



**Pastor Bob's
Confession**

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In the spirit of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) I have begun to search the Scriptures to see for myself if what I have been taught squares with the Word. It is not that I have been negligent in studying my Bible through the years, but, as a teacher and pastor, I had felt that the press of duties justified my use of shortcuts. So, I read volumes of the church's literature, thinking I was doing well. I seemed to have forgotten that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," After all, we had many scholars among us far more able than I, who had taken the time to study things out and put their findings on paper to bless the rest of us. I assumed our Godly leaders would not publish these studies for us if they were not in strict agreement with the Bible.

In the eighties, however, it gradually dawned on me that one must be selective of the authors he trusted. If one is not selective in what one studies confusion can result if the material disagrees with ones understanding of what the Word of God teaches. Choices had to be made because, for several years, Adventists had been battling over important doctrinal issues such as: what kind of nature Jesus had when He was born of Mary. Some of our theologians were insisting that Jesus had at that time *assumed* a *perfect, unfallen*, human nature. That would have made His nature just like Adam's *before* he sinned.

Others were saying, "No! No! No! That is new theology. We as a people have never believed that! The only difference between that position and Catholicism is that Catholics say Jesus had an *unfallen* nature because *Mary had never sinned.*" However, it seemed to me that Jesus could have only condemned sin in the

flesh if He had had a fleshly (fallen) nature like ours, as will be discussed below.

Eventually church publications stated that Adventism was large enough to permit belief in either point of view. How could that be so? Certainly a doctrinal position that required taking sides could be settled by careful Bible study. One of the points of view had to be wrong! Further, allowing error equal standing with truth practically guaranteed error would one day gain the ascendancy.

The assertion that it did not make any difference which view of the human nature of Christ I chose to believe and teach was incredible. It seemed to be designed to take the pressure off those who were promoting the new viewpoint of Jesus having taken the *pre-fall nature* of Adam rather than the *post-fall nature* of Adam. However, the Bible puts it this way in the book of Hebrews chapter 2 verse 16, “For, truly, he does not take on the life of angels, but that of the seed of Abraham”. In other places the Bible says that, “...Christ cometh of the seed of David...” John 7:42 (*see also Romans 1:3 and 2 Timothy 2:8*). Further, Sister White stated in the book *Desire of Ages*, “It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. {DA 48.5}”

[Clarifying reminder: Mrs. E.G. White (1827 to 1915) was one of the principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most Adventists believe her to have had the prophetic gift. The church has been blessed, in many areas, by her enlightening insights into scriptural themes that she received

while in vision. Most Adventists refer to her simply and fondly as “Mrs. White,” or “Sister White.”]

Which side was right? Was the side that was wrong bringing in the “omega of apostasy” that we had been warned would come, or was the “Omega” already here, undetected? If the “Omega” was here already, might not the people who were wrong in the partisan conflict regarding the human nature of Christ be adding to, or trying to strengthen, the “Omega” position? It certainly seemed to be too important of an issue to let go unresolved. My ministerial course at Emmanuel Missionary College (1955) had not prepared me for such involved questions. Permit me to backtrack to the early sixties.

As a new pastor in the Michigan Conference I had been given as many cases of *Questions on Doctrines* as I could use. I got a VW Beetle full, enough to supply each of my church members that would take one. I also presented a hard cover copy to each of my many “Ingathering” business donors. It was this book, published in 1957, which had first introduced the pre-fall human nature of Jesus as the “representative” SDA point of view. (See *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 9.) For Adventists this was a new theological position that had not been accepted by vote.

Looking back, I recall two events that should have told me that all were not pleased with the new book, but these did not assume any significance to me for many years. The first had been mentioned in a Michigan Conference pastor’s meeting. It was reported to the group that a well-known scholarly pastor (retired) was miffed because he had not been consulted during the preparation of *Questions on Doctrine*. We were told he was sending letters to the churches, making a big issue of a minor matter over which he disagreed with the authors. The issue (the

pre-fall human nature of Jesus) was mentioned but not discussed at that time with the pastors, nor was the allegedly disgruntled pastor (M. L. Andreason) named. We pastors were advised to ignore the matter.

