in 1889, the question is raised as to whether it was an official Statement of Beliefs. (We used the 1914 Statement, because it was the final year that it appeared in a Church publication, and thus the 1872 Statement and the 1914 Statements covered the lifespan of Ellen White with the Church) There are some variations between the two statements, but on the Statements concerning God, they are identical. As noted above the 1872 Statement was prefaced with the fact that the beliefs set forth were held "with great unanimity" by them, while the Statement first appearing in 1889 was prefaced with the assertion that there was "entire unanimity" in regard to the stated beliefs.

The litmus test for being official is now stated to be the action of the Church in general session. However, this criterion was not set until the 1946 General Conference session when it was voted that "no revision of this [1931] Statement of Fundamental Beliefs as it now appears in the Manual shall be made at any time except at a General Conference session." (GC Bulletin, June 14, 1946, p. 197) Because of this action, some have concluded that the only "official" doctrinal pronouncement by the Church is the 1980 Dallas Statement of Fundamental Beliefs. This conclusion cannot be sustained.

In December 1882, the General Conference Committee voted to publish a Yearbook. When published it contained "the statistics of [the] denomination, the proceedings of [the] General Conference, T & M [Tract and Missionary] Society, and other associations, the financial condition of [the Church's] institutions, [the] General and State Conference Constitutions, and a good calendar, and full directories of all Conference and various societies throughout the country." (Quoted in the SDA Encyclopedia, Vol. 11, p. 595) Such made the Yearbook an authoritative voice of the Church's position and standing. In this Yearbook of 1889 was placed the Statement of Beliefs which appeared again in 1905, 1907-1914 and which were authored by Uriah Smith. It was as official as any statement could be until a new criterion was set as in 1946. In fact the 1931 Statement was prepared for publication in the Yearbook. "It was

not until 1932 that an official Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual appeared issued by the General Conference."

### A Change in Wording - 1931

By a request from the African Division, the General Conference Committee authorized on December 29, 1930, the preparation of a Statement of Beliefs for inclusion in the Yearbook. On the subject of the Godhead, a change was made. The new Statement read:

**That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption.**

**That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. ...**

There can be no question but that the change of wording of the Statement on the doctrine of God also was a substantive change. Not only are the attributes of God - omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient - consigned to the Eternal Father, but also while the Holy Spirit is declared to be a "person" it is defined as a "power."

Jesus Christ is declared to be "very God" thus eternally co-existent with "the Eternal Father." There is no suggestion of "there is one God" as in both the 1872 and 1980 Statements. Being "very God," is amplified to mean "of the same nature and essence" as God. In this there is an echo from the Nicene Creed which states of Jesus Christ, "being of one substance [essence] with the Father." (Creeeds of Christendom, Vol. 2, p. 58; the word, "essence" being a substitution for the word, "substance," in the Western text)

Was this Statement to be considered an official Statement? The answer is clearly, "Yes." It was placed in the Year Book, and as noted above the 1946 General Conference took an action which affirmed the Statement. It read: - "No revision of this Statement of Fundamental Beliefs as it now appears in the Manual shall be made at any time except at a General Conference session. (GC Bulletin, June 14, 1946, #8, p. 197)

How was this 1931 Statement on the Godhead understood in Adventism? We know of no specific analysis,

but we do have a current illustration. In 1979, one year prior to the adoption of the current Statements of Belief, the Southern Publishing Association released a book, Knowing God, by Dr. Edwin R. Thiele. This book was used as the basis of the Adult Sabbath School Lessons for the last quarter of 1998. The lessons reflected what Dr. Thiele had written, except for one chapter, "The Triune God" (Third Lesson). Some editor for the Sabbath School Department of the General Conference wrote a substitute lesson differing from Thiele's presentation knowing that what Thiele had written which reflected the 1931 Statement did not harmonize with the current 1980 Statement.

Dr. Thiele summarized his understanding of the Godhead in the final paragraphs of the chapter on "The Triune God." He wrote:

**Each member of the Trinity of Heaven is a divine personage in His own right and is worthy of our homage and petitions. ...**

**If any of the Three Personages of the Holy Triad were not divine, it would not be proper to recognize Him as holy or to pay homage to Him. As God is holy, so also is Christ, and likewise the Holy Spirit. All three being divine and holy, each must receive recognition for the part He plays, and to each we must accord the deference and veneration that is His due. (pp. 33, 34)**

Observe that Dr. Thiele perceived the Godhead as composed of "Persons" even as we are individually persons. It is over this point, that we can deduct from the Sabbath School Lesson "Study Guide" how the 1931 Statement about God was understood. In the third lesson was found this explanatory note:

**The word persons used in the title of today's lesson must be understood in a theological sense. If we equate human personality with God, we would say that three persons means three individuals. But then we would have three Gods, or tritheism. But historic Christianity has given to the word person, when used of God, a special meaning: a personal self-distinction, which gives distinctiveness in the Persons of the Godhead without destroying the concept of oneness. (p. 24)**

Thiele's understanding of the 1931 Statement which he expressed in his book as, "Three Personages of the Holy Triad," was seen as Tritheism and not in agreement with the Nicene Credal summation - "one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

## The 1980 Statement

The statement as voted at Dallas, Texas in 1980 is lengthy compared with all previous statements. Not only is there a general statement which embodies the Nicene Creed summary concept, but a paragraph is devoted to each of the "three co-eternal Persons," but "persons" used in a theological sense as noted above.

