

WHY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM IS NOT EVANGELICAL • PART 3

LifeAssuranceMinistries.org

Proclamation!

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS
SABBATARIANS
CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

JANUARY–MARCH 2011
VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1

The Promise that led us out

BEN AND DELINA MCPHAULL

Why Easter is a big deal

All about progressive sanctification

The tomb is empty

Former Adventist Conference best ever

What is integrity?



COLLEEN TINKER

You can be spiritually alive today

“What’s the difference between Adventism and a legalistic Baptist church?”

The question took me by surprise; I had not been out of Adventism many years, and it was the first time someone had asked me that sort of question. I was at a church women’s retreat where I had earlier given a talk on my journey out of Adventism, and my questioner was the wife of a Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot who had spent years overseas, sometimes serving Adventist missionaries.

“The Baptist church is built on orthodox Christian doctrines,” I replied; “Adventism is built on unbiblical doctrines.”

The reality that in Adventism Jesus neither completes the atonement nor bears the final responsibility for human sin explains why Easter is almost ignored within that organization.

In the years since I first grappled with that question, I have come to see that the unique teachings of Adventism lead to a single core that skews its entire theology. That core is buried in the investigative judgment doctrine, and it is this: Jesus did not complete the atonement on the cross, and Satan plays a role in its completion.

The Bible compared to Adventism

The Bible teaches that Jesus became sin for mankind (2 Cor. 5:21) and died as a propitiation for our sin (Rom. 3:26-27). He carried the guilt of human sin as our Substitute, thus giving us the right to be counted righteous through faith in Him.

Adventism teaches that Jesus’ death on the cross did not complete the atonement, that it only accomplished the transfer of human sin to the heavenly sanctuary where ultimately Satan will bear the guilt of human sin and cleanse heaven by carrying the guilt for sin into the lake of fire.

The atonement, however, is between God and humanity alone. Neither Satan nor any other angel plays any role in the process of salvation. Humanity is guilty of its own sin; no angel or demon is held responsible. The Lord Jesus—God the Son in human flesh—took full responsibility for carrying the guilt of our sin and also for paying its price.

The reality that in Adventism Jesus neither completes the atonement nor bears the final

responsibility for human sin explains why Easter is almost ignored within that organization. His death is merely one step in a process that may lead to salvation. His resurrection only promises eventual recreation of our bodies at His second coming.

Adventism, with its beliefs that humans have no immaterial spirit and that they must contribute their best efforts in order for Jesus to make up the deficit in their righteousness, fail to understand that Jesus’ resurrection is the source of our spiritual life. Because He broke death’s claim on us, we can be brought to spiritual life by His indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:10-11).

He is alive! And because He is alive, we have the right to become children of God (John 1:12). Easter is the most important holiday of the year; death could not hold Jesus! The Father accepted His sacrifice, and He destroyed the curse of death.

Satan plays no role at all in removing the curse of sin.

In this issue

In this issue we share the final installment of Dr. Louis Talbot’s 1957 article on why Adventists are not evangelical. Chris Lee examines why Easter is so important—and why Adventists do not generally celebrate it. Dale Ratzlaff explains the role of “progressive sanctification” and shows that we are justified entirely by the personal righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Ben and Delina McPhaul share the story of why they left Adventism, and Carolyn Macomber challenges readers to live with integrity. We also share a report of the 2011 Former Adventist Fellowship conference held at Trinity Church in Redlands, California, in February.

We pray that this Easter you will know Jesus and the power of His resurrection in your life. In Him, your past, present, and future sins are forgiven, and in Him you have passed from death to life.

Hallelujah! He is risen indeed! †

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Proclamation!

Vol. 12, Issue 1 • January February March 2011

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Copy Editor **Cristine Cole**

Design Editor **Richard Tinker**

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Web: **LifeAssuranceMinistries.org**
E-mail: **proclamation@gmail.com**

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The tomb is empty

Q: What is so special about Easter? Isn't it a pagan holiday that Christians have adopted?

A: I purposely used the term "Easter" in the question for a reason. Actually, while I much prefer the term "Resurrection Sunday", I want to emphasize that we cannot judge a holiday or a Christian celebration on the basis of its name.

Today, while the terms "Easter" and "Resurrection Sunday" are both used, many say "Easter" is a pagan term and thus ought to be abandoned. While it's true that the word "Easter" derives from the name of a pagan god, the word no longer carries a pagan meaning. When I was taking Greek, my teacher, the late Dr. Fred Veltman, warned us to be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking the Greek words could be properly defined by their "root meanings". Word "roots" may shed light on a term, but often the term derives a meaning of its own with the passing of time and the evolution of word use. For example, the Greek word for "servant" is said to have a root meaning of "under rower". However, it is sometimes used interchangeably with another word for servant often translated "deacon".

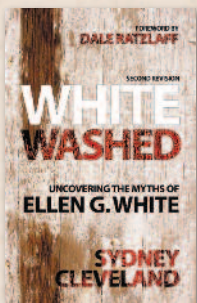
The point I am making is this: let us not be quick to judge people's worship on the basis of the names of the days they worship. Often people may be communicating the derived meaning of a name, not the root meaning. Some people go so far to say that if people worship on Sunday, they are worshipping the sun god. Well, they are no more worshipping the sun god than those who worship on Saturday are worshipping the Roman god of the harvest, Saturn.

Call it Resurrection Sunday or Easter—the tomb is empty! Without the resurrection, our preaching is useless, our faith is futile, we are still in our sins, our dead loved ones are lost, and we are to be pitied more than all men. However, Christ is raised! (YES!) Our sins

Without the resurrection, our preaching is useless, our faith is futile, we are still in our sins, our dead loved ones are lost and we are to be pitied more than all men.

are forgiven, we are children of God, we have eternal life, we have peace with God, we have the Holy Spirit, we are freed from the law, we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His Son. We are now qualified for our inheritance in light. Yes, we serve a Risen Savior!

Let us with joy unspeakable join Mary who worshiped at the feet of the Risen Lord on that first Resurrection Sunday! Spread the good news! The Lord is risen—yes, the Lord is risen indeed! †



Free book for Adventists

The newly revised printing of *White Washed* by former Adventist pastor, Sydney Cleveland, will be ready for distribution during April; however, you may request your copy now. We have received funding to give away over a thousand copies to individual members of the Seventh-day Adventist church who will read this powerful book. It has one new chapter entitled, "Do God's True Prophets Take Advice From the Dead?"

If you are a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church and wish to read this book on Ellen White, just go to the LAM Publications, LLC web site: www.Ratzlaf.com/page3.html. There, click on books and choose, "White Washed" free to SDA members." There is no cost except the normal shipping charge. If you are not an Adventist member, you may purchase it as usual. Simply click on "White Washed" and proceed to check out. The purchase edition of *White Washed* will not be on the website until we receive inventory during April.

Dale Ratzlaf, the founder of Life Assurance Ministries and *Proclamation!* magazine



Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaf have authored five books concerning Adventism: *Sabbath in Christ*—a volume that explains new covenant Sabbath rest, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism*—explores the unique doctrine of a pre-advent judgment that decides eternal destinies, *Truth About Adventist "Truth"*—a little book that's perfect to give to Christians that need to understand Adventism, *Truth Led Me Out*—in which Dale Ratzlaf tells his own story of following Jesus, no matter the cost, and *My Cup Overflows*—Carolyn's autobiography. Each of these books is available at www.Ratzlaf.com or by phoning 800-355-3090, or 520-836-9790.

When Ben and Delina McPhaull married, their vows included (Ben): I promise to guide, protect and provide for you, so together we can build a home that glorifies God, and (Delina): I promise to trust and follow you, as you follow God, so together we can build a home that glorifies Him. Admittedly, they had no idea what that really meant, nor did they ever imagine that their commitment would take them out of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Here's their story.

DELINA I grew up believing that accepting Ellen White was optional and Adventist beliefs could be supported using the Bible only. My parents, life-long educators, raised my siblings and me in a loving, stable, moral home where questions and discussions were always welcomed. I don't have any Adventist horror stories.

I went to public schools in Keene, Texas, where school officials routinely accommodated Adventist students in lunch menus and sports schedules. When I was baptized, I didn't know what it meant to be born again. I didn't know that salvation came through faith in Jesus, alone. I saw baptism as just another thing that a good girl was expected to do, and so I did it. Thinking the Adventist church was the true church, I wanted to join it officially.

It wasn't until I went to college that my worldview began to be challenged. At the University of Texas–Austin, I was around students who were serious about their faith in a way I'd never seen. Though I couldn't understand how they could trample on the fourth commandment, I saw that you could be a real Christian and not be Adventist.

After graduating, I moved to Washington, DC, and met Ben. We were cultural Adventists, believing what we'd always been taught without much thought. We weren't involved in church, and when we did go, we'd get there for the special music and sermon. Little did I know that Ben was running from a call to be a pastor.

BEN Even though my parents were not Adventist when I was born, my earliest memories are of growing up on the campus of Oakwood College (now University) while my dad was a theology student. I grew up listening to my dad preach and working the sound system, recording, duplicating and selling tapes during his evangelism series every year. Early on, Adventist evangelism and the Adventist message were embedded in my brain.

I graduated from Pine Forge Academy, the only Adventist black boarding academy in the country. Our headmaster

The Promise

BEN AND DELINA MCPHAULL



A photograph of a Black man with a beard, wearing a peach-colored short-sleeved button-down shirt and blue jeans, walking through a grassy field. He is smiling and looking to his left. The background features large trees and a clear sky. The text "that led us out" is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

that led us out

would tell us that we were special, important, unique, and head-and-shoulders above any other students in the nation. There was a sense of pride in being black Adventist youth. The school was often called “little Oakwood,” and in fact more than 90 percent of my graduating class enrolled at Oakwood, including me. The network of relationships that I developed followed me into adulthood and became a large part of my identity.

The subculture of Black Adventism defies all of the negative stereotypes of what it means to be black in America. Education is valued highly and expected. The emphasis on healthy living speaks directly to the health challenges that traditionally plague black people. It is not unusual to see a child born in poverty grow up to be a successful professional, distinguished in his field (think Ben Carson, world-renowned neurosurgeon and Barry Black, US Senate Chaplain). These heroes, along with the well-dressed, articulate, shiny-car driving professionals voted into leadership positions in local churches are the image of what it means to be a black Adventist. Black churches are full of role models—successful entrepreneurs, lawyers, professors, nurses and musicians. Adventist youth have a reputation of being “about something.” This is precisely how, with a glossy *Message* magazine in hand, the Seventh-day Adventist church is marketed in urban communities. Many attribute their “salvation” from poverty, drugs, or hopelessness to Adventism itself. When contrasted with the culture at large, there is no impetus to criticize or question. Black Adventists will debate music, having separate conferences, or women in pastoral leadership positions, but the very root of what Adventists believe is not debated or examined.

I was only at Oakwood for a year and a half before I left to work full-time. I moved to Washington, DC, where I met Delina, and soon after decided to go back to school to study to be an Adventist pastor. I'd felt God calling me to ministry for a long time but didn't really want to pursue it. No longer able to run from my calling, I quit my well-paid job and moved to Texas to finish my degree at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene.

DELINA I started thinking it would be a good idea to read the Bible for myself and started a Bible-in-a-year plan. When I began finding differences between what I knew of the Bible stories with what I was reading, I got a copy of *Patriarchs and Prophets*. I saw how much Ellen White added to the Bible stories—to the point of changing the facts and the message. It wasn't long before I ditched the Ellen White book but continued reading the Bible and loved it. It was the first time that God was truly real to me. Reading His Word took me to where a lifetime of church, family worship, and prayers had never taken me.

BEN At Southwestern, the professor in one of our religion classes showed *The Spirit Behind the Church*. That was the first time I was confronted with people who were anti-Adventist and anti-Ellen White. I dismissed them because I

Life is easier when you don't rock the boat, offend people, or risk having your name dragged through the mud. But I did not want to imply by my silence that I agreed with doctrines that were unbiblical; I couldn't pledge my allegiance to the doctrines before an ordination committee.

thought they were just disgruntled and bitter. The things they were saying couldn't be true.

Disappointed that I didn't get a job when I graduated, I was still really excited to go to the seminary at Andrews University. There I found professors that allowed us to dialogue and think for ourselves. I finally felt somewhat free to explore some of the questions I'd always had about Adventist theology. Was the Adventist church the remnant or part of the remnant? Was the Sabbath really the seal of God? What did it mean when Jesus said, "It is finished?" (If there is an investigative judgment, then it really isn't finished.)

One of my professors, before every class, would read Galatians 3:23-25. I don't remember him ever explaining it. Little did I know he was planting a seed that would grow to reveal the biblical doctrine of salvation and how it was in direct contradiction to Adventist belief.

DELINA While in Michigan some significant things happened in my love for Bible study. My sister introduced me to Beth Moore Bible studies, and a friend invited me to Bible Study Fellowship [BSF]. The Beth Moore studies ignited my love of the Word, and it became alive, beautiful, exciting, and relevant. BSF made the Bible accessible. I didn't have to buy a study or be guided; the Holy Spirit would teach directly through the Word. It began to change me, and I wondered why the term "Bible study" turned so many people off in my Adventist circles and why verse-by-verse study was unheard of in Adventist churches.

I'll never forget the night that Ben and I went for a walk around Andrews' campus. I was so blown away by what I'd been studying in Romans. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1; 10:9-10). People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life (Rom. 3:24-26). We are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law (Rom. 3:21-22).

"Well, Paul is hard to understand," my theologically-trained pastor-husband told me.

BEN In retrospect, there were some theological things that were hard to understand—because I was told they were hard to understand. Scripture is so clear to me now.

I left the Seminary with lingering questions but with hope and ambition for my pastoral career. I was hired in the Southern California Conference as an associate pastor. On the Sabbath I was introduced, I proudly shared with the congregation that I firmly believed in the ministry of Ellen White (and heard a resounding "Amen").

That first year in California, we attended a pastoral family retreat in Phoenix. During our stay there, Delina and I

stopped at the bookstore of a church that was near our hotel. As we browsed, we saw shelves with anti-Ellen White and anti-Adventist books in a section labeled "Cults". We were shocked! Back at our hotel, we promptly googled the church and discovered that the pastor, Mark Martin, was a former Adventist pastor.

DELINA We didn't set out to leave Adventism. Leave? For what? We were part of a community where we'd always felt loved and supported. Leaders regularly affirmed that Ben had a bright future in the denomination. We still thought we were part of a group who were just like other Christians, except that we kept Saturday as a Sabbath. I thought Adventism just had different, quirky interpretations. I didn't see it as wrong but began to think that maybe it just wasn't for me.