The other hint that all was not quite right with *Questions on Doctrine* was when one of my elders casually asked me some questions about the nature of Christ that were beyond my knowledge and experience in the Word. He quickly sensed my discomfort, perceived that I was blissfully ignorant on the matter, and let it drop. Nearly forty years passed before I was able to again visit this dear octogenarian brother. He did not remember the above incident, but he remembered well Elder Andreason's *Letters to the Churches*, and the blessings they brought him. Even though I did not understand the issue, it was my own fault. I have eyes to read and ears to hear what the Spirit of Christ says to the churches. (Repeated seven times in Revelation, chapters two and three.) I just was not searching the Word for myself. I was caught up in the efficient use of shortcuts and let the press of duties rob me of many chances to learn the things heaven was anxious for all mankind not only to comprehend, but appreciate and obey.

In the eighties, Adventist officialdom again used that clever tactic mentioned above saying: "It really does not make any difference which view of the human nature of Jesus one holds". This had opened my eyes to a deep doctrinal division that had been festering for years of which, to my shame, I had been completely unaware. I dislike admitting it, but I would probably still be in that dull state of mind had not some Berean-minded brethren had the courage to stand for truth as they saw it. I might still be thinking that apostasy in the church had begun over a symptomatic issue such as the wearing of jewelry.

Now I understood that “Creeping Compromise” had deeper roots than I had imagined. To be teaching that the apostle Paul’s intentionally redundant phrase, “he also himself likewise took part of the same,” in Hebrews 2:14, did not mean that Jesus had taken a human nature like ours, was beyond belief. Neither could I accept that it did not make any difference which way I believed. I also had to admit that for over thirty years I had been a part of the problem, instead of being a part of its solution. I distributed *Questions on Doctrine* when I should have recognized the errors it contained. Even more serious discoveries were just ahead.

About this time I received a complimentary subscription to *Our Firm Foundation*. This publication was a tremendous blessing. It fed my soul. It increased my knowledge of the Word, and my confidence in it. I found there a group of authors that seemed correct in their usage and understanding of the Bible. I also appreciated the publication “Adventists Affirm,” with its group of authors trying to hold back the movement of our church from its foundational pillars. I now thought I had the advantage that our church elder had enjoyed thirty years earlier, when he received Pastor Andreason’s letters. I was now on mailing lists that gave me a clearer view of what was going on behind the scenes.

The book “*ISSUES: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*”, was published by church leadership in 1992 as an attempt to discredit those who were still insisting that Jesus had indeed inherited a fallen human nature from Mary. Of course we no longer accepted its premise that the human nature of Christ was irresolvable. (*Issues*, p.109) However, a question raised on page 39 of (*Issues*) that was most perplexing, “Are the modern defenders of so-called historic Adventism really

prepared to return to a non-Trinitarian position?” I wondered, “Just what does that involve?” I underlined it and recorded the passage with other notes at the back of the book to jog my memory for a more thorough study. But sorry Berean that I was, I did no more to resolve the question. I had failed the Berean test again.

Students of Adventist church history know that the church was nearly torn apart by a doctrinal crisis during the first decade of the twentieth century. The world-renowned Adventist physician, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, had set forth pantheistic notions of the personality of God. He skillfully used selected statements from the writings of E.G. White to buttress his own writings, and thus convinced many church leaders to look favorably on his unbiblical views of God. However, Mrs. White was still on the scene at that time. She protested the misuse of her writings, and vigorously entered the fray to defeat Dr. Kellogg’s unbiblical speculations about the personality and nature of God and His Son. Kellogg lost the theological battle. As a result the church lost some of its prominent leaders and much property.

Mrs. White had referred to the Kellogg controversy as the “alpha of deadly heresies.” (See *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 200.) Traumatic as that was for her, she was more concerned about a far more deceptive error, which she referred to as the “Omega.” She predicted it would follow the “alpha”. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and omega is the last. Used idiomatically, “omega” implies summation, finality, greatest development, and culmination. So, as used by Mrs. White, the Kellogg “alpha” false teaching about God was soon to be followed by a more deceptive “Omega,” the last, the summary, the greatest, deception about God. Well, her analogy made sense.