The general statement, captioned "The Trinity," reads:

**There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.**

This is a triune - three in one - concept of God, never before expressed officially in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. All previous Statements of Belief perceived of the Godhead as individual Persons.

To what is this Statement actually confessing? In a book prepared by the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC - Confessing the One Faith - with a subtitle, "An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)," it is stated:

**The Nicene Creed as a confession of faith belongs to the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church. In the Nicene Creed the individual joins all the baptized gathered in each and every place, now and throughout the ages, in the Church's proclamation of faith: "we believe in." The confession "we believe in" articulates not only the trust of the individuals in God's grace, but it also affirms the trust of the whole Church in God. There is a bond of communion among those who join together in making common confession of their faith. (p. 15)**

The Nicene Creed begins with "We believe in" in contrast with the Apostolic Creed, "I believe in." The individual who confesses, "I believe in," then unites in fellowship with those who confess, "we believe in." This is the step the Seventh-day Adventist Church took in 1980 in making the Nicene Creed a part of their Statement of Beliefs. When the curtains are pulled on the final drama on the stage of time, there will not be much difference between "the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church" and what is now called, "the holy Roman Catholic Church. The current "unity in diversity" theme now promoted on the basis of the Nicene Creed doctrine of the Trinity will tolerate very little "diversity." It will be "one" Church as

it is declared to be "one" God.

The Nicene Creed as written into the 1980 Statement declares, "There is one God," even as the 1872 and 1914 Statements of Belief also declared. What is the difference?

Interestingly, the WCC's Faith and Order Paper (#153) just referenced above explains how three can equal one. In discussing the second section of the Creed - "We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ" - is found this observation:

The most difficult and controversial expression in this section of the [Nicene] Creed is the homoousios - "of one being with the Father. The main point behind the use of this word was to exclude any idea that the Son was a different kind of reality from the Father, contingent and created. On the contrary, the Son, though dependent on the Father, is inseparable from the life of the Father: ... As later Church Fathers (e.g. Gregory of Nazianzus) were to put it, the word "God" means nothing other than the life which is actively shared by Father, Son and Spirit. (pp. 44-45)

On this point, the difference between all previous statements and the 1980 Statement on the subject of God is that the 1892, 1889-1914, and 1931 Statements contained this phrase describing God - "a personal, spiritual Being." The 1980 Statement omits this concept.

The current problem involving the neo-antiTrinitarianism being propagated today is twofold: their rejection of 1) The Eternal Deityship of the Word, and 2) The Holy Spirit as One of "the Heavenly Trio." In the light of the above "Explication" of the Nicene Creed, to follow "the truth as it is in Jesus" one cannot be a Trinitarian. The real answer is to find "the truth as it is in Jesus" - the emphasis being placed on "Jesus," as the God-man.

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## Two Suggested Statements of Belief

(Neither Trinitarian nor non-Trinitarian)

We believe in the oneness of God (Deut. 6:4) as manifest in the "counsel of peace" which was between the Two of Them (Zech. 6:13, Heb). That counsel defined the Father-Son relationship (Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:5), and outlined the conditions incumbent upon the Son so as to provide for the redemption of man. In the outworking of that plan, the Holy Spirit was manifest to make effective, in the lives of all who believe, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. In the oneness of God is manifest omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. From that oneness

flows to all created beings life, truth, love and grace.

We believe that Jesus Christ, who in His pre-existence was eternally and fully God (John 1:1-2), emptied Himself so as to become truly man (Phil 2:6-7). While retaining His divine Identity, He took upon Himself the fallen nature of man (Rom. 1:3), so as to condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3-4), thus becoming our Example, and to die a sacrifice for the redemption of those who accept him as their Substitute. Resurrected from the dead, declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4), He carried into highest Heaven a glorified humanity to be incorporated in Himself into the Godhead thus revealing God's purposes for the redeemed. In Christ, God and man remain eternally One.

## "Pioneers"?

In the present agitation fostered by the neo-antiTrinitarians in the community of Adventism, much is being made of what the "pioneers" taught on the subject. I have before me a booklet which contains "Quotes from Adventist Pioneers concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity" with the question asked - "Did They Believe in the Trinity?" By definition a "pioneer" is "a person or group that originates or helps open a new line of thought" (Websters Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). In reading the material compiled from various Adventist writers in the early decades of the Movement, I fail to find any "new line of thought." It is all anti-Trinitarian in emphasis, the religious thinking they brought with them into the Advent Movement. If the compilation had been on the sanctuary doctrine, a true pillar of our faith, then the term "pioneers" would have been appropriate. As it stands in the usage by the author of the booklet, it is deceptive.