BEN The more I began to study and prepare for sermons, the less the obligatory Ellen White quotes appeared in my sermons. Simultaneously, I found a deep love for Christ and the Scriptures that I didn't know before.

DELINA Ben would go to the library to prepare his sermons. Without fail, he would return home energized and excited by what he'd discovered in the richness of the Word. Oftentimes, his zeal would be dampened with, "But I can't preach that," because it was something that was not in line with Adventist doctrines. "I just want to preach the Word," he would tell me.

Though we shared what we were learning, we never studied any doctrinal points together. I was never able to articulate the things I was learning in a way his pastor-brain would understand. But his own questions were mounting. God had him on his own journey.

Ironically, the fact that we were a pastoral family caused me to question the Sabbath. If keeping the Sabbath would determine my salvation, then we were in trouble. For a pastoral family, Saturdays are the days that are most taxing, most exhausting, least restful or rejuvenating.

I began thinking, the Sabbath has to be more than just a day. And slowly God showed me that it was. The Sabbath was a shadow pointing to Jesus! (Col. 2:16,17).

The day I finally got it, it was as if someone abruptly shut off the burner in my Sabbath hot-air balloon. I saw it slowly deflate and crumple to the ground. My pride in knowing the "Sabbath truth" and striving to keep it holy all my life, lay there in a heap. I'd reached the point of no return.

BEN I did not feel comfortable sharing that I was questioning Adventist doctrines with anyone. Here and there, I would ask pointed questions of pastors that I respected, and

they would usually brush me off or give me the answer I expected to hear. The fact was, I knew Adventist doctrines. I grew up hearing them preached week after week and night after night at evangelistic events. I studied the doctrines in school, college, and seminary. I can recite a doctrinal sermon in my sleep. One night, after attending an area-wide conference-sponsored evangelism event, I came home and told my wife that I was done. I called a friend who connected me with Mark Martin. He invited me to fly to Phoenix to spend the day talking, airing my questions and studying the Word. After the first meeting, I read Galatians over and over. I finally understood the meaning of the verses my seminary professor had read repeatedly years before. That day, I crossed the point of no return, but most importantly, I was born again.

DELINA We were finally both on the same page knowing that our days in Adventism were numbered, but neither of us was hearing God tell us, “Leave now!” In retrospect, we know God’s timing was perfect, but at the time, the wait was torture.

BEN For a year, every week we’d hear something that was blatantly unbiblical at church, or I heard other pastors talk about their special remnant mission at worker’s meetings. It was like nails on a chalkboard. I couldn’t ignore it, and I didn’t know how much more I could take. Finally the time came, and during a favorable employee evaluation, I handed my supervisor my resignation letter explaining that I no longer believed that Scripture supports:

- The Mission of the Church (3 Angels’ Messages) (Fundamental Belief (FB) #13)
- The SDA Church is the remnant church (FB #13)
- Investigative Judgment/Pre-Advent Judgment (FB #24)
- Ellen G. White is a messenger of God (FB #18)
- Sabbath is the seal of God (FB #20, GC p. 640)
- The Great Controversy worldview (FB #8)

When my pastoral colleagues found out I was resigning for doctrinal reasons, not one pastor came to me with open Bible in hand to show me that I was mistaken. What I heard was, “How will you support your family?” “Who’s got your ear?” “Those aren’t reasons to quit your job!” or “I don’t believe in that either. I just don’t preach it.” Only one person tried to address the points in my letter, but he used *The Clear Word* as his “scriptural” support.

My conference president offered a three-month paid sabbatical to study under an Adventist scholar of my choice

and get my questions answered. What many people didn’t understand was I wasn’t leaving to search for answers. I left because I’d searched and found that the Bible didn’t support what I’d believed all my life and what I was being paid to preach.

DELINA Leaving was stressful, emotionally, financially and relationally, but I can tell you example after example of how we’ve seen God’s faithful hand through it all. I mostly feared how relationships would change. And they have—some for the better, and some not.

Even if we’d wanted to stay for our own convenience, for the sake of our children, we could not have stayed. Knowing what we know, we could not intentionally expose them to false teaching in church, Sabbath School, Adventist Youth, Pathfinders, and Adventist “Christian education.”

BEN The temptation to stay was there, but my desire to minister with integrity was strong. I could have stayed to collect a paycheck, have a flexible schedule, and a respected job. Life is easier when you don’t rock the boat, offend people, or risk having your name dragged through the mud. But I did not want to imply by my silence that I agreed with doctrines that were unbiblical; I couldn’t pledge my allegiance to the doctrines before an ordination committee. At the same time there was a temptation to get all my ducks in a row first—money saved, a job lined up, a five-year plan in place—before doing what God was calling me to do. But those thoughts were conventional wisdom, not faith. I encourage everyone, especially pastors, to follow the Lord. Trust Him. He’s faithful.

DELINA My heart grieves for our friends who no longer have much use for God in their lives, who don’t believe in Jesus and think they’ve tried Christianity because they were raised Adventist. They judge what it means to be a Christ-follower by their experience in Adventism. I pray that they’ll give the Bible and Jesus a try.

I know that God has led us on this journey out of the Adventist church and into the Body of Christ. I look forward to the day when Ben gets up to preach again—this time with the freedom to preach the simple, true, and unadulterated Gospel. †

DEANNA JONES / COCORIAH PHOTO

Delina and Ben McPhaull met in 1999 and married in 2004. Delina is a writer and stay-at-home mom of their three children, Maxton (age 3), and twin girls Maxwelle and Maxine (age 1). In March, 2010, Ben resigned from pastoral ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist church and is founder of Quarterlife Ministries, which promotes biblical literacy among young adults. The McPhaull family worships at First Baptist Church of Burleson in Burleson, Texas. You can find links to their blogs at McPhaull.com.

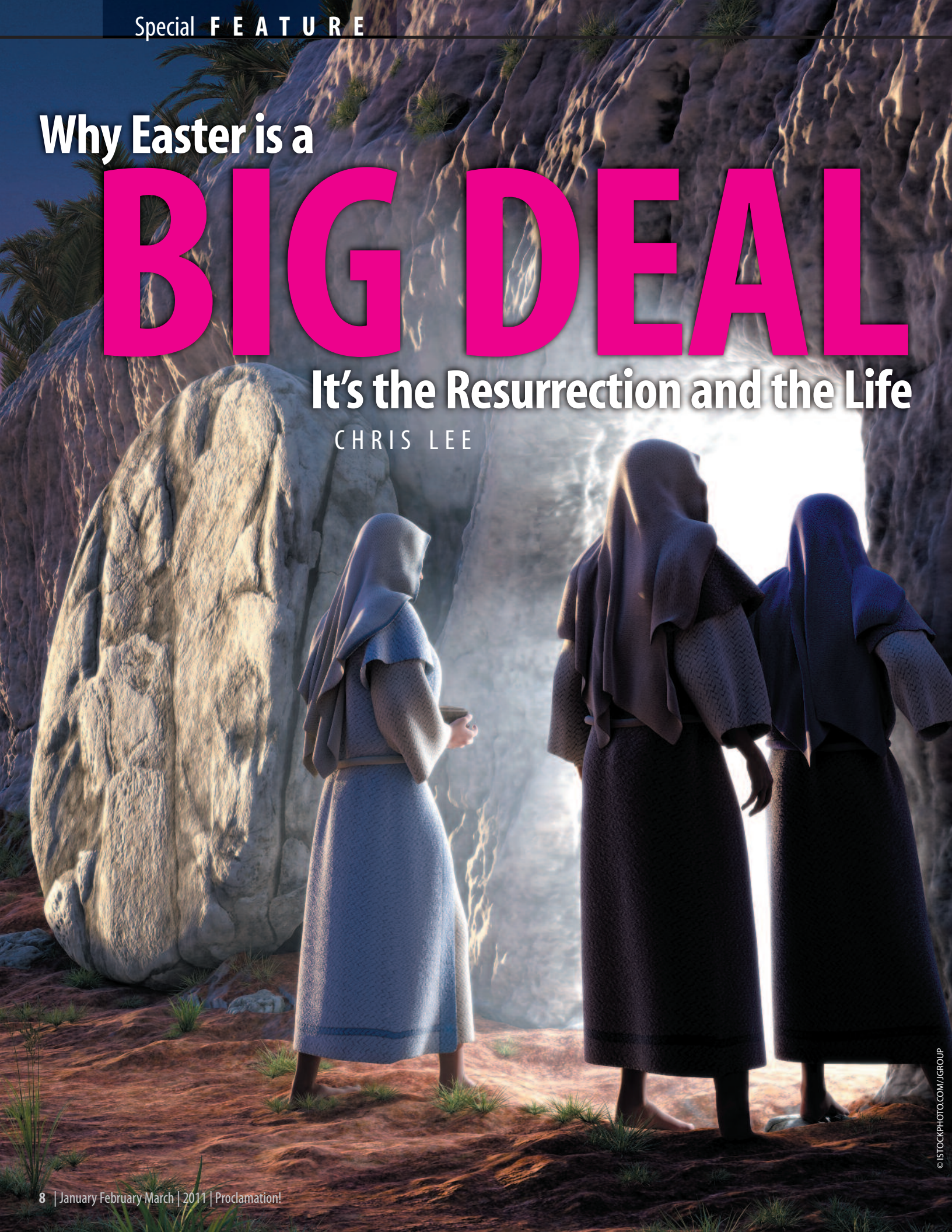


Why Easter is a

BIG DEAL

It's the Resurrection and the Life

CHRIS LEE



I woke up early that morning, my footie pajamas sinking into the shag carpet as I bailed out of bed and began methodically searching every spot in the house where a basket laden with goodies might be hidden. Finally, there it was—cleverly concealed inside the dryer. It was stuffed full of malted chocolate eggs in foil, brightly colored jellybeans, and one large chocolate bunny. Later we dyed hard-boiled eggs and then searched for them in our back yard after Mom hid them.



© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/WINTERLING

The hunt for candy and colored eggs was Easter to me as a child. The only other thing I knew about Easter was that I wasn't supposed to talk about it at church or with the other kids in our Seventh-day Adventist church school. My mother, who didn't grow up Adventist, shared with her kids some of the Easter traditions she had enjoyed as a child, but she preferred her fellow Adventists not know these secrets. I remember asking why we couldn't talk about Easter and was told that most of our friends didn't celebrate it because it was a pagan holiday. I asked why our family celebrated Easter if it was pagan. My mom told me that she thought it was alright to have some fun with bunnies, eggs, and jellybeans as long as we realized that the Easter Bunny was make-believe, and we were just playing a game, kind of like we did at Christmas when we would pretend that Santa Claus was coming. I recall no mention of Jesus or His resurrection.

As the years went by, it became more acceptable to engage in some of the "secular" activities surrounding Easter. More and more of my friends reported getting candy or participating in neighborhood egg hunts or similar celebrations. However, throughout my childhood and teen years, I never heard the holiday acknowledged in church. As a college student attending a couple of the more progressive Adventist college churches, I began to hear an occasional mention of Easter from the pulpit, usually as a passing reference to what others in the community would be doing that weekend. Often the reference was used to highlight the fact that we instead chose to honor Christ by honoring the Sabbath, just as He did by resting in the grave on the seventh day. Sometimes mention of the resurrection might be thrown into a sermon somewhere as well, but I don't remember ever hearing about it without it being linked back to the seventh-day Sabbath in some convoluted way.

Was my experience typical? Based on conversations over time with a large number of former and current Adventist contacts across the country, I believe that my experience is common to many Adventists and certainly cannot be classified as

unique. I'm sure some Adventists would say that I'm dead wrong, that my experience was not really representative of Adventism. To be sure, I grew up in the Midwest where historic Adventist practices are more prominent than on the coasts. I have no doubt that there are Adventist families who have always openly engaged in Easter egg hunts. I have even heard of one Adventist church in Southern California and one in Minnesota that went so far as to hold Easter Sunday services as evangelistic outreaches to their communities. Of course, the object was to get people to come back the next Sabbath. Moreover, in the case of the Minnesota congregation, there was a significant backlash from Adventist leadership for resorting to such unorthodox technique.

Nevertheless, despite the few examples that could be cited of some Adventists "celebrating" Easter, the bottom line is that a person would have a very difficult time finding an Adventist church with its doors open on Easter morning, nor would one find many families gathering together to engage in a deeply spiritual celebration of the risen Lord. If the day is acknowledged at all, it is usually in a primarily secular way. At best, Easter is considered a minor holiday. Case in point, the Adventist college in the city where I live routinely schedules its alumni reunion weekend to coincide with Easter weekend. Various events are scheduled Thursday through Saturday night with Sunday being the day most travel back home. On a holiday when Christians all over the globe are gathering to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus through corporate worship followed by big feasts with extended family, graduates of Union College are mostly in their cars or on planes giving no thought to corporate worship or Easter dinner. Easter is just not a very big deal in Adventism.

Why don't Adventists celebrate Easter?

I am often asked why Adventists don't typically celebrate Easter. My mother's response about pagan

underpinnings doesn't fully answer the question. There does appear to be a certain amount of truth to the Adventist claim that some of the traditions associated with Easter, such as the time of year, certain symbols, and possibly even the name have roots in pagan celebrations. However, something similar could be said of Christmas which is now embraced by nearly all modern Adventists (even though that was not the case with early Adventists). If you ask modern Adventists why it is okay to celebrate Christmas, I think they would correctly say that regardless of some distant link to a pagan celebration or symbols, what Christians celebrate today is the birth of Jesus, so the symbols are given their meaning in this biblical context. It doesn't much matter where the date came from or why Christmas trees are used if Jesus and His birth are now the objects of the day and the symbols. Simply put, in most modern Adventists' experiences, Christianity has triumphed over paganism where Christmas is concerned. So why isn't the same type of logic applied to Easter? I believe the full answer is complex and deeply rooted in core Adventist theology.

Adventist theology tends to under-emphasize, or even negate, the significance of the resurrection. I recall working with an Adventist friend whom we'll call "Doug". I had put an album by a Christian group on the CD player, prompting Doug to ask who the artists were.

When I answered, "Third Day", he responded with, "What's that supposed to mean?" I explained that the group's name was a reference to Jesus rising on the "third day" just as He promised. I thought that would be explanation enough, but Doug immediately came back with, "Why would you want to name your group that?"