Jesus referred to himself as the “Alpha and the Omega,” “the first and the last,” and/or “the beginning and the end,” in six different verses in the book of Revelation. These references about Himself are scattered from the first through the last chapter. These statements all apply to truth about Himself as God’s Son. It follows logically, then, that the omega of deadly heresies would thus apply to errors, to the most deceptive of lies, about the nature and relationship of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Surely we had been given enough clues about the “Omega,” the fullness, the embodiment, of all the errors about God to be foisted upon the Remnant Church just before the end of time, to be able to figure out what it was. Following are more of those clues:

“The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 204, 205)

The “Omega” would “be of a most startling nature.” (*Ibid.*, p. 197) It would be so deceptive that the messenger trembled for

God's people.

But just what was that "Omega?" Could the Catholic/Evangelical doctrine that Jesus had taken an unfallen human nature be the "omega" of apostasy? Some of us had thought that perhaps it might be, but in some ways it did not seem to fit what was known about the "Omega." For example, it did not soon follow either the "alpha of deadly heresies," or Mrs. White's death as she predicted it would.

As I was pondering the identity of the "Omega" in the spring of 1999 an article appeared in the April 22 issue of the *Adventist Review* that grabbed my attention. The title of the lead article was "Heresy or Hopeful Sign?" (Referred to hereafter as "Heresy") The not so subtle subtitle was, "How early Adventists struggled with the truth about the Trinity." There was much about this article that reminded me of the journalistic style of the *Issues* book. It was obvious that someone was questioning the church's belief regarding the Trinity; Unsettling waves were being made. This article had been written both to bolster the official position and do damage control.

I wondered, "Have I been sleeping at my post all this time? Why haven't any of my trusted authors sounded an alarm? What are we missing?" Notice that I was still depending somewhat on others. However, I was beginning to realize that I needed to take personal responsibility for checking things out for myself. I was gradually sensing my need of a more determined Berean attitude.

At the first reading of the "Heresy" article I did not know enough about the subject to fault many of the points made, but the necessity of careful study was urged upon me by the following four glaring statements:

I. “... it is not so surprising that some teachings assumed by most Christians were rather late in receiving attention from this small but rapidly growing Christian denomination.” (“Heresy,” p.9)

Adventism’s founders as well as the Bible (Revelation 14:8) referred to this group of “most Christians,” mentioned in the RH article as “Babylon,” (i.e. confusion). Why should that group of churches, at this late date, be used as Adventism’s standard? To show how logical it was for Adventists to take so long to finally get around to dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity the above article lists the following chronological progression of reforms in doctrinal and lifestyle understanding and acceptance: 1. The investigative judgment. 2. The Sabbath. 3. Giving up pork, and then, forty years later, 4. Giving up oysters. Each of these reforms had taken Adventism’s founders further and further from the churches they had left. Only after the last of these reforms, (after giving up oysters) did some of their successors begin to agitate for the acceptance of the Trinity. What a shock to find out that the “Trinity” doctrine was Babylon’s contribution to Adventism.

What could be greater than a change in whom a church worships? I certainly was not aware that such a change had been made. I had thought Adventism’s founders, with prophetic guidance within the first few years had laid a firm foundation that was not to be moved. An angel told Sister White, “Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these [the three angels] messages (*Early Writings*, p. 258, 1858)”. This last-mentioned change in Adventist beliefs regarding the Trinity had embraced one of the few doctrines, held in common by Catholics and Evangelicals alike. Jesus Himself calls these churches “Babylon.” Was it not illogical, suspect even, to tout such a

change as a reform? Changing whom one worships would seem to be moving foundations, wouldn't it?

II. *“Ellen White’s testimony, by calling attention to scriptures whose significance had been overlooked, created a paradigm shift that couldn’t be overlooked.” (“Heresy,” p. 11.)*

No scriptural examples were given for such a “paradigm shift” in doctrine. Mrs. White herself had pointed to “the Bible and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 595) But no biblical evidence had been given in the “Heresy” article for such a change.

My thoughts were troubled as I wondered, “If the Bible is not plain enough to enable us to figure out whom we are to worship, how could it possibly be the standard of all truth? Were we to worship ‘*the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*’ (*John 17:3*), or were we to worship a Trinity, which seemed to be totally unsupported by scripture?”