Actually, the booklet is an attempt to justify the position held by these neo-antiTrinitarians so as to make it appear that they are in harmony with the earliest leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the doctrine of the Godhead. This compilation has glossed over certain positions held by some of these "pioneers" by omission. One leading voice in early Adventism was Uriah Smith. He taught in the first edition of Thoughts on Revelation, in commenting on 3:14, that the pre-existent Christ was "the first created being" (p. 59). This is not found in the booklet. Why? If this "pioneer" view were accepted, it would classify the neo-antiTrinitarians as Arians.

The booklet does quote James White as writing in 1852 of "the old trinitarian absurdity that Jesus Christ is the very and Eternal God" (p. 5, col. 1). Yet in 1876, in writing of the differences between Seventh-day Baptists and the Seventh-day Adventists, White would state that "S. D. Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the Trinitarians that we apprehend no trial [problem] here" (R&H,

Oct. 12, p. 116). This was omitted from the compilation. What is observable in the booklet is the change in thinking on the part of Uriah Smith who was not alone in holding that Christ was "the first created being." This belief was held by "many" early Adventists. One finds E. J. Waggoner openly challenging this teaching. He wrote of "an opinion that is honestly held by many... who through this opinion, do actually deny [Christ's] divinity. It is the idea that Christ is a created being." (See p. 28, col. 2) Waggoner gives his view:

There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father, but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning. (p. 29, col. 1)

By 1898, Uriah Smith had come around to the same view. See Booklet, p. 15, col. 2. This was practically a complete turn around from his original belief along with "many" others of the early Adventists. Thus by omissions, an important point is missed. The church's earliest "thought" leaders changed from their first position, to that adopted by the second generation of thinkers. (E. J. Waggoner was a second generation Adventist minister, his father being, J. H. Waggoner) Because of this change in position, White could justifiably write that "S.D. Adventists hold (the position on) the divinity of Christ" nearly with the Trinitarians.

The fact remains that so long as Christ is presumed as "begotten" at some point in the eternity of the past, just so long will the concept of God held by the neo-anti-Trinitarians reflect the Nicene Creed. The Creed reads - "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of God before all worlds... begotten, not made." This is exactly the step from Smith's first position, to E. J. Waggoner's formulation. The simple conclusion to be drawn is that the booklet does not give an accurate picture of what took place from the beginnings of Adventism to 1900. It is deceptive by omission and by an incorrect association of the data, the work of a novice.

One segment of the neo-antiTrinitarians appear to have latched on to the statements of A. T. Jones and W. W. Prescott, and proclaim that they have "new light." These declare that prior to Bethlehem, sometime in the remote past, Christ was "birthed." even as Abraham begat Isaac, which infers the involvement of a direct divine action. Jones had written that Jesus "came from heaven, God's first-born, to the earth and was born again." (Pioneers, op. cit., p. 6, col. 2) Prescott had worded the same thought a bit differently: "As Christ was twice born, once in eternity, the only begotten of the Father, and again here in the flesh...." (ibid., p. 2, col. 2).

It would be much simpler just to accept the prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-2, 14), and seek to understand the affect that the Word becoming flesh had on the Godhead. The Godhead paid a price for man's redemption that the human mind can but vaguely perceive. One could then

understand why Ellen G. White was inspired to write - "the Heavenly Trio." Add to this the "second Adam" motif for the enlightened heavenly viewpoint as to why the designation, "Son of God" was given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will see why Gabriel told the truth when He said that the One born to Mary "shall be called the Son of God."

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## Events of Interest

An official Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission has proposed that the world's Anglicans accept the papal authority of "the Bishop of Rome" even before the two traditions achieve full communion. It also declared that the Bishop of Rome - the Pope - has a specific ministry concerning the "discernment of truth," and calls this "a gift to be received by all the churches." (ENI, 99-0172, 21 May 1999)

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Vatican have reached agreement on an historic document which aims to resolve the theological controversy dating back to the 16th century split between Martin Luther and the papacy. The document will be signed in the German city of Augsburg on 31 October this year - 482 years to the day after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the town church in Wittenberg, an event widely reckoned to mark the start of the Reformation. Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Church Unity, said at the Press Conference June 11 announcing the coming of the signing of the document that Pope John Paul II had given his blessing to the signing of the joint declaration. Cassidy further stated that the joint declaration was "one of the great acquisitions of the modern ecumenical movement" and "not just of importance for the LWF and the Catholic Church, but for the whole ecumenical movement." (ENI, 99-0211, 16 June 1999)

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