I was a bit stunned and stammered something about the resurrection of Jesus being a central event in Christian belief. This prompted Doug to query, "Why? Wouldn't we still be just as saved without it?"

Doug's question was a very good one, one for which I didn't immediately have a reply. This drove me to the Scriptures to find an answer for Doug and myself. This study helped me begin to understand the stark differences in the message of Adventism versus the message of the apostles. So before diving into SDA theology, let's first take a brief survey of just a little bit of what the Bible has to say about the importance of the resurrection of Christ and how it is directly linked to our assurance of salvation. Jesus Himself makes it clear that our hope of resurrection and life is in Him because He Himself is the resurrection and the life. No resurrected Jesus, no eternal life.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn. 11:25-26).

As the fledgling church was being formed, the apostles saw the resurrection as so central to their message that a replacement for Judas was required to be an eyewitness to the resurrected Lord.

"Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from

us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22).

The rest of the book of Acts is replete with repeated testimonies to the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave. It was a constant and central part of the gospel message that transformed the Roman world. The same message is repeated throughout the epistles. In Romans, the apostle Paul makes it clear that we are united with Christ in both His death and His resurrection. It is through our identity in the resurrected Christ that we have our assurance of salvation and eternal life.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5).

The resurrection event is so important that it is part of a saving confession of faith. Some liberal groups which assume the label "Christian" deny a literal resurrection. There is no salvation in such a false belief system. In his letter to the Roman church, Paul makes it clear that belief in a resurrected Lord defines true saving faith.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Rom. 10:9-10).

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul includes the third-day resurrection as an essential part of the gospel which saves us and as a matter of first importance.

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Throughout the rest of the chapter Paul goes on to describe in great depth the importance of the resurrection and the reality that without the resurrection we are still dead in our sins and have no hope. Especially notable is verse 22 which states that death came through Adam, but resurrection and life are in Christ.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

In Philippians we are told that there is power in the resurrection of Christ, and we again see that our identity and hope are in both Christ's death and His resurrection.

...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:10-11).

The Apostle Paul is certainly not alone in proclaiming the resurrection as being directly tied to our sure hope. Peter preaches a very similar message and even emphasizes the connection between the saving new birth, which all the saved experience, and Jesus' resurrection.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3).

At this point I feel I need to pause and acknowledge the fact that many Adventists will strenuously object to the suggestion that the Adventist belief system is weak on resurrection theology. They will no doubt vigorously state that they agree with all the points above and insist that my friend Doug is an aberration who is not representative of well-educated Adventists. Certainly it's true that Adventism does teach a literal resurrection and that the points above are not necessarily directly contrary to Adventist teaching. However, the question at hand is not one of whether or not the resurrection is believed to be true—it is—but a question of why this event is not emphasized and celebrated by Adventists to the same degree it was by the apostles and is by nearly all believers who have come after them. If Adventism truly saw the resurrection as the defining event in Christianity, then Adventists would celebrate and preach that event to the same degree evangelical Christians do. This is precisely where the weakness of Adventist resurrection theology is exposed. While the resurrection is what defined the message of the Apostles and still defines evangelical Christianity, it is not what defines the message of Adventism.

In researching the theology of Seventh-day Adventism, it is important to consult primary, authoritative Adventist sources. The official Seventh-day Adventist Church website, as well as numerous other published Adventist sources, list the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of Adventism. To refer to these beliefs as “fundamental” is to say that they support the existence of, determine the essential structure of, and are of central importance to the organization's belief system (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). In other words, without any one of these fundamentals, the belief system would represent something other than Seventh-day Adventism.

Adventist Fundamental Belief #13 deals with the remnant church and its mission of proclaiming what is referred to as “The Three Angels' Messages”. In order to understand fully these unique Adventist messages we must also turn to another Fundamental Belief. Adventist Fundamental Belief #18 teaches that the writings of Ellen G. White are considered by the organization to be a prophetic, inspired, “...a continuing and authoritative source of truth...”. There is no more authoritative source to which we can go for the Adventist understanding of the Three

Angels' Messages. Ellen White has much to say on this topic. Her “authoritative” views will be synthesized and summarized here, but for those wishing to more deeply research White's teachings on this topic, the *Testimonies for the Church*, volumes 6-8 as well as *The Great Controversy* are primary references.

Adventism sees itself as a movement comprising the remnant people of God who have been called in the last days to proclaim the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14:6-12. The first angel proclaims the everlasting gospel which, according to Adventist belief, includes the concept of a heavenly investigative judgment which supposedly began in 1844. The second angel's message is a call to depart “Babylon” which is interpreted as Roman Catholicism and all the Protestant churches (the daughters of Babylon) which have been influenced by Catholicism. The influence of Roman Catholicism within Protestantism is believed to be demonstrated primarily by the fact that most Protestant churches meet for worship on Sunday. This brings us to the third angel's message which is believed to be a warning against worshipping on Sunday. Adventists teach that those who worship on the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) will receive the seal of God while those who worship on Sunday will eventually receive the mark of the beast and be lost.

The first angel

Let us more closely examine each part of the Adventist message beginning with the first angel. The first angel carries the idea of a “gospel” defined by an investigative judgment. In Adventist belief Jesus is pictured as returning to heaven after His resurrection to minister as a priest in a sanctuary building with two compartments. Jesus is believed to have initially returned to the lesser compartment and did not enter the most holy place until the year 1844 A.D. The resurrection was not the culmination of a finished work, but merely the event that prepared the way for a new phase of work referred to in Adventist literature as “the investigative judgment”, “pre-advent judgment”, “sanctuary ministry”, or other related titles. We will use the most oft-used term, “investigative judgment” (IJ). Because this is the founding doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, it is necessary to understand something of this essential

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.



belief in order to understand how it informs Adventist theology, including the theology of the resurrection.

In researching the doctrine that gave birth to Adventism, we must again consult primary, authoritative Adventist sources. Fundamental Belief #24 sets forth the investigative judgment (IJ) doctrine as one of the 28 beliefs which are essential to Adventism. In order to better understand the details of this doctrine, we will turn to that authoritative source of Adventist truth, Ellen White (Fundamental #18). One of White's most revered and oft-quoted books is *The Great Controversy*, and it is the chapter entitled "The Investigative Judgment" (in older editions) or "Facing Life's Record" (in newer editions) that most thoroughly outlines the authoritative teaching on the IJ. If we examine this chapter by asking the journalistic "five W's and an H", we learn the following about the Adventist understanding of Jesus' supposed work in the investigative judgment:

Q: When is the IJ?

A: It began in 1844 and is going on today (p. 480).

Q: Where does the IJ take place?

A: In heaven in "the holy of holies" (p. 480).

Q: Why is an IJ needed?

A #1: To make an atonement [apparently the atonement was not completed at the cross] (p. 480).

A #2: To determine who is entitled to the benefits of atonement (p. 480).

Q: Who is judged?

A: Believers only, not unbelievers (p. 480).

Q: What is judged?

A: Every believer's work down to the smallest detail, even wasted moments (p. 482).

Q: How are people judged?

A: According to how well believers' characters and lives meet the standard of the Law (p. 482).

Q: Why are works judged?

A #1: To determine which believers are accounted worthy of eternal life (p. 482).

A #2: To reject believers who have any unconfessed sins still on the books, to blot those believers out of the book of life, and to erase any good deeds those believers had (p. 483).

A #3: To determine the weight of each work, good or bad, in deciding the believer's destiny for weal or woe, counting against the believer even a completely forgotten sin which he had not specifically confessed (p. 486, 487).

Q: What should believers do, given that they are on probation, under judgment, and the weight of their works will decide their destiny?

A: Afflict their souls before God (p. 490).

The investigative judgment is not the gospel. It's not good news. Rather, it's an anti-gospel. If a person embraces this doctrine, there is no way one can know if one is saved or not until such time as Jesus comes to his or her name in this supposed judgment and judges his works to see if he or she is entitled and worthy. In this anti-gospel, Jesus' resurrection is the culmination of nothing, settles nothing, and assures us of nothing. Why celebrate an event of so little import?

The second and third angels

We will now turn our attention to the second message that is believed to define the remnant people of God. The second angel is thought to call Christians out of "Sunday-keeping" churches, referred to as "Babylon". Given the importance of this message, it can easily be seen why much of Adventist evangelism is focused on proselytizing Christians and converting them to Adventism by means of "Revelation Seminars" held all around the country under various names. The key "truth" used for proselytizing Christians is the seventh-day Sabbath.

Adventists believe the third angel's message is closely related to the second. The third angel warns that those who worship on Sunday will one day receive the mark of the beast. This fact explains why it would be very difficult theologically for Adventists to celebrate Easter. Imagine running countless "Revelation Seminar" evangelism series teaching that worshiping on Sunday is the mark of the beast, then showing up on Resurrection Sunday to worship!

In essence, the defining message of Adventism is that the eternal destiny of Christians is determined on the basis of their day of worship. They will be "sealed" or "marked" based on whether they worship on Saturday or Sunday. Given this theological stance, Adventists are forced to de-emphasize a resurrection that occurred on a Sunday that settled nothing. Rather than celebrating the day Jesus rose from the grave as He promised, Adventists instead assert that He only stayed in the grave until Sunday in order to honor the Sabbath and to provide an example for us by resting on Saturday. This clearly moves the basis of salvation away from trusting in the righteousness that is in Christ alone, to trusting the perceived, personal righteousness of worshiping on the perceived right day—a subtle, but blatant perversion of the gospel. Not only this, but according to Ellen White (*Spirit of Prophecy* vol. 3, p. 203-204), not only did Jesus rest on the Sabbath, but everything that Jesus was stayed in the tomb in an unconscious state, including His deity!

The Adventist Jesus

These Adventist beliefs raise another issue in Adventist theology. The Jesus of Adventism is different in notable ways from the Jesus of Christianity. The Jesus Ellen White describes is not consistent with the God who keeps Israel who will neither slumber nor sleep (Ps. 121:4) and in whom all things hold together (Col. 1:17). Adventists do not believe the spirit is anything more than breath which is exhaled at death, so they are forced to say that Jesus was unconscious, essentially non-existent, in both His humanity and His deity, while in the tomb. In Adventism, Jesus is not the complete fulfillment of all the old covenant shadows, but is instead Himself subject to the shadow of the Sabbath. The Jesus of Adventism is not primarily our substitute, but is instead primarily our example. According to Adventist interpretation, in the many

“Sabbath conflicts” with the Pharisees in the Gospels, Jesus is not declaring Himself to be greater than the shadow of the Sabbath, but is instead attempting to reform corruptions in Sabbath-keeping and to provide an example to us of how best to keep the Sabbath. In Adventist belief, the resurrected Jesus did not return to the place of greatest honor, glory, and holiness, nor was His work finished. The bottom line is that the Jesus of Adventism is not the Resurrection and the Life, but the judge who examines our works to see who is accounted worthy of eternal life.

Because of these beliefs, Adventists do not tend to see their identity and destiny as being firmly and permanently established in Jesus’ vicarious life, death, and resurrection. Many Adventists who truly understand and embrace their belief system and the authoritative teachings of Ellen White, believe that Jesus had no advantage over us, was born with a sin nature, and could have failed in His mission by falling into sin. They see Jesus’ life as an example proving that perfection of character is attainable through personal effort and the assistance of God. Adventists see Jesus’ death as an incomplete atonement that has purchased a period of probation after which they will have to stand before a holy God, without a mediator, with a purified character attained by grace plus “their own diligent effort” (*Great Controversy* p. 425). Adventists see eventual eternal life as something for which they wish, attainable only if they can pass the investigative judgment and be found to be entitled to the benefits of atonement. There can be no real certainty about one’s destiny, so there is very little to celebrate in the resurrection of Jesus. It bears repeating that in Adventist theology Jesus’ resurrection settled nothing, except perhaps to demonstrate that such an achievement is theoretically possible.

The biblical Jesus

Oh, how different is the biblical Jesus and the biblical gospel! 1 Peter 3 pictures the resurrected Jesus Christ “at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.” Hebrews chapters 1, 10, and 12 expand this “right hand” imagery to picture Jesus as having “sat down” upon His ascension to heaven. All this imagery describes Jesus rising to return to the place of greatest power, honor, glory and holiness, His work finished and complete once for all. In biblical theology, the resurrection is the culmination of Jesus’ substitutionary work on our behalf. Jesus lived in perfect holiness and credited His incomparable righteousness to our account as if it were our own. Jesus took our sins upon Himself and bore the righteous wrath of God against our sin in His person, completely paying the penalty of our sin as a propitiation. Jesus then rose from the dead, returning to heaven so that those who are in Him are even now raised up with Him, seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6) assuring our place with Him eternally. Jesus is able to save us forever because He always lives as our intercessor (Heb. 7:25). It is the resurrection that testifies to and authenticates Christ’s complete

...the heart of Easter is a celebration that lasts the whole year through. Each day becomes a celebration of the living Lord Jesus and who I am in Him.

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work (Rom. 4:25). It is in the resurrection that we have our assurance and sure hope. The resurrection was at the very core of the gospel message because it witnessed to Jesus’ work being real, effective, complete, and worthy of all faith.

Since leaving Adventism I have endeavored to be conformed to a biblical worldview. The more time I spend in the Word, the more I am impressed with how central the resurrection is to the gospel. Without the resurrection there is no good news. It is an event worth celebrating! With this conviction I have found that Easter has become a spiritual high point for my family and me. It is a time we greatly anticipate. We eagerly look forward to the joyous and exuberant worship we will share with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We look forward to the family feast we will share together in celebration of the One who has granted us access to the King’s table. Jesus has become the focal point of the celebration while bunnies, eggs, and jellybeans have faded away into insignificance. It matters not at all what dates or traditions may have been celebrated in the distant past. We celebrate our Risen Lord and our place in Him. The focus of our worship gives Easter its significance.

As meaningful as Easter has become for me, the heart of Easter is a celebration that lasts the whole year through. Each day becomes a celebration of the living Lord Jesus and who I am in Him. I am even now seated with Him in heavenly places, and that is all the assurance and significance I will ever require in life. Each weekly “Third Day” has become a corporate celebration of the risen Lord who has adopted us into the family of God and made us brothers and sisters in Christ. That’s all the identity I will ever require, and it will be my identity throughout eternity. That’s worth celebrating, today, everyday, and in a special way on the day that has come to represent the reason our hope is founded and sure. It is my sincere hope that this Easter Sunday, you will join your brothers and sisters in Christ in a joyful corporate celebration of the culmination of Jesus’ victory over the power of sin, death, and the grave.