III. *“The Fundamental Beliefs can and will be refined as further insights clarify old truths or as new situations necessitate new explanations to the world of what the Bible teaches and Seventh-day Adventists believe.” (“Heresy,” p. 13).*

This is the last, the summary sentence, of the article. Notice what the “Heresy” author, a professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, has said in this carefully crafted summary. Perceived situations “can and will” be used to justify the necessity of “new explanations to the world, of what the Bible teaches and Seventh-day Adventists believe,” regarding our “Fundamental Beliefs.” If situational ethics are unscriptural, what about situational doctrine?

The word “*refined*,” as used in the summary can mean

“subtlety”, which includes the following in its definition: “elusive, not immediately obvious, clever, characterized by craft or slyness; devious. Operating in a hidden and usually injurious way; insidious.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary* definition for “subtle.”) This describes precisely the methods used in bringing about the reversal of the “historic” Adventist positions regarding the human nature of our Savior and the Trinity Doctrine.

IV. “Whatever may have been Ellen White’s original beliefs, she never expressed anti-Trinitarian views in her writings, and she eventually led Adventists to reconsider and accept a Biblical concept of the Trinity, as we shall see later.” (“Heresy,” p. 10)

V. “She never wrote an article directly confronting wrong views about the Godhead. But she published in the Desire of Ages and elsewhere statements that couldn’t be explained away and that were destined eventually to change the view of the church.” (“Heresy,” p. 12)

I noticed that the statement “She never wrote an article directly confronting wrong views about the Godhead,” overlooked the whole Kellogg controversy, which she had called the “alpha of deadly heresies.” What else had been overlooked? Here we were dealing with a subject that also involved Godhead worship issues, The Immutable Law of God, and The Three Angels’ Messages, at least, and probably the rest of the pillars of our faith, if thoroughly understood. Was this another case of “refining” our doctrine?

This move to accept a Trinitarian Theology appeared to have been an “Omega Class” turnaround of the entire church, because

the author of the “Heresy” had clearly stated that, until the turn of the century, there was a “tide of anti-Trinitarian theology among Adventists.” He also verified that the foundations for the above reversal were being laid just as the alpha of apostasy came to full bloom, and was rejected. (See “Heresy,” p. 11.)

In the early 1950s the world’s perception of the Seventh Day Adventist Church seemed to demand that something be done regarding our doctrine. Several Evangelical writers and speakers were circulating the idea that the Seventh Day Adventist Church was a cult. This classification was based on two of our doctrines regarding Christ: *(1) The Pioneers believed that Christ was in reality the literal Son of God before His incarnation. (2)The Pioneers of the church had held that Christ took upon Himself the nature of fallen man at His incarnation.* The Founders of this church believed these two positions were clearly supported by the Bible. The situation presented as necessitating a new explanation to the world of what Seventh-day Adventists believe. There must have seemed to some of the church leaders an urgent need to remove from the denomination the stigma of being classified as a cult by the Evangelicals.

Many praised, as reform, the church’s subtle reversal on these two major doctrines. These moves had also made Adventists more like the churches around them. The very same churches that Jesus calls “Babylon.” Jesus bids His true followers to use the same term in giving the three angels’ messages, (Revelation 14:6-12) and they will obey. We need to admit the truthfulness of the Lord’s diagnosis of our condition, (proud, worldly, selfish, blind, wretched, and miserable, and spiritually poor, and naked) and take the cure (repentance). Please take a break now and prayerfully read Revelation 3:14-22. While this

message applies primarily to the Adventist leadership, woe to the laity who mirror their errant leader's symptoms, and do not take the prescribed cure!

If falling in line with the Trinitarian theology of the mainline churches were the predicted "Omega," it is not surprising that Mrs. White "trembled for our people." (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 203) What could have been more deceptive than to have her "lesser light" writings be utilized, as both lever and pivot point, to force the change as to whom Adventists worship?

It would be hard to admit that we had been wrong for so long. I was finding that to be the case, yet why should I have been so surprised at how I felt? Had not one third of the angels living in the very presence of the Father entertained wrong ideas about Him and His Son, and spurned their tender entreaties to repent? The unrepentant angels, in giving their faith and loyalty to Lucifer, had unconsciously accepted another as their god. So if I were wrong I had best admit it! Why share the future of those fallen angels?