It really is good news! It really is a big deal! Jesus is the resurrection and the life. †

Chris Lee lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with his wife, Carmen, and daughters, Ashlyn and Alyssa. The family attends Lincoln Berean Church where Chris is a LifeGroup leader and serves as a resource on Adventism. He regularly works with questioning and transitioning Adventists as well as concerned evangelicals. Chris can be reached by e-mail at ambulator@gmail.com.



Why Seventh-day Adver

Part 3

LOUIS T. TALBOT, CHANCELLOR
BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES

Reprinted from *The Kings Business*, May, 1957



This installment concludes our publishing of the three-part series of articles written by Louis Talbot, then the chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola University), in *The King's Business* in 1957. This series was a direct response to Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse's articles in *Eternity* magazine in 1956 in which he announced that Seventh-day Adventists were evangelical based on the conferences with Walter Martin and representatives of the Adventist Church.

In view of the current controversy occasioned by the recent defense of Seventh-day Adventism by *Eternity* magazine, I have been endeavoring to put before the readers of *The King's Business* a few of the reasons why I believe that this sect is not evangelical.

Only lack of space has prevented the consideration of more than eight erroneous teachings of Seventh-day Adventism, although it is my opinion that it contains many additional unscriptural views. In his excellent booklet entitled, *Why You Should Not Be a Seventh-day Adventist*, Rev. E. B. Jones, a former missionary of that sect in India, has presented 40 Bible-supported reasons for rejecting its teachings. So in three brief articles, I am barely "scratching the surface" of this subject. However, in spite of the necessarily compressed nature of this series, I trust that the eyes of some may be opened to see how infinitely remote from being evangelical Seventh-day Adventism actually is.

Dr. M. R. DeHaan, distinguished teacher of the Radio Bible class of Grand Rapids, declared: "Modern-day Seventh-day Adventism contains *some* truth, but it is not *the* truth. The fact that their errors are covered with a veneer of truth makes it all the more deceptive, subtle and dangerous. What little truth the Seventh-day Adventists teach is cleverly used as a disguise to cover up the many errors in their system. The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a history of unbroken deception."¹

I concur with Dr. DeHaan in these views. Consequently, I am emphatically opposed to the recent attempt of editors of *Eternity* to put pressure upon evangelicals to approve this sect and to receive its members into full fellowship with Bible-believing churches. Whatever motive prompted these writers to approach

the top leaders of Seventh-day Adventism, I do not know; God alone knows the hearts of men. But I do know that their action has brought confusion and harm to the church of Christ and hindered those endeavoring to lead their loved ones and friends out of bondage into the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. I should not wish to answer to God for this excursion in heresy. To my mind, it is nothing short of treason to the gospel cause, a desertion to the side of the enemy which has left aghast many of the children of God.

I have in my files a letter received from one of the most honored evangelicals in this country, who writes: "This [*Eternity* espousal of Seventh-day Adventism] is probably the greatest shock I have received in my 35 years of ministry. I cannot conceive of any Bible-taught believers going overboard and not detecting the subtle deception which has been characteristic of the Seventh-day Adventist movement ever since its inception. One ought to know by this time that all of their Adventist leaders' talks are nothing but the common practice of baiting the hook with pure truth, and then after they [the unwary] are hooked, dumping them into the creel of their numerous errors and vagaries. Surely these are the last days and it makes us tremble and cry unto God to keep us steady and give us a spirit of discernment that we too may not be deceived. Until I have seen a flat, outright, unquestionable repudiation of the many false doctrines of Adventism, and issued officially by the denomination itself, I shall not believe one word of their pious talk."

This is my view as well. We can only pray that Satan, as he frequently does, may overstep himself in this instance. Let us ask God that all of this controversy and accompanying publicity may be used to draw the attention of believers to the dangers of this

ntism is not evangelical

sect and to put them on the alert. This stimulus to the propagandizers and proselyters is responsible for new penetration into churches, young people's organizations and mission fields where, as always, Seventh-day Adventism is working havoc.

This sect has many faces. One of its most attractive is that of the Voice of Prophecy radio broadcast which operated for years without identification of any kind and, since no mention was ever made by its sponsors of the broadcast's underlying heresies, was often mistaken for an evangelical program. Had the Seventh-day Adventist teachings of the sanctuary, investigative judgment, Sabbath-keeping, annihilation, soul sleep and their Christ-defaming scapegoat-Satan error, been propagated, this artful radio broadcast never would have built up its vast listening audience.

To illustrate how misleading this program is, the other day I was listening to it and the speaker in bland tones referred to "the blood that covers all our sins." I wondered how many listeners were aware that Seventh-day Adventists have no assurance whatever that their sins are washed away when they take upon themselves the name of Christ. They cannot be certain they are saved until the so-called "investigative judgment" in the supposed "sanctuary" is completed.

In this regard Mrs. White declared: "It is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated....At the time appointed for the judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 485, 486). She also wrote: "Those who accept the Savior, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or feel that they are saved. This is misleading....Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 155). So that back of the lovely phrases piously used by the Voice of Prophecy speaker lie these ugly heresies, and this alluring "front" is but a trap for the untaught.

Heresies covered in previous articles

In the [first] issue we considered briefly the Seventh-day Adventist teaching that Christ, our holy Savior, was born with a "sinful" nature—a nature which, in the blasphemous language employed by a former writer of an official Seventh-day Adventist publication, *The Signs of the Times*, was defiled by "inherited meanness," and that "bad blood" flowed in His veins!

The Scriptures teach that the humanity of Christ was as spotless as His deity. Whether in heaven or on earth, there was no change in His nature; He was from eternity to eternity, "...holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). He bore

our sins "in his own body on the tree," not in His nature. Dr. I. M. Haldeman² rightly declared: "He [Christ] was begotten of God from the seed of the woman, by and through the Holy Ghost. That which was begotten was not a person but a nature—a human nature. This human nature was holy; Scripture calls it that holy thing. It was the holiness produced by and out of God. Since its quality was the holiness of God, there was no sin in it, and no possible tendency to sin. This holy, sinless human nature was indissolubly joined to the eternal personality of the Son." The Seventh-day Adventists have dragged the Lord Jesus Christ down to the level of unregenerate man in their denial of the impeccability of this Holy One.

In the [last] issue we attempted to explain the fantastic, man-devised, Satanically-inspired Seventh-day Adventist teachings of the sanctuary, investigative judgment, unfinished atonement and the scapegoat-Satan error. We allowed the Seventh-day Adventist authors to state these gospel-conflicting views which came into being as an emergency measure to cover the embarrassment suffered by the sect's founders when the prediction of William Miller, Adventists' spiritual progenitor, that Christ would return in 1844 failed of fulfillment. Since there are no Scriptures to support these doctrines, they must be repudiated by anyone who relies upon God's Word and who calls himself evangelical. The editors of *Eternity* themselves reject these views but defend those who teach them! I consider this position untenable and inconsistent.

The Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath

Now we come to a consideration of the favorite—or at least, the most zealously advocated—teaching of the Seventh-day Adventists. I refer to "the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath." I call it that because it certainly is not a New Testament or Christian doctrine. In Seventh-day Adventism this so-called "truth" ranks in importance second only to its sanctuary teaching and is the very heart of that legalistic system.

Dr. J. B. Rowell wisely observes: "It is not likely that many Seventh-day Adventists know all the steps in the strange development of this Seventh-day Adventist doctrine, nor how many confessed mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture were made. However, it is well that they should know that it was their unscriptural teaching regarding the heavenly sanctuary, and Satan being the sin-bearer, which led to the emphasis on the Sabbath. I quote directly from their standard work *The Great Controversy*....'In the very bosom of the Decalogue is the fourth commandment, as it was first proclaimed: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"....None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the Law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the Law in the ark in heaven: and that an acceptance of the truth concern-

ing the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God's Law, and obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment....The work of judgment which began in 1844 must continue until the cases of all are decided. *In order to be prepared for judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God* (pp. 435, 435—italics mine). The Seventh-day Adventists, by their legalistic teachings regarding the Law and the Sabbath, practically deny the doctrine of salvation by the free gift of God, and go in direct opposition to the Epistle to the Galatians.”³

Where is the Emphasis?

Early this year I was conducting meetings in the Central Presbyterian Church of St. Petersburg, Fla., when to my surprise, upon opening the local newspaper one morning I was greeted with a half-page advertisement appearing in the section reserved for church announcements for the forthcoming Sunday. In a condensed form we are reproducing that ad [below].

Immediately I cut out one of these advertisements and sent it to the editors of *Eternity* with the following comments, in substance, if not in these exact words:

“The enclosed announcement appeared in the St. Petersburg paper this morning. You contend that the Seventh-day Adventists believe in the deity of Christ and other truths of the Word, but it is very evident from the enclosed that this is not where their emphasis is. It is upon the keeping of the Sabbath day.

“Please note 1) The claim that the Seventh-day Adventists have turned one million Christians from worshiping on the first

day of the week to the seventh day. They have reason to boast, for this is the objective of their message. 2) This meeting was not held on the seventh day, but on Sunday in order to catch untaught Baptists, Presbyterians and those of other denominations. 3) It is sponsored by ‘Adventist churches’. Where is the Seventh-day designation? You and I are both ‘Adventists’ if by that is meant belief in the second coming of Christ. A number of good, sound ‘Advent’ magazines come to my desk but they are not Seventh-day Adventist. This too is misleading. If the million Sabbath-keepers increase to two million, the Seventh-day Adventists will be greatly in your debt.”

I received no reply.

The pastor of the church in which I was ministering sent a stenographer to this widely-publicized service and she took down the message verbatim. It is an understatement to remark that the report was most enlightening! One of the things that struck me most was the way in which the Seventh-day Adventist “evangelist” introduced the subject. Said he: “This evening we shall take into consideration why it is that most of the Christian people of the world are keeping Sunday. In the language of Deuteronomy 30:19: ‘I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.’ Friends, it is a life and death matter we have before us this evening, because it deals with one of the Ten Commandments by which we shall be judged.”

This “life and death matter”—the Adventists’ belief as universally held by them that Sabbath-keeping is essential to salvation—was not the question of receiving or rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior, but of making a decision with regard to one’s observance of the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath! I understand that this kind of meeting is by no means an isolated case, but it came to my personal attention as an illustration of the emphasis upon law and Sabbath-keeping as being vital to the salvation of the soul, which characterizes Seventh-day Adventism all the time, everywhere and without which there would be no Seventh-day Adventism at all.

Since I have been writing these articles, my mail has been flooded with Seventh-day Adventist literature. In one day I picked up from my desk a handful of pamphlets bearing these titles: *Has the Sabbath Been Lost? The Blessing is the Sabbath, The Sabbath Man Made, Is the Sabbath Vital?, The Sabbath Christ Made, Breaking One Means Breaking Ten, How Sunday-Keeping Started, Remember the Sabbath Day, and God’s Sabbath-Keeping Church Today*. One and all of these publications are of Seventh-day Adventist origin. Do you wonder, friends, that I have concluded that the Seventh-day Adventists’ regard for the Jewish Sabbath virtually amounts to the worship of a day instead of a Person? Never once in all the Scriptures did the Lord Jesus Christ command the observance of a day. There is, however, a plain and most important commandment given to the Christians in the New Testament. It is found in 1 John 3:23 and it has no reference to the seventh day or to any day. It is written: “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

The Most Unusual Church Service Ever Held in
St. Petersburg

TRIAL BY JURY

**SATURDAY OR SUNDAY . . . which is the Lord's
day for Christians?**

**Defense Attorney will give 19 reasons for keeping Sunday
[Evangelist] will speak for Saturday**

**Why Have More Than A Million Modern
Christians Turned From Sunday To Saturday?
Does It Make Any Difference? Will You Be Lost
If You Are Keeping The Wrong Day? Who Is
Right? The JURY made up from different
denominations will decide the case — JOIN
THE CROWDS SUNDAY, 7:10 P.M., TRIAL 7:30.**

All Seats Free, Sponsored by Adventist Churches in this area.

Origin of “the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath”

As O. R. L. Crosier (with Edson and Hahn) was responsible for actually formulating the Adventists’ sanctuary teaching (afterwards repudiating it and Seventh-day Adventism as well), it was Joseph Bates, a former sea captain, who was principally responsible for adding the seventh-day Sabbath doctrine to the Adventist creed. His influence and support launched Elder James White and his youthful wife Ellen upon their respective careers as leaders of the sect. Bates was also mainly accountable for the sect’s formerly held error, “shut door,” or belief that probation for the world ended on October 22, 1844.

In five years this crude fallacy was abandoned by both Bates and the Whites, but the Sabbath teaching grew in power. Influenced by a book of Preble’s entitled, *The Hope of Israel*, Bates wrote a tract of 48 pages entitled, *The Seventh-day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign*, which in substance contains the views on the seventh-day Sabbath as held by the Adventists at the present time—that the Sabbath was in force from the creation, that it was ratified at Mt. Sinai, that the papacy as “the little horn” of Daniel 7 “changed the day,” and that “the third angel’s message” (Rev. 14:9-11) requires that the ten commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath precept, be obeyed.

Subsequently, Bates wrote another tract, *The Seal of the Living God*, attested by Ellen White who declared, “The seal is the Sabbath.” A more ambitious work, *History of the Sabbath and of the First Day of the Week*, by J. N. Andrews, followed. Mrs. White confirmed Bates’ views with her “vision” of April 7, 1847, which we reproduced in our [last] issue. Claiming to be taken to heaven by an angel, she there supposedly “saw” the ten commandments with the other memorials of Israel’s history in the ark.

Of the fourth commandment she writes: “The fourth [the Sabbath commandment] shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God’s holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath was not nailed to the cross.... I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God’s dear waiting saints. And if one believed, and kept the Sabbath, and received the blessing attending it, and then gave it up, and broke the holy commandment, they would shut the gates of the Holy City against themselves, as sure as there was a God in heaven above” (*A Word to the Little Flock*, one of the earliest Adventist publications. Italics mine). In the face of these declarations by “the messenger of the Lord to the remnant church” (as Mrs. White is designated by the Seventh-day Adventists), dare anyone claim that this sect does not teach that Sabbath-keeping is essential to salvation?

Dr. Leroy Froom, prominent Seventh-day Adventist leader of the present day, explains:⁴ “Thus the Sabbath, first received under the binding claim of the law of God, was now reinforced by various prophetic passages, particularly of Revelation 14:9-12, which gave the Sabbath the significance of a testing, sealing message for the last days. And the doctrine of the heavenly sanc-

tuary, which explained the Disappointment and enforced the soundness of their basic positions, was now clearly interlocked with the doctrine of the Sabbath” (*The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, Vol. IV, p. 959).

It is consistent that the sanctuary teaching, which presents the Lord Jesus Christ as still making atonement in heaven, and the



Those evangelical writers who have permitted “blind leaders of the blind” to persuade them to throw their influence into the enemy’s cause must also share in the responsibility for this shameful betrayal of the souls of lost men.

Sabbath doctrine, the sect’s chief mark of legalism and salvation by works, should be “interlocked.” The sanctuary heresy sets forth an incomplete Savior; the Sabbath an unfinished salvation.

Consequently, it is sadly true that no Seventh-day Adventist has assurance of salvation.

He cannot rejoice in such Scriptures as 1 John 5:13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” My soul is filled with a righteous indignation when I think of these modern religious leaders who, like the Pharisees of old, “shut up the kingdom of heaven against men,” of whom Christ further declared [in figure]: “...Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matt. 23:13).

Those evangelical writers who have permitted “blind leaders of the blind” to persuade them to throw their influence into the enemy’s cause must also share in the responsibility for this shameful betrayal of the souls of lost men. Instead of employing their gifts and energies as apologists for this sect, they should be warning men and women—and young people especially—of the peril of dabbling with error in any form.

Thank God for a present salvation, for hope and joy and peace in believing that our sins are forgiven for His name’s sake, for the assurance of eternal life here and now! Salvation-plus-law, salvation-plus-the-Sabbath, is utterly contrary to salvation by grace through faith plus nothing, which blessed spiritual boon is based upon the finished work of a substitutionary, vicarious Savior on the cross of Calvary.

The Sabbath, as related to the last days, is described by Mrs. White as follows: “Through a rift in the clouds, there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks of hope and joy to the faithful but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God’s law. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God.... The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus’ coming and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people” (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 638, 640). In like manner the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath as “the test and

seal of God” is featured in all Seventh-day Adventist literature. For instance, Uriah Smith, famous for his 46-page *Key to the Prophetic Chart* upon which so much Seventh-day Adventist eschatology is based, wrote bluntly: “We understand the religious world will be divided into just two classes, those who keep the Sabbath, and those who oppose it” (*Biblical Institute*, p. 240). It is my understanding too—and I am sure it is yours, my friends—that the world is divided into two classes: the saved and the lost, according to what they do with the offer of free salvation in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, man’s only Savior.

When Did the Sabbath Begin?

No one denies the assertion of the Seventh-day Adventists that “on the seventh day” God rested from His creation labors and sanctified the day. However, there is no implication in the Genesis account or any other place in the Word that this Sabbath was applicable to man. Dr. Charles L. Feinberg comments: “There is no hint here [in Genesis] that God gave the Sabbath to man. He alone rested. Considered as a day of rest (although God did not rest because He was tired—Isaiah 40:28), the original Sabbath could not logically have been given to man because as yet he had not labored.”⁵

The long period of 2,500 years from Adam to Moses is Sabbath-less. Details of the domestic lives and religious rites of the patriarchs are described in the first book of the Bible but no mention is made of a Sabbath. It is not logical to suppose that if the Sabbath were a part of their lives, it would be overlooked in the records. The only reasonable conclusion is that the Sabbath is not mentioned there because prior to Sinai, the Sabbath did not exist for man.

Moses himself clears up the question as to whether the Sabbath was in force for man before Sinai with the words recorded in Deuteronomy 5:1-3: “...Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant [which included the Sabbath commandment] with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.”

The Case of Exodus 16:21-30

A favorite argument of the Seventh-day Adventist who attempts to prove that the Sabbath was given to Israel before Sinai is based upon the passage in Exodus 16 which has to do with the gathering of the manna for six days and a rest on the seventh day. Especially do the Seventh-day Adventists pounce upon verse 29: “See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread for two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”

I am indebted to Dr Feinberg’s previously mentioned booklet for a clear and reasonable exposition of this portion of Scripture: “Carefully note, first of all, that in this passage, the Sabbath is not included as a commandment to Israel. We do not have here the language or the terminology of commandment as in Exodus 20:8-11. Compare the wording which is clear in both cases.

Secondly, mark the absence of penalty for disregard of the Sabbath in Exodus 16 and the penalty for infraction of the Sabbath in Numbers 15:32-36. Both were acts of gathering too, but no death penalty is given in Exodus 16. The Sabbath was not binding on them in this chapter. It cannot be argued that no act was performed. Verse 28 makes it clear that they had refused the provision God had given here for rest on that day. See verses 29 and 30 also. Thirdly, note the unprecedented character of the situation in Numbers 15. They had no precedent by which to proceed, therefore they had to ask God’s mind in the matter, which was clearly given. The Sabbath is given to Israel in Exodus 16 before it is enjoined upon them in Exodus 20, but they did not enter into it. Man has never prized the Sabbath either as a gift (Exodus 16), nor has he kept it as a law (Numbers 15). Exodus 16 was a temporary arrangement of which the people did not take advantage.... Thus Exodus 16 cannot rightly be used to indicate any help to the legalists on the supposed perpetuity of the law. The case was single, was circumscribed to one people, and applicable for a limited time, or until the giving of the law.”

The Sabbath for Israel Alone

In view of such Scriptures as Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:10-12, the Seventh-day Adventist cannot deny that the Sabbath was given to Israel and Israel alone, and for a specific purpose. In no way at all can these words be twisted to apply to Gentile believers: “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Ex. 31:13); “Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them” (Ezek. 20:10-12). But the Seventh-day Adventists get around this by claiming to be “the true Israel of God” as other sects have done from time immemorial.

The whole law of Sinai was given by Moses to Israel, and the particular law of the Sabbath had a glorious significance for Israel alone, to remind that nation that by His call, His covenant and His miraculous works on their behalf, He had sanctified them—or set them apart—from all the nations upon earth to be His peculiar treasure through which to reveal His love and mercy to all the world. God delivered the law in its entirety to Israel. There is no distinction in “ceremonial” law. All the law “...was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). The Law-Giver became the Law-Fulfiller.

What about the Pope and the Sabbath?

One of the “tall tales” of the Seventh-day Adventists is the claim that “the pope” changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. Many have asked, “Which pope?” but to date no answer has been forthcoming. Nor will there ever be a reply since there is no historical evidence for this contention. Often the *Roman Catholic Convert’s Catechism*, compiled by Roman Catholic Rev. Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., is quoted by the

Adventists as absolute proof that the day of worship was altered by the papacy. Dr. Rowell calls our attention to something additional written by this same author which is “conveniently” omitted by Seventh-day Adventists as he points out that:

“Either the Seventh-day Adventists do not know all that Peter Geiermann wrote on this subject, or else they refuse to quote that which makes the difference.... This Romanist theologian actually taught that the Lord’s Day was observed from the times of the apostles. I have before me a highly commended work by the Rev. P. Geiermann, C.S.S.R., entitled, *A Manual of Theology for the Laity*, bearing the official imprimatur and *Nihil Obstat*. In this we read: “The first Christians, besides, kept Sunday holy also, because on that day the Savior rose from the dead, and the Holy Ghost came down on the apostles. Later on, however, a dispute rose between the Jewish and Gentile converts respecting the day which must be kept holy. Many of the Jewish converts maintained that all converts were bound by the entire law of Moses. TO REMOVE THIS ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION, and to free her children from the ceremonial law of Moses, the church decreed in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364) that all Catholics should keep holy Sunday as the Lord’s day (Apoc. 1:10) AS HAD BEEN DONE IN APOSTOLIC TIMES (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). This change the church was authorized to make by the power conferred upon her by Jesus Christ’ (p. 326). While it is not necessary for us to refer to the papacy for proof that the first day of the week was the day of worship for the early church, we cite this as evidence that the Adventists will withhold what seems best to them, and quote only those portions which are expedient for them.”⁶

It is interesting in connection with Dr. Rowell’s conclusions to reflect that the “mark” of Roman Catholicism has never been a day of worship. What distinguishes that system from all other religious bodies is their belief in the supremacy and infallibility of the papacy. Neither Constantine nor the Council of Laodicea “changed the day”, as claimed by the Seventh-day Adventists. They only approved the observance of the first day of the week, on which day the Christian church had worshiped from its beginning. To claim otherwise is to deny the facts of history.

Where is the Sabbath in the New Testament?

The Seventh-day Adventist is hard put to it to explain why not once in the New Testament is there given a command to keep the seventh or the Sabbath day. He endeavors to put such commands in the mouth of the Lord Jesus and resorts to such absurdities as twisting Matthew 24:20 into a Sabbath precept. This verse, obviously a prediction of the then soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem (in 70 AD), states: “But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day,” and naturally it refers to the difficulties of travel on those occasions. It is no more a reference to keeping the Sabbath than it is to keeping the winter season! The Seventh-day Adventist

forces Mark 2:27, 28 (“And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath”), to refer to mankind as a whole, not to the Jews, to whom Christ was directly speaking.

Again, the Adventist makes much of the fact that the Lord Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Of course He did. He was a Jew who obeyed the law of Moses. He lived in Palestine all His earthly life. But when He went to the cross, that was the end of the law, for He was the end of the law (2 Cor. 3:5-14; Col. 2:9-15). He was personally the complete and perfect fulfillment of all the law, including the Sabbath! Paul also preached in synagogues on the Jewish Sabbath, for obviously that was where he could find a Jewish audience!

The Seventh-day Adventist further claims that the fact that Christ rose in triumph over death on the first day of the week was of no consequence; that the gatherings together of the primitive Christians on the first day of the week, as recorded in Acts, were not actually public meetings at all. One has only to refer to the descriptions of such assemblies as in Acts 20:7 to prove this false. First Corinthians 16:1, 2 also throws light on the subject.

There is such a fanatical and unrelenting attempt on the part of the Seventh-day Adventists to make the Scriptures mean what they wish them to teach, that one, in reading their arguments, is impressed that there is indeed something Satanic about such a rabid brand of religiosity. Apparently it is the design of the enemy of men’s souls to divert the attention of the needy soul to the observance of a day, as a means of salvation, and away from the Lord Himself as “the way, the truth and the life.”

Keeping of the Sabbath Discouraged

The Seventh-day Adventists claim that because the term Sabbath days used in Colossians 2:16 is in the plural, it cannot refer to the weekly Sabbath day. However, in the Authorized (King James) Version, the word days is in italics, signifying that it did not appear in the original manuscript, and in the American Standard Version (the Revised), the translation is a Sabbath day. The Sabbatarians will be required to produce another translation for any support of the theory that this verse does not include the regular weekly Sabbath as well as all the other Sabbaths of the Mosaic system.



There is such a fanatical and unrelenting attempt on the part of the Seventh-day Adventists to make the Scriptures mean what they wish them to teach, that one, in reading their arguments, is impressed that there is indeed something Satanic about such a rabid brand of religiosity.



The Council at Jerusalem declared what “laws” were to be observed by Gentile converts, and all had to do with idol worship! It is obvious that the Sabbath was not binding on those Gentile Christians nor is it binding on any believer today, Jew or Gentile.

Dr. Rowell has done the church of Christ a great service as he points out that in the New Testament, duty to keep all other nine commandments is mentioned, but obligation to keep the Sabbath is not once mentioned. Worship of the Lord God only, is found 50 times; idolatry condemned, 12 times; profanity, 4 times; and covetousness, 9 times. Dr. Rowell makes this reasonable inquiry: “If, as the Seventh-day Adventists affirm, the keeping of the seventh day is imperative, why did Christ not once command it? And why did the apostles neither command it, nor condemn its non-observance?...The Seventh-day Adventists stress the failure to keep the Sabbath as the great sin. Then why is it that in the lists of sins recorded in the New Testament, the sin against the Sabbath is never once mentioned? For example, in Mark 7:21-22, there are 13 sins listed. Why did our Lord not mention breaking the Sabbath? In Romans 1:29-31, there is a list of 19 sins; in Galatians 5:19-21, a list of 17 sins; and in 2 Timothy 3:1-4, a list of 18 sins. In all the great warnings concerning sins, why was not failure to keep the seventh day given prominence? It was not even mentioned.

“One of the best opportunities Jesus had to preach Sabbath-keeping was when a lawyer asked Him, ‘Master, which is the great commandment in the law?’ (Matt. 22:36). In His answer, our Lord made not the slightest reference to the Sabbath. Neither here, nor elsewhere, did our Lord teach the keeping of the Sabbath day; nor did He warn against not keeping it. ‘Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandments. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets’ (Matt. 22:37-40).”

In the difficulty with the Judaizers in the early church, described in Acts 15, why is there not one single reference to the Sabbath day? The Council at Jerusalem declared what “laws” were to be observed by Gentile converts, and all had to do with idol worship! It is obvious that the Sabbath was not binding on those Gentile Christians nor is it binding on any believer today, Jew or Gentile.

Dr. Rowell also deals helpfully with this matter of Christ’s abolition of the law, including the Sabbath, in these words:

“When the substance is come, we no longer need the shadow (Col. 2:16, 17). If when walking we see a shadow overtaking us, our thought may be on the shadow; but, when our friend catches up with us, we are no longer occupied with the shadow, but with our friend himself. So, since Christ came, we are no longer occupied with the shadow of things to come, but with the glorious person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us’ (Gal. 3:13). Let God’s Word make this clear: ‘Wherefore then

serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, [or until Christ] that we might be justified by faith’ (Gal. 3:19-24). ‘...Ye are not under law, but under grace’ (Rom. 6:14). Grace in the power

of the Holy Spirit in the heart can effect truest obedience to the will of God more readily than the letter of the law written on tablets of stone, or pages of a book. Hence the Word of God turns us to ‘the glory that excelleth’ and the One who empowers us for its realization. ‘Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty’ (2 Cor. 3:17).”

What about the first day of the week?

The Christian need not concern himself about any change in the day of worship. Actually, there is no connection at all between the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord’s day. The Christian has no Sabbath in the truest meaning of the word. But he has a “rest,” and that precious repose of the soul is in Christ. For the Christian worker, the Lord’s day is not a day of physical rest at all but the day in which he is busiest serving his risen Lord whose resurrection the first day of the week commemorates. For all such it is truly “day of all the week, the best, emblem of eternal rest.” No more blessed words were ever spoken or written than those of Matthew 11:28-30 in which the Lord Jesus Christ invites us: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Christ is our peace and Christ is our rest. The children of Israel in the wilderness missed this spiritual rest or rest of faith as we read in Hebrews 4:9-11: “There remaineth therefore a rest [or a Sabbath—a perpetual cessation from spiritual strain and anxiety] to the people of God. For he that is entered into his [Christ’s] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did from his*. Let us labor therefore [seek] to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Those who *insist that something must be added*—whether it be a *day, a religious rite or any work of the flesh*—cannot know the true Sabbath, which is rest-of-heart and peace-of-mind which result from relying completely upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and ceasing utterly from one’s own works.