However, maybe I was wrong in my assessment of the "Heresy" article. Maybe this Trinity question was not, after all, the faith destroying "Omega" Adventists had been warned against. There was no maybe, though, as to whether or not I needed to take personal responsibility for finding out the truth about whom I was to worship. That was long over due.

There were two reasons why I began my Berean quest in the writings of the end time messenger, as was seen in quotes **I**, **IV** and **V** above. It was she who was alleged to have provided the rationale for persuading the Church's acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity. The second reason is that Mrs. White, having

passed to her rest, could no longer protest the misuse of her writings to prove the new point of view, as she had done with Dr. Kellogg's attempted misapplications.

The first chapter of her book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, entitled, "Why Was Sin Permitted," yielded the following crystal clear statements that directly contradicted the article's claim that Sister White "never expressed anti-Trinitarian views" quoted above. ("Heresy," p. 10)

"The *Sovereign of the universe* was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had *an associate—a co-worker* who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.' John 1:1,2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—*the only being* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34—emphasis added)

"There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him who, *next to Christ*, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. (*Ibid.*, p. 35—emphasis added)

"... though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. ... And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was *the prerogative of Christ alone*. (*Ibid.* - emphasis added)

"*The King of the universe* summoned the heavenly hosts

before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true *position of His Son*, ... The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled *both*. ... Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that *none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes*, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will." (*Ibid.* p.36—emphasis added)

Please read the whole chapter to appreciate how powerful these passages are when read in their context. It is as plain as can be that the Father is the Godhead, for it is He who is described as "The *Sovereign* of the universe," and as "The *King* of the universe." He shares everything with His only begotten Son, "... the only being *in all the universe* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God." (*Great Controversy*, p. 493) The Sovereign Father's only begotten Son is his "co-worker" and "associate." These nouns are singular, so, to this point, we have two divine Beings described.

Now! "Sin originated with him, who next to Christ, had been most honored of God, and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven." Lucifer, the "father of lies," he who would "be like the most High," (Isaiah 14:14) at whatever price, had been at one time third in command in Heaven.

It must be admitted that this *sampling* of straightforward statements, from just one chapter of the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, is much more than strongly anti-Trinitarian. The fact that Lucifer is a created being, yet "next to Christ," and third in command, *precludes even the possibility* of the existence of more than two divine Beings.

Obviously, the "Heresy" author was being less than

forthright when he stated that Mrs. White "... never expressed anti-Trinitarian views in her writings." ("Heresy," p. 10) Further, that she would have purposefully made "a seven-word comment that would turn the tide of anti-Trinitarian theology among Adventists" ("Heresy," p. 11), would require great intellectual agility to accept, especially if one were to remember that she herself said, "God will have a people on the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms." (*Great Controversy*, p. 595)

That there was "the tide of anti-Trinitarian theology among Adventists" at the beginning of the past century was enlightening though. What we have today must be newer theology. Below is that tide-turning seven-word comment, in its context, as it appeared in *Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897, the year before *Desire of Ages* was published. This may well be where the *Desire of Ages* compiler found it.

"In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Savior." (*Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897-emphasis supplied)

If this quotation even hints of a Trinity, Mrs. White would be directly contradicting the sampling of very clear statements that we just read, statements describing the Godhead as a sovereign Father, a Father who shares all His attributes and power with His only begotten Son. She obviously was beautifully describing, with all the fervor at her disposal, the unimaginable gift of eternal life. Jesus inherited His eternal life from His Father (Hebrews 1:5 John 5:26). We did not inherit that kind of life, but Jesus is anxious to share His inheritance, that very same eternal life, with

us, as a gift!

The usage Adventist theologians have made of the above “seven-word comment” seems to be covered by the definition of the word “refine,” under quote number three, above.

The most charitable explanation possible of the “Heresy” author’s use of that “seven-word comment” is to treat it as a prime example of doing what nearly all of us have been guilty of doing, myself included. We have been reading with our Trinitarian glasses (our preconceptions, which may be misconceptions) in order to make revelation coincide with what we have been, and are being, taught. In academia this is called “Reasoning from the desired conclusion.” This way of thinking is a perilous mistake that ought to be shunned, since the conclusions reached not only remain unproven, they are often incorrect.