Annihilation, soul-sleep, conditional immortality

Space permits but a bare mention of these heresies which Seventh-day Adventists hold in common with the Jehovah Witnesses cult. From a pamphlet entitled, *What do Seventh-day Adventists Believe?* published by the Seventh-day Adventist Pacific Press Publishing Association of Mountain View, California, I quote the position of the sect on these subjects: “*The Mortality of Man*. We believe God alone has immortality; that a man may have immortality only as a gift from God through Christ; that upon conversion, the Christian receives eternal life by faith in the

promises of God; that immortality will be conferred upon the righteous at the second coming of Christ and the first resurrection. *The Unconscious State of the Dead*: We believe that when a man dies he enters a state of silence, inactivity, and entire unconsciousness; that he remains 'asleep', altogether oblivious to the passing of time or events, until the first resurrection if he is accounted righteous, or until the second resurrection if he is numbered among the wicked. *The Punishment of Sinners*: We believe that 'the wages of sin is death'; that the punishment meted out to sinners will be eternal death, total extinction by fire, after they are adjudged guilty before the bar of God."

It is needless to say that none of these teachings are to be found in the gospel message of the Word of God. No true evangelical accepts them. How then can anyone who is evangelical approve a sect which teaches them? How can a true Christian be indifferent to such teachings going into homes and capturing the hearts and minds of little children and young people? The Word of God clearly reveals that man was created an immortal soul who will live somewhere forever—either with God or forever separated from Him in hell. When a Christian dies, his spirit goes immediately into the presence of Christ where, though "absent from the body," he (the inner man) is "present with the Lord" (Eph. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:1-8); and the unbeliever—the one who rejects Christ as Savior—will find himself in a place of everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels, with all of those who have bypassed Calvary and rejected the love of God as revealed in the blessed and only Savior.

Much more should, and could, be written upon Seventh-day Adventism. I had hoped to reproduce more of Mrs. White's visions, but those who are interested can buy the book *Early Writings* and read them. One can see why the Seventh-day Adventist must resort to such extra-scriptural "evidences" as visions, dreams, and revelations for his beliefs, for he certainly cannot find support for them in the Scriptures.

In conclusion, with the author's permission, I quote the following "contrasts" from a book previously referred to, *Why You Should Not Be a Seventh-day Adventist*, by Rev. E. B. Jones. This gives me an opportunity to pay tribute to the tireless labors of this thoroughly informed and faithful servant of God who serves the Christian church well in his unenviable specialized ministry of exposing the falsity and the soul-endangering character of this sect. I consider reprehensible the efforts of the self-appointed champions of Seventh-day Adventism to "downgrade" Mr. Jones, the late D. M. Canright, and others who have repudiated the poisonous doctrines of this unscriptural system and, by the grace of God, have forsaken it. For a final summing up of the case here are:

Some startling contrasts

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that Christ was a 'holy'—a sinless—Savior. The Seventh-day Adventist believes that our Lord's nature, while here in the flesh, was 'sinful'—that 'in His veins was the incubus of a tainted heredity...bad blood and inherited meanness'!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that when Christ shed His blood upon the cross, He made an offering completely acceptable to God for the sinner's reconciliation. The Seventh-

day Adventist does not believe this—he does not believe that Christ completed the atonement when He suffered and bled on Calvary!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that when Christ died 'on the tree,' He then and there bore 'in His own body' all our sins. The Seventh-day Adventist believes that, in the end, Satan will be man's sin-bearer!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that Christ—here and now—has saved him, and for all eternity! The Seventh-day Adventist believes that no one is saved in this life—that eternal life is but a mere future 'hope'!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that by his faith in Christ alone—'without the deeds of the law'—he has eternal salvation. The Seventh-day Adventist believes that eternal life is obtained by 'perfect obedience' to the Sinaitic law!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that Christ is 'the end of the law'—the one who by His death, perfectly fulfilled the law and thus terminated it. The Seventh-day Adventist believes that the law is still in force—that it has 'never been annulled,' and that Christians are obliged to keep it!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that in this age of the 'better covenant,' Christ is his Sabbath or his day-by-day spiritual 'rest'—the 'finisher' of his faith—his perfect and ever-continuing peace. The Seventh-day Adventist believes that only by observing the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath may one be 'sealed with the seal of the living God' and experience true peace within his soul!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that when his natural life ceases, his spirit will immediately 'depart and be with Christ.' The Seventh-day Adventist believes that in death the whole man sleeps in the grave, in complete unconsciousness, till Christ comes to awaken him at the time of His second advent!

"The correctly instructed Christian believes that at death the spirits of the wicked dead go to their 'own place—hades, 'the unseen world,' and following the judgment of 'the great white throne' will be 'cast into the lake of [unquenchable] fire' where 'the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.'

"The Seventh-day Adventist believes that the unrighteous dead sleep peacefully in their graves until the second resurrection, and after the judgment God will consign them to 'a furnace of fire,' and there in 'love and mercy' cause them to be 'utterly destroyed'—annihilated!"

My friends, is it necessary to bring any further evidence to show that Seventh-day Adventism is not evangelical? May God in His light give you to see the light. Ever "prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21). †

Endnotes

¹ *What's Wrong with Seventh-day Adventism?* From foreword. Dunham Publishing Co, Findlay, Ohio.

² Used by permission of Fleming H. Revell, New York.

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⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ From the booklet, *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*.

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⁷ *The Sunday School Times*.

ALL ABOUT PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

HOW MUCH DO WE NEED JESUS?

DALE RATZLAFF

I started to write this article with some confidence. Then, the more I prayed and studied, the more humbled I have become. Who am I to write on the subject of personal holiness? Why do I even want to write on such a subject? What I thought would be a slam-dunk assignment has turned into a soul-searching journey. Like looking through a zoom lens, the subject has expanded before my eyes. What follows is certainly not the final word on the subject. It is only the “Dick and Jane” version—for those of you old enough to remember that first grade reader.

One problem we discover when we discuss sanctification is a lack of clarity on the meaning of the term. “Sanctification” is used a number of ways in Scripture with differing nuances of meaning, so we need to clarify our definitions.

Sanctification as set apart

In the Old Testament, as well as in the New, there are many examples of people, places and things being set apart by God. God chose Israel and said, “I have set you apart from the people to be mine.”¹

“The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever” (1 Chron. 23:13). This setting apart did not make Aaron or his sons personally holy. Aaron, in fact, made the golden calf and caused Israel to sin.² Rather, they were set apart for a specific duty.

“And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

Sanctification as passive, external righteousness

When addressing the church in Corinth, which was full of immature Christians who had all kinds of problems—factions, immorality, lawsuits, perversion of the Lord’s Supper, misuse of spiritual gifts, and more, Paul writes, “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling” (1 Cor. 1:2). In Greek, “have been sanctified” is a perfect passive which means they were sanctified in an instant of time, but the results of that sanctification continue. The passive voice means it was not their personal effort by which they were sanctified. Rather, as the text states, they were sanctified “in Christ Jesus”. It was His doing, not theirs. We find the same meaning in Hebrews 10:9, 10: “then He said, Behold, I have come to do Thy will. He takes away the first in order to

establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified [another perfect passive] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.” Here “sanctification” denotes being set apart by God because we have been made righteous by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. This is external, passive righteousness. It is the very righteousness of God. For all practical purposes, this verse describes the same righteousness as justification by faith but includes the additional idea of being set apart by God for His use.

Sanctification as active, progressive, internal righteousness—being made holy.

“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:4-8).

This is a very insightful verse. It resembles Paul’s description of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, and it gives us additional insight on *how* these personal qualities are developed. Peter states that we are to develop

these personal qualities of holiness as a result of focusing on “His precious and magnificent promises.”

We know that we, in ourselves, are not as good as we ought to be. We want to live more like Christ. We accept the fact that we are justified by faith, but we want to see more of Christ’s righteousness worked out in our lives. And this desire is good. But how do we do this?

Our former teaching on sanctification

Those of us who have come from Adventist backgrounds must come to grips with the function of the law in sanctification. We can accept the fact that we are justified by faith alone, but we were taught that justification was only half the story. We were also taught that we must advance in sanctification. And we heartily agree that obedience to God is taught throughout the Bible. Those who love God will keep His commandments. Jesus tells us over and over again what His commandments are: we are to love the Lord with all our heart, mind and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves.³ Yet when we speak of advancing in sanctification things get a little fuzzy. Every life has its ups and downs, not only for us today, but the characters presented in Scripture were no different. Bible history presents men and women as fallible sinners like us. Noah got drunk with



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wine, Abraham and Sarah lied, Moses lost his temper, and David committed adultery and murder—and the list could go on. In the New Testament we find the disciples—after walking with Christ for three years—bickering about who would be the greatest. Peter denied Christ and later compromised the gospel when the party of James arrived in a gentile meeting.

So how does progressive sanctification fit into all this? Is it the tendency of my life that counts? What if I am killed in an auto accident when my “arrow of sanctification” is headed in the wrong direction? Does a lack of sanctification undermine my right standing with God? My prayer is that God’s Word will bring clarity here, for it is greatly needed.

As one studies the book of Galatians, it becomes evident that the main problem Paul confronted was not believers living in open, personal sin. Rather, they were being seduced by a perversion of the gospel. Apparently false teachers were telling the Galatian believers that while justification by faith was good, they also needed “personal righteousness” in addition to “faith righteousness” and were directing them back to the law.

Today when sanctification is mentioned, especially in Adventism, it usually refers to the progressive idea of personal righteousness.⁴ Those who read the writings of Ellen White are often directed back to the law to gain sanctification. Following are several quotations from Ellen White on sanctification and obedience to the law. As you read these see if you can discern **how** one is sanctified and also, **why** personal righteousness is needed. All emphases are mine.

“Obedience to all the commandments of God is the **only** true sign of sanctification.”⁵

“We must go among them [southern people] and show them how to honor and obey God’s law, **in order that they may be prepared to have a part in the new earth.**”⁶

“Every sin will be put away from us because it is an offense to God, and **we will bring ourselves** into harmony with God.”⁷

“Those who are truly sanctified by a knowledge of God, will render **perfect obedience** to God’s requirements.”⁸

“They will be sanctified and glorified **through obedience to the commandments of God**, wrought by divine power, through the faith of the Son of God.”⁹

“Bible sanctification is a conformity to the will of God, **attained by rendering obedience to his law, through faith in his Son.**”¹⁰

“Obedience to the law of God is sanctification.”¹¹

The above quotes show Mrs. White’s teaching that obedience to God’s law, empowered by faith in Christ, is necessary for sanctification. The “how” is obedience to the law. The “why” is to meet God’s requirements, to bring ourselves into harmony with God, and to be prepared to have a part in the new earth. Although she says this righteousness is accomplished by faith in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is nevertheless our own active, internal, personal righteousness. Following is another quote that was often used to explain sanctification and personal righteousness:

“When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this **disposition** and **effort** as man’s best service, and he makes up for the **deficiency** with his own divine **merit**”¹² (emphasis mine).

When I was a student in Adventism the above quote was often used with the diagram below.



The red lines represent the passive righteousness that is in Christ, imputed to us by faith alone. The yellow lines represent internal, active, progressive sanctification. The red lines above the yellow lines represent the “deficiency” in our “disposition” and “effort”. In other words, we are fitted for heaven **partly** by our active, personal obedience to the law by faith in Christ and **partly** by the righteousness that is imputed to us—Christ’s own divine merit.

You will note that near the right of the chart, the yellow line reaches clear to the top. The “CP” on the chart stands for “the close of probation”.¹³ The little horizontal yellow line represents the time when the saints have to live in the sight of God without an intercessor.

“In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus’ mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment.”¹⁴

Over the years, this teaching has been modified. Rather than insist that the last generation reach perfection (although some still teach they must and see this lack as the reason Christ has not yet come),¹⁵ it was said that God looks at the tenor of the life. If we are growing in Christ and our “sanctification arrow” is moving upward, then God will make up for the “deficiency”. If our “sanctification arrow” is on a steep dive toward the bottom of the chart, no one knows the final outcome. But there would certainly be no assurance of salvation in that case, and if one expressed assurance, they would be viewed as presumptuous.

In commenting upon 2 Peter 1:4-8 mentioned above, Ellen White states: “We are saved by climbing round after round, mounting step after step, to the height of Christ’s ideal for us. Thus He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”¹⁶ Many of us remember the song we used to sing, “Every round goes higher, higher...”

In summary, the historic Adventist teaching on sanctification includes the following.

1. Sanctification usually refers to personal, active, progressive righteousness.
2. Obedience to the law aided by faith in Christ with the power of the Holy Spirit is the means by which one becomes sanctified.
3. The purpose of one’s sanctification is to become progressively more holy, fitted for the new earth.
4. One meets the righteous requirement of God by having a **disposition** (desire) to obey God and makes his/her best **effort** to this end. Jesus then accepts this **disposition** and **effort** as his/her best service and makes up for the **deficiency** with His own divine **merit**.

Thus, we are saved partly by Christ’s righteousness that is imparted (active, personal righteousness) to us by obeying the law through faith in Christ and partly by Christ’s imputed (passive) righteousness (Christ’s divine merit).¹⁷

What if I am killed in an auto accident when my “arrow of sanctification” is headed in the wrong direction? Does a lack of sanctification undermine my right standing with God?



This Adventist view of sanctification is very much like the false teaching threatening the Galatians. They listened to Paul preach the gospel, and they responded to that gospel. Then, after Paul left the area, false teachers came in and added to the gospel by requiring personal righteousness through observance of the law. To this heresy Paul states: “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly” (Gal. 2:21).

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? [This is the gospel message.] This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith [acceptance of the gospel]? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:2-3).

The biblical way to achieve active, personal righteousness

First, we must be born again, justified by faith, saved by grace!

Any attempt to live a righteous life in obedience to the Ten Commandments without being born again is fruitless for righteousness and/or sanctification. As Martin Luther pointed out in his introduction to his commentary on Galatians, obedience to the Ten Commandments, as well as to the ritual laws, “may be wrought by us either *by our natural strength*, or else by the gift of God.” Obedience to God’s moral principles always has many advantages, even for those who are not Christian. But this legal obedience is not a substitute for genuine sanctification. One must first be freed from sin, born

again in spirit, and set apart for God's service before progressive sanctification even starts.

Paul, throughout the epistles, first lays the foundation of acceptance by God's grace based solely on faith in Christ. Then, and only then, does he admonish believers in Christian living. Christian living flows from being saved; it does not qualify one for salvation.

Sanctification is not a function of the law

In Romans 7, Paul shows how the law is actually *against* us developing personal righteousness. "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:4-6).

This is not an isolated text. The truth of this statement is repeated over and over again.¹⁸ By saying that sanctification is not the function of the law, many will immediately accuse us of wanting to live in sin. No, never! Note carefully the following verse:

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus [because we have been declared righteous]. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not

do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1-4).

Note that "the requirement of the law" is not fulfilled in us until *after* we have been *set free from the law*! In other words, we achieve obedience to God's moral principles represented in the law, not by focusing on the law, but by looking away from the law and focusing on our standing in Christ. At that point we have the very righteousness of God imputed to us and *then* the Holy Spirit speaks to our born-again spirit and begins to develop *His* fruit in our lives. As Paul pointed out in Romans 7, the law actually *arouses* our sinful passions that lead to death. The law is against us when it comes to achieving personal righteousness.

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit.

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" (Gal. 5:18). Nothing could be more direct and clear. Paul goes on in Galatians to show what the fruit of the Spirit is. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). This is real, active progressive sanctification, and it is the work of the Spirit in every aspect of our lives.

The same principle is described in 2 Corinthians 3. The thrust of this chapter is that the Spirit in the new covenant not only takes the place of the law in the old covenant, but He also gives *true transformation* to life.

Evangelical Gospel

PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST

ACTIVE, PERSONAL, PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

“But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **liberty**. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:14-18).

It is not the law that brings true transformation; transformation only comes when we set aside the veil of the law so that we can see the radiant glory of the Lord who is the Spirit.

Progressive sanctification is not meritorious

This is vital to understand. One cannot be free from the law and devoted to Christ until this truth is firmly planted and nurtured in the soil of the soul. As long as one is depending, even in the smallest amount, on one’s “disposition” and “effort”, there is no assurance, no freedom, and no liberty that is so often mentioned in the epistles.¹⁹ We cannot be married to the law and married to Christ at the same time. That is spiritual adultery.²⁰ Until one fully accepts the passive sanctification mentioned above in Hebrews 10:9, 10, there can be no real progressive sanctification.

The following parable of Jesus teaches that there is no salvation merit in our obedience. In Luke 17, Jesus had just told His disciples that if they had faith like a mustard seed, they could say to a mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and be planted in the sea”—and it would obey them. Mulberry trees have an aggressive root system, and we can envision the disciples imagining what power their faith will bring them! Perhaps

they were envisioning overcoming the Romans as they helped Christ set up His earthly kingdom. However, immediately after Jesus’ statement on “mulberry-tree-moving faith”, Luke records Jesus saying,

“But which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat’? But will he not say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink’? He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done’” (Lk. 17:7-10).

Jesus is showing that obedience to his commands is not meritorious. Earlier we showed the chart on justification/sanctification that many of us were taught. Compare that with what I believe to be the biblical model on page 26.

The red lines represent the passive righteousness of justification, and the yellow lines represent active, personal, progressive sanctification. Note that the believer *never* relies at all on progressive sanctification for his standing with God; from the beginning of our Christian walk to the very end we rely always and only on the external righteousness, the very righteousness of God received by grace through faith in Christ Jesus!

There are two underlying questions that we have not yet fully answered that must be brought into sharp focus: (1) *how* do we achieve more personal, active righteousness, and (2) *why* do we want more personal, active righteousness? How we answer these two questions will impact our relationship with Christ and the focus of our daily lives. We will address these questions in the next issue of *Proclamation!* †

Endnotes

¹ Lev. 20:26.

² Ex. 32.

³ Mt. 22:37-39; Jn. 13:34; 15:10, 12.

⁴ “But the Bible teaches that sanctification is progressive.” Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 300.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Home Missionary*, 1897-07-01.015.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Southern Work*, p. 33.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Review & Herald*, 1890-06-10.013.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Review & Herald*, 1901-09-03.002.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 1888-04-13.015.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 299.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 1890-05-19.003.

¹² Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 1890-06-16.006.

¹³ An Adventist term signifying a point in time, before the second coming of Christ, when the

“door of mercy” is closed and no more people can be saved.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 280. (See also *The Great Controversy*, p. 614, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 198; *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4 p. 432).

¹⁵ “When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to

gather the precious grain.” Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 69.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530.

¹⁷ This is really the teaching of the Catholic Church. The main difference is this: Adventists achieve their internal, personal righteousness by keeping the law while the Catholics achieve their internal, personal righteousness through the sacraments of the church.

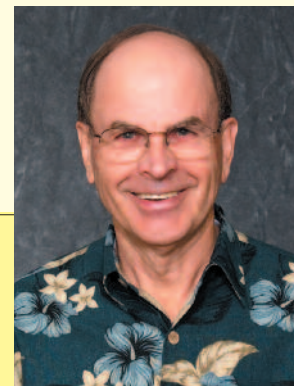
¹⁸ See Phil. 3:8-10, Gal. 2:19, 21; 3:10-12; 17, 19-25; 4:1-11, 21; 5:11, 13, 18.

¹⁹ Rom. 8:2, 21; 1 Cor. 9:1; 10:29; Gal. 4:30, 31; 5:1, 13; 1 Pet. 2:16; 1 Cor.

8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 2:4;

Jam. 1:25; 2:12.

²⁰ See Rom. 7:1-6.



Dale Ratzlaff is the founder of Life Assurance Ministries, Inc., and owns LAM Publications, LLC. He served as an Adventist pastor for 13 years, seven at Monterey Bay Academy where he taught Bible. He and his wife Carolyn left the Adventist church in 1981 when he realized he could no longer teach the investigative judgment in clear conscience. He has authored *Sabbath in Christ*, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, *The Truth About Adventist “Truth”*, and *Truth Led Me Out*. These are available through his website, LifeAssuranceMinistries.com. The Ratzlaffs reside in Casa Grande, Arizona.

Sixth annual former Adventist conference the best ever

The sixth annual Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF) weekend conference convened on Friday morning, February 18, 2011—almost a whole day earlier than previous conferences. This year, five seminars on Friday addressed the subjects most requested by people leaving Adventism. Mark Martin, former Adventist and senior pastor of Calvary Community Church in Phoenix, Arizona, presented talks explaining the pre-tribulation rapture, the human spirit, and eternal hell. Dale Ratzlaff, founder of Life Assurance Ministries and *Proclamation!*, gave a study on the Sabbath and the new covenant, and Jonathan Bilima, another former Adventist and pastor of Relevant Church in Riverside, California, taught on judgment: when it happens, and what God evaluates.

Sharon Strum led the praise team again this year, and Trinity pastor of community, Steve Springsted, welcomed attendees to the campus for the weekend.

Keynote by Gary Inrig

Rain was falling Friday evening as a crowd of around 250 people listened to Gary Inrig, senior pastor of Trinity Church, speak from the book of Jude on “Choosing to Defend the Gospel: why Trinity Church Ministers to Former Adventists”. Gary identified the ways the gospel can be perverted and its power eclipsed, and he stated that Trinity Church ministers to former Adventists not because it stands against Adventism but because it stands for the gospel.

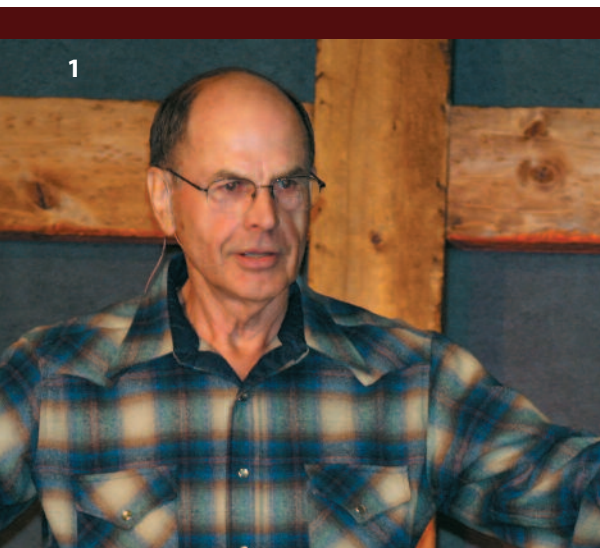
Gary’s talk followed Myra Meharry sharing her faith story. In her story Myra explained that, as a Christian converted to Adventism, she realized Adventism was not



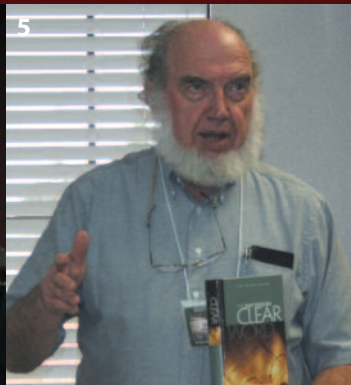
Christian when she took a class in denominational history in a distance learning class from Andrews University Seminary. She read a quotation from her textbook, *The*

Lightbearers, explaining that as the Adventist founders were formulating their doctrines, they would frequently bump into Bible passages they could not understand. At those times Ellen White would receive a vision, and the meanings of the passages would be made clear to her. They knew those revelations were from God because on her own, she did not understand what the Bible said in those passages.

Myra realized the founders’ inability to understand Scripture meant they were not



1. Dale Ratzlaff spoke on the Sabbath and on “progressive sanctification”. 2. Around 250 people attended the Friday evening meeting featuring Trinity pastor Gary Inrig. 3. Carel Stevenson with his wife Nicole before she gave her faith story. 4. Martin Carey’s breakout examined the legacy of Robert Brinsmead. 5. Jim Valentine presented the “Four Genres of Adventist Scripture”. 6. Richard and



filled with the Spirit who reveals His own word. Myra stressed that she loves the Adventists, and because she loves them, it is not and never will be acceptable to stand by and say nothing.

A question and answer panel moderated by Richard Tinker followed the program. The panel consisted of Gary Inrig, Mark Martin, Dale Ratzlaff, and Colleen Tinker.

Saturday opened with Greg Taylor, former Adventist and senior pastor of the Brethren in Christ Church in Hempfield, Pennsylvania, presenting a devotional on the people listed in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. Mark Martin presented the second session: "Why I Need to Choose a Church". Breakout sessions featured Mark Martin, Dale Ratzlaff, Greg Taylor, Martin Carey, and Jim Valentine.

Born again last year

Following lunch Nicole Stevenson shared her faith story, a moving celebration of God's faithfulness to her as He rescued her from a broken and destructive youth and brought her to new life at the end of last year's FAF weekend. Dale Ratzlaff then

presented a clear and inspiring lesson on "progressive sanctification" based on the book of Galatians. After more breakout sessions, Jon Rittenhouse of Trinity Church closed the afternoon with a talk entitled, "How Can I Know If I'm Born Again?"

The evening meeting included Ben McPhaul, a former Adventist pastor who resigned in March, 2010, telling his story of God's faithfulness and encouraging others to trust God and follow Him into truth. Greg Taylor spoke on the seven last words of Jesus and invited anyone who had not yet done so to receive the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord before leading the group in communion.

Why worship on Sunday

Sunday morning Mark Martin listed a series of historical facts explaining why Christians worship on Sunday. Among other things he showed that Sunday had never been a day of pagan worship, and Constantine's legalizing Sunday as a day for Christian worship was based on the Christians' practice, not on pagan practice.

Trinity's associate pastor Mark Brown preached for church on the subject of the

atonement as described in the book of Leviticus and described how the scapegoat represented Jesus bearing our sins out of camp. Following communion, the service ended with everyone singing "Worthy Is the Lamb". Most of the "formers" present were unable to stop their tears of joy.

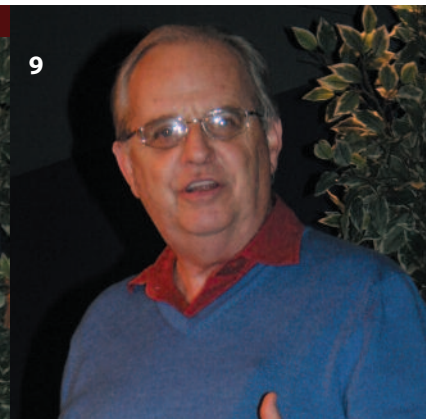
The weekend ended with lunch at the home of Esther and Stanford Shu.

Last Adventist pillars fell

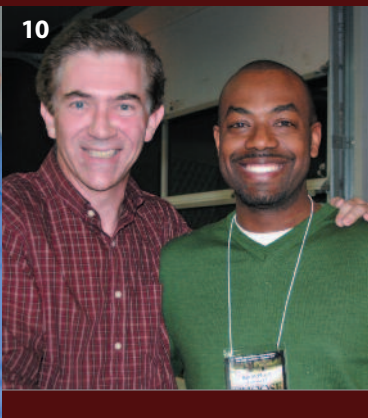
The teaching this year was rich, and the fellowship was deep and profound. Two people attending accepted Jesus on Saturday afternoon, and another said, "The last of the chains are gone. The last of the Adventist pillars fell for me this weekend... I told a Christian friend of mine. 'You've never heard real worship until you've heard a group of former Adventists singing because they are free from their bondage.'"

"Jesus has been the center of my life from an intellectual position, but I went home feeling from a very deep level emotionally that He was the top priority in my life in a way I never felt it before." †

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHARON CAREY



Colleen Tinker and Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff celebrated the Tinker's anniversary. 7. Jonathan Bilima presented the subject of "Judgment". 4. Myra Meharry gave her faith story on Friday evening. 5. Gary Inrig addressed contending for the faith as the reason Trinity church ministers to former Adventists. 10. Jon Rittenhouse and Ben McPhaul enjoyed meeting. 11. Greg Taylor led communion Saturday evening. 12. Mark and Leslie Martin enjoying the fellowship at Sunday lunch.