Sometimes we absorb misinformation because we just do not search the Scriptures for ourselves. We have more faith in a pastor’s ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth than we do in our own. Besides, we pay him to do it for us, don’t we! The situation is very similar between ministerial students and their teachers. We must carefully evaluate what we hear and read, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, or we lose our Berean safety net, and may be easily led astray.

Gradually, I realized that a belief in the Trinity requires one to believe that Jesus is not really a begotten son because, “Christ did ultimately derive His divine life from the Father” (Heresy p. 11). In other words, the Father is not really a father, and His only begotten Son is not really a begotten Son, because He could not have been begotten without having had a beginning sometime in eternity past. Is it any wonder Jesus calls this “confusion,” (English for “Babylon”) and why one day He will be forced to

sorrowfully say to such, “I know you not whence ye are: depart from me.” (Luke 13:27)

The concept that, “Jesus is not really an only begotten Son,” is precisely what the “Heresy” author was trying to prove. This is shown by his additional comments on the same, “tide-turning” seven words. Note well as he continues: “Christ didn’t ultimately derive His life from the Father”. Further, the “Heresy” author says that by using these seven words Mrs. White had “asserted His full deity and equality with the Father.” (“Heresy” p. 11) [Sic - as opposed to partial deity, I suppose]. It does matter to you that this contradicts the plainest statements about Jesus, the only begotten Son, inheriting His name from, and being “appointed heir of all things” by his Father, doesn’t it? (Hebrews 1:5, 2) It does to me, also!

So, to be like the churches around them, some of the Adventist Leaders and Theologians gradually led the church to embrace the Trinity, “... the central doctrine of the Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the church.” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16) It had been the refusal of the three nations (horns) of Daniel 7, to accept the then-new theology, that the Son was not a begotten Son, that had occasioned their being plucked up, annihilated, by the little horn with a mouth speaking great “words against the most High” God. (Daniel, chapter 7, describing prophetically the emergence of the Papacy.) How many millions died then, and during the Dark Ages of Papal supremacy following the destruction of these three nations in 538 AD, only the final judgment will reveal.

This bloodily enforced Trinity doctrine is the cement that binds the ecumenical movement together. Now the SDA leadership is pleased to be associating itself with it. The title of

the World Council of Churches (WCC) book, *So Much In Common*, tells it all, and it was co-authored by Adventism's resident ecumenicist, B. B. Beach. This verifies that Adventist's belief in the Trinity now is similar enough to that of the WCC membership to make them acceptable to it as a sister church. Remember! A church that lessens the distance to Rome "... is a backsliding church." (*Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894)

Please do not sigh and ask yourself, "Is this really a salvational issue?" It most certainly is! "Why?" you may ask. Because the salvation landmarks have been moved. The foundations are being destroyed. If one still worships a Trinity he has actually disqualified himself from giving the principal part of the three angels' messages. This has to be true for anyone who knows neither whom to worship, nor whom he is worshipping. Follow on, fellow Berean candidate. When one searches the Word for oneself, the Comforter sees to it that his Word shines "more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18)

Seventh-day Adventism's founders pointed to the Bible as their charter, rather than to the decisions of councils, or to the writings of a new prophetess. In Revelation 14:7, especially, they saw a mandate. The verse was understood as a call to a dying world to pay attention to the urgency of understanding the judgment hour message. It is a day of reckoning, when God's pardon will no longer be available. It includes Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary, to resolve the sin problem in general, and more importantly, to us, the resolution of that sin problem in our lives, so God can save us. This verse also teaches the Sabbath of the Creator. That is a lot to pack into just one verse, yet this is only its lesser part. If together, we can take off our Trinitarian glasses for another look at this information-packed verse, we will

see that all that has been detailed above are only its secondary applications.

Let's take a closer look: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." (Revelation 14:7 first part) This has to be speaking of the Father. If the judgment were not His, He could not give it to His Son, as both John (5:22) and Matthew (11:27) quote Jesus as stating was the case.