Thanks for exposing false teaching

I just finished reading the latest issue of the magazine—fantastic! I can hardly wait for the next issue; Dr. Talbot's articles are well done and so "right on". It has been 10 years since I made my exodus out of Adventism, with the help of loving family and of course, the Spirit of Truth. I appreciate all the effort, time and resources that the team at the magazine puts forth. It is a huge undertaking, but I am so encouraged to see how God keeps things moving forward even in these difficult financial times. It is heartwarming to read the comments made by other readers who are studying the Word for themselves

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES

MISSION

To proclaim the good news of the new covenant gospel of grace in Christ and to combat the errors of legalism and false religion.

MOTTO

Truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to follow truth when it is revealed.

MESSAGE

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

and allowing the Holy Spirit to be the teacher. I am deeply saddened by the vengeful comments of those who hide behind false teachings, fearing to examine God's plain Word for themselves. I continue to pray for them as well, that the truth of God's Word will set them free to know they are saved and able to walk in God's abundant grace.

Thank you for continuing to expose false teaching and for encouraging readers like myself to seek the truth. God is faithful and He will keep blessing those who seek Him with all their hearts.

CRESCENT MILLS, CA

Touching many people

Thanks so much for your hard work and devotion for *Proclamation!* magazine. It is such an important work and touches so many people. It has been such a blessing to me! Do not become discouraged with the nasty letters you often receive. God is working mightily through you.

REDLANDS, CA

Looking forward to learning

I have come out of the Seventh-day Adventist group. I was a member since 1973 but left the church in 1994 and have really not been able to go back. I was living outside of God's will for my life for about 15 years, and then a couple years back I began earnestly seeking the truth. I was not comfortable going back into the Adventist church because every time I entered one of the Adventists' churches there was much oppression...I just visited [some friends] and they gave me [a back issue of] your magazine which answered my longing to know the truth about death...Thank you, thank you for printing the truth so plainly that I could understand and see. ...

I am learning so much and look forward to learning more with your publications. How could we have been so blind and not seen these errors? I am so grateful that God has lifted the veil from my eyes and I can see now!

EUGENE, OR

You will persecute us

It is very sad to read your magazine and all the lies you are printing. People are believing your lies. That's the saddest part.

Why don't you pick on other religions instead of picking on the Adventist religion? You have nothing good to say about Ellen White or the Adventist church. You are the ones who are going to persecute us. Who are you to judge, anyway?

We do not wish to receive your magazine; please do not send it anymore. Please find somebody else to

sage—specifically, the concept of a loving God causing eternal suffering in hell to those that choose not to follow Him. I can think of no reason, and I have studied a few, that justifies eternal torment....Another topic that *Proclamation!* has taken a strong stand on is the idea that Christ could not fail when He was tempted. Again, there are scholars citing Scripture that disagree....As long as Christianity clings to the belief of an eternally burning hell their spiritual filtering system, to a greater or lesser degree, will be clogged with fear...

You have nothing good to say about Ellen White or the Adventist church. You are the ones who are going to persecute us. Who are you to judge, anyway?

criticize and leave the Adventist people and the Adventist church alone! You are being used by Satan to plant weeds in God's garden.

PERALTA, NM

Compromising the gospel?

For several years I have read each *Proclamation!* received. Every issue has been read cover to cover...As a result of our spiritual journey, in 2003, my wife and I left Adventism and joined another denomination. After visiting several churches we became members of a denomination that encourages its members to grow in their personal relationship with Christ. Belief in and acceptance of Jesus as their Savior is the only requirement for acceptance into their fellowship....

My wife and I have been sending *Proclamation!* to our daughter for the last three years. The words she used were that *Proclamation!* was becoming "dismissive and patronizing". In its eagerness to distance itself from Adventism, is *Proclamation!* in the process of throwing out the baby with the bath water?

Proclamation! has taken a strong position on some issues, per my understanding of the Bible, that compromise the core gospel mes-

Remember when we had all the knowledge? How much growing did we do?...

I do not have to agree with every article that *Proclamation!* prints. However, I would like to see a more balanced approach. This is especially true with articles that reflect on the character of our Savior....

"In essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; in all things, love" (early Christian slogan adopted by Stone-Campbell churches). The essential is Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Another essential is the individual priesthood of all believers with all the implied freedoms and responsibilities.

LANSING, MI

Editor's comments

Leaving Adventism does not mean we leave authority. Rather, we now place ourselves under the authority of God's word instead of the authority of a modern prophet and a denomination. We are not free to decide what we will believe; instead, in Christ we are finally free to know and submit to Scripture.

Before we can address whether or not a belief compromises the gospel, we must identify the gospel. 1 Cor 15:1-4 articulates the

gospel this way: “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...”

The points that you raise regarding eternal hell and the nature of Christ require us to address the foundation upon which we form doctrine: the reliability of Scripture. Liberal theologians view Scripture not as the inerrant word of God but as a more symbolic record of man’s historic perceptions of God. Life Assurance Ministries holds a conservative evangelical view of Scripture: it is the word of God, inerrant in its original manuscripts, breathed by God as He moved men to write, and completely reliable as His revelation of Himself and His will.

Because we believe Scripture is completely reliable, we must take seriously that Jesus Himself taught the reality of eternal hell more than any other person. Our evaluation of this doctrine cannot be based on our finding a reason for hell (at any rate we are finite and unable to see eternal reality) but upon the fact that God’s word declares it is true.

Scripture also teaches that the fullness of deity dwelt in Jesus (Col. 1:19; 2:9). He shared our flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14), but there was no sin in Him. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29)—something only God can do. Unlike we who are born spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-3) and must be born again (Jn. 3:3-6), Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born spiritually alive. Jesus said of Satan, “He has nothing in Me; but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me” (Jn. 14:30-31).

Because Jesus had no sin in His flesh, Satan had no claim on him. Moreover, Jesus only did what the Father told Him to do. Because of His intrinsic spiritual life, his lack of sinful tendencies, and because He was God the Son and only did His Father’s will, He was not able to fail in His mission. Jesus could only be our Savior if He was

greater than we are, if He could become sin for everyone (1 Cor. 15:21), and defeat death by the life that was in Him (Jn. 10:17-18).

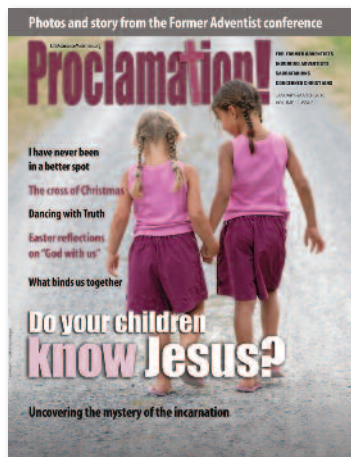
The gospel is not compromised by biblical teaching. Rather, it is compromised when we fail to take God’s word seriously and thus misunderstand Jesus and who He really is.

Nothing Christ-centered

Please, little children, I have been receiving your publication called *Proclamation!* for a couple of years. I never requested nor asked to have it sent to me. I have yet to find anything that is Christ-centered. Nothing to uplift the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. All I have found is criticizing, judgment, and outright lies. Yes, you may have found a following and many folks who have not understood salvation by faith, but look for yourselves in the Holy Scriptures and you will find that nowhere does it authorize you to be my judge or anyone else’s.

There is sufficient time for repentance. Please consider it. Remember that the old accuser is Satan. Is this your goal? It is my prayer that you see the light.

SLIDELL, LA



Lingering Bitterness

Please remove me from your mailing list. I grew up in the Adventist church and was baptized while in junior high. In my senior year at an Adventist academy, one of my teachers introduced me to the joys of a wonder-

I look forward to every issue of *Proclamation!* The articles feed my soul and affirm and add to my growing thirst for more of God's truth in my life.

ful relationship with Jesus Christ. For years after, while attending SDA institutions of higher learning, teaching at SDA schools, and then working for another religious denomination but staying very active as an SDA, I came to realize that I do not subscribe to many SDA key doctrinal beliefs. Nevertheless, so many Adventists have been good to me over the years, and I had so many good experiences, that I am able to move on without the lingering bitterness reflected in your publication. Undoubtedly, others benefit from your magazine, so please save the expense and drop my name from the list.

VIA EMAIL

Editor's note

One of the most common criticisms directed toward former Adventists who left for the sake of Jesus is that we are bitter and angry. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because we love Adventists, we want them to understand that Adventism opposes Christ’s finished work and undermines the authority of Scripture. We cannot look the other way knowing that they do not live in the freedom of the gospel and the security of salvation. Our desire is that Adventists will come to know the miracle of new birth and the joy of following Jesus no matter the cost.

Satan is working through you

How can you publish such material as you do and hurt our Lord Jesus, who died on the cross for each of us so that we can be saved in the kingdom prepared for us, if we so choose? My husband is not an Adventist and probably never will be since he has been in contact with some of your group, and this is very sad to me as he is a

good man and I know he loves the Lord. But Satan is working through you to publish false information with terrible accusations, which would discourage anyone who is not well-grounded in the Truth. Apparently this is just what you would like to see happen.

It is my prayer that each of you will humble yourself before the Lord and repent of this sinful thing you are doing and come back into the fold before it is forever too late. The “Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen. 6:3), and we need to yield our all to Him now while we have time.

SHREVEPORT, LA

Weighed...

You have been weighed and found wanting.

VIA EMAIL

Released

Your ministry has released me from guilt about the Sabbath. CENTERVILLE, OH

Thank you for your sacrifice

I look forward to every issue of *Proclamation!* The articles feed my soul and affirm and add to my growing thirst for more of God’s truth in my life. I was raised a fourth generation Adventist. Your magazine confirms my own struggle to cleanse my mind of the falsehoods learned during 50 years in that organization. Thank you so much for your sacrifice in bringing this to us. I will be going to your website to make a donation.

DURAND, MI

MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:
Editor, *Proclamation!* Magazine
P.O. Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373
 OR EMAIL EDITOR:
proclamation@gmail.com

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LifeAssuranceMinistries.org

The life **EXAMINED** with Carolyn Macomber

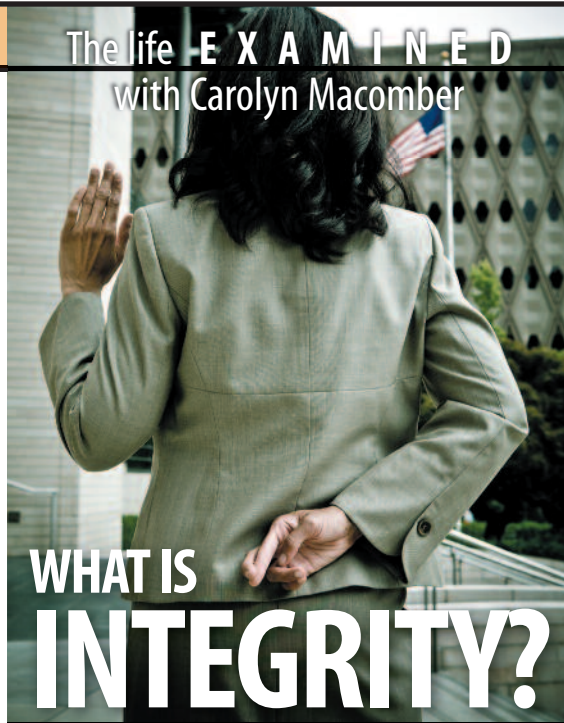
What does it mean to live with integrity? The word “integrity” is defined as the state of being whole and undivided. The opposite of integrity would be a state of dividedness.

For forty-six years I lived in a divided but unexamined state. I knew something wasn't quite right with my belief system, but I couldn't figure out what it was.

Seventh-day Adventism always seemed to have something missing as I was growing up. Things didn't seem to add up, yet there was plenty of addition in the doctrines I held as truth: 1260 days plus 7 weeks plus 49 weeks—and so on ... I was lost in an oblivion of numbers without context. They didn't make sense, but at the time I just trusted those more “learned” than I.

Then I began to study on my own—and things got worse. More and more confusion arose. The addition needed to be subtracted from my belief system. Finally I had to decide if I could live with a consciously divided heart—claiming to be an Adventist and appearing to have integrity, but privately disbelieving some of their foundational doctrines. I lived with this intense dividedness for quite some time until I made the decision to step into the abyss of the unknown: living outside of Adventism. It has not been easy, but I would not change my decision for anything! My heart has been made whole by the gift of a holy sacrifice—Jesus Christ. His resurrection has given me hope. Receiving His gift of grace has raised me, also, from death to life (Eph. 2:1-8) and multiplied my joy.

Now that I am gone from Adventism, I hear from those who continue to remain Seventh-day Adventists. Some tell me that they don't believe that Ellen G. White is a prophet; they also don't believe a person must keep Saturday as the Sabbath to be saved; they don't believe that Sabbath-keeping will be the test at the end of time (as Adventism teaches), and they also



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don't believe that Sunday-keepers will receive the mark of the beast (as Adventism also teaches).

Let us look at one of these doctrines: Sunday-keepers (those who worship on Sunday) will receive the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast is clearly a mark that associates a person with Satan. This claim is serious! To believe that those who worship on Sunday are connected with the devil is a damning accusation and doctrine. Yet this teaching is a doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For a person to say he doesn't believe this doctrine yet still to remain a

member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is like supporting an institution that sells poison in baby food packaging. To say that one doesn't believe in Ellen White, the seventh-day Sabbath as the seal of God, Sunday worship as the mark of the beast, the investigative judgment (that clearly denies the finished work of Christ), and yet still worship as an Adventist is to live with a divided heart—which is no integrity at all.

Some within Adventism have challenged me about criticizing them (although I am simply pointing out the inconsistency in Adventist doctrine) because they personally believe in Jesus and have a relationship with Him. I want to challenge them clearly concerning their divided heart. They are living with duplicity, believing one thing, but living another.

Stepping away from a divided heart and leaving what is known for the unknown is not easy. Yet to live with a complete lack of integrity is worse. I challenge those reading this who have one foot in Adventism and one foot out—I challenge you to live with integrity and search the Scriptures for yourself.

Who will you live for, yourself or Christ? Will you live without integrity or in peace with an undivided heart? †

Carolyn Macomber is teaching at an inner-city school. Discovering increasing inconsistencies between Adventism and the Bible, she withdrew her membership from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2009. She is a member of The Chapel Evangelical Free Church near Andrews University in St. Joseph, Michigan, is a children's teaching leader for the St. Joseph Bible Study Fellowship, and is co-founder and leader of the Former Adventist Fellowship at The Chapel. She will share her discoveries in this column, and you can read her experiences of processing out of Adventism into the Christian community at her blog at www.keriananderson.wordpress.com. You can watch her testimony at <http://www.formeradventist.com/weekends/fafweekend2010.html>.