Now the second part of Revelation 14:7: "And worship him who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." This identifies the Son, the Agent of the Father, in the creation of all things. He then instituted the Sabbath to memorialize His creative power, including the most complicated of all, the creation of new lives for those who answer His knock on their hearts door. (Exodus 31:13) This necessitates the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

Do you see it? Who we are to worship is the primary focus of this verse. Who? The Father and His only begotten Son, that's who! Jesus says that life eternal is based upon this knowledge! "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) "The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted." (EGW, in *The Youth's Instructor*, July 7, 1898)

It was Jesus Himself who said, from heaven, that He had received the message in the book of Revelation from His Father, to pass on to John, who was to write it out for us. (Revelation 1:1) Typical of the many times Jesus gave the Father as the source for all He said while here on earth, in the flesh, is John 12:49. Listen! "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

Those who worship any beings other than the Father and the Son are in the class that need the warning our Father wants someone to give to Babylon. He has so many children in danger there, worshipping in vain, being taught “for doctrines the commandments of men.” Adventists need it first if they are going to give the message to the world!

That we Adventists, as a church, are at present disqualified from giving the most important part of the three angels’ messages needs to be emphasized again. For example, how can it be said, with a loud voice, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” if we are cherishing Rome’s central doctrine, and worshipping the false god she raised up over the bodies of millions of God’s faithful followers? Those endowed with power to give the final messages are “undefiled” with the “whore’s” doctrines. We must repent “... and anoint our eyes with eye salve, that we might see.” (Revelation 3:18) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:5) This is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27) This is the “everlasting gospel.”

It is Jesus who is knocking at my heart’s door, and yours. He has promised to come in, and stay, if only we will let Him in. It is His spirit, His mind that seeks entrance that He might dwell within. What companion could be more delightful, more helpful, or more comforting in battle with evil, than Jesus? It is even better than having Jesus, in person, living with us. Jesus Himself said so. “It is expedient for you that I go to my Father.” (John 16:7-15) Now His omnipresent spirit can be within His friends, everywhere. Within is so much closer than with. Further, this is the same spirit that the Father has, so there is plenty to go around. How do I know that? “... for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him.” (John 3:34)

The Father and His Son have proven that they will do anything that is honest, cost what it may, to save me. He who was once Heaven's third in command has never done, nor can he ever do, anything honorable for me. Why, oh why, have I ever honored him? What a sorry Berean I have been!! Can you relate to my experiences?

I was shocked to find that I truly was, "... wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17), when it came to knowing my bible like I should have (likely the experience of many of my fellow church members). This conclusion, regarding myself, was attested to by the following considerations: 1. Being so gullible to have accepted the erroneous interpretations of scripture, necessary to support belief in the Trinity, without so much as a blink of the eye; 2. To also have been teaching this bloodstained error to others, decade after decade; 3. All the while expecting, momentarily, to be imbued with the Latter Rain power of the Spirit.

Infinite odds accompany the hope of being in the group who are empowered by the Spirit to give the loud cry. The "Latter Rain" power is promised only to those who are not defiled with the false doctrines mentioned above, (*see Revelation 14, especially verse 4.*) This most certainly would include the Papacy's "central doctrine," the Trinity of her contriving. Think about it: Could anyone who is defiled with Rome's central doctrine receive the "latter rain," or be included in the "hundred forty and four thousand"?

Let us review our situation from another perspective. We can readily see that corporate Adventism has added an extra being to those commanded to be worshipped by the first angel. We do not understand very well why the second angel says that

“Babylon is fallen,” because we no longer know what is wrong with Babylon’s god. If we are still Trinitarians, we are powerless, yes, impotent, to give the “Third Angels’ Message.” Keep thinking: Is it possible that the “latter rain” power, necessary to give these messages, could be given to the saints by that rebel leader Rome elevated to equality with the Father and the Son?

Consider the implications of this small sample of a great number of related questions that have troubled thousands of Adventists for many years. 1. Why did Adventist leadership present a gold medallion to the Pope? 2. Why are papal representatives invited to, and lauded at General Conference sessions? 3. Why is the papal flag paraded across the stage at G.C. sessions as if it were, in God’s sight, a legitimate nation? 4. What has happened in Adventism so that its leadership now boasts that only the Catholic Church is more hierarchical? (See E.E.O.C. vs. P.P.P.A.) Keep thinking: Is the “latter rain” power going to be poured out on the majority in the church? Why not?

There must be no equivocation. If we are worshipping that third being the Papacy elevated by force of arms to equality with the Father and the Son, in order to establish its Trinity, “the central doctrine of the Catholic faith,” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p.16) we are honoring the beast himself. Satan does not mind if we do so ignorantly. He is satisfied that we are out of the battle, impotent to give God’s last warning messages to a doomed world.

There is still hope, since “the mark of the Beast” has not yet been given. As the time for the mark to be given arrives, however, we may confidently expect that a band of Seventh-day Adventist theologians and administrators will bring out “new explanations to the world of what the Bible teaches and what Seventh-day

Adventist's believe," thus further refining our Fundamental Beliefs "as new situations necessitate." (Refer again to quote number three, from page 13 of the "Heresy" article, where it says that this "can and will" be done.)

The question needs to be asked: "If I cannot trust all of our theologians and administrators to desist from reasoning from their desired conclusions, how will I ever know what is truth?" To give my answer to this vital question is the purpose of my confession. I had to admit that I had been far too trusting. Also, that I had covered the neglect of my personal responsibility for finding out what God had to say to me, with a pious-appearing cloak of loyalty to the church. That is a poor substitute for loyalty to Jesus.

Perhaps you, too, will have to make some similar confessions before there will be any hope for you, so make them, and begin enjoying the light of truth, the light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

All of the above is intended to point up the need for a Bible study plan that will keep us in the Father's lighted path, and lay wide open Satan's darkest schemes. If the plan can be concisely stated, thoroughly understood, and systematically followed, we will no longer be led around like blind sheep. Following is my attempt to verbalize such a plan. Ideas for improving the statement are welcome.

THE BEREAN SEARCH PLAN

The Bible, rightly understood, does not contradict itself. It cannot, for it is the Word of God. This demands a prayerful,

careful, patient, searching of the Word, comparing scripture with scripture, until a clear answer to our query comes into focus. Occasionally, the best that can be done, at the time, is an understanding based on the weight of evidence. Our safety net is the acknowledgment that a correct conclusion must not, and will not, contradict any part of God's Word, for his Word is truth! (John 17:17) All questions will not, and need not, be immediately resolved. We should bask in the assurance that it is our heavenly Father's pleasure to supply each one of His children's needs by Christ Jesus. (see Philippians 4:19)

The same principles of study also apply to the prophetic writings of Sister E. G. White. This demands that any apparent contradiction is the result of some misunderstanding. Such an impasse is not to cause us to doubt, but is to challenge us to look for more specific passages and the weight of evidence to resolve the issue. We are not free to pick and choose in order to justify belief in a pre-selected conclusion!

The Bible is to be given precedence, not because Ellen White was an "inferior" prophet, but because she, as only one, is bound by the aggregate of all the authors included in it, just as all the Bible's authors are bound to agree with each other. A Berean would accept Sister Whites own words when she says that her writings are a "lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light [the Bible]." (*Review & Herald*, January 20, 1903) Further, the Berean believes that "God will have a people on the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms." (*Great Controversy*, p. 595)

Isaiah 8:20 is the heart of the Berean Search Plan: "To the

law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

One needs to be acutely conscious of the danger posed by pride of opinion or preconceived ideas, either of which can result in putting a “slant,” or a “spin,” on a passage in order to force it to fit our understanding or purpose. This is reasoning from the desired conclusion, which, in this case, has far worse consequences than a wrong answer. It is arrogantly telling God what His Word means. God forbid! May we, instead, prayerfully ask Him to teach us what it means? We must stop looking to others to understand what is the interpretation of God’s Holy Word. We have already seen the inevitable result of men enforcing man’s false doctrines on God’s people, in the liquidation of those whose consciences would not allow them to accept the Trinity, that outrageous “central doctrine of the Catholic faith.” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p.16) Adventist leadership has, until now, also chosen the hierarchical path, rather than the path of repentance that leads to becoming a servant of Christ and His church. That makes having a Berean attitude all the more relevant.

Have you ever wondered, fellow Berean, why the churches are weak, and ready to die? Listen!

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’ Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and he can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God

always results in creating confidence in one another.” (*Review & Herald*, August 26, 1890—emphasis added)

Just now, pause and reflect. Note how forcibly this applies to us as individual members of these churches. Nothing is going to change for the better until we understand this. It is Jesus, Himself, who is the Comforter and Guide. He was made perfect through suffering, and through living without sin in a fallen human nature. Thus He became the perfect Advocate, Comforter, and Intercessor. How much, how very much, we and our loved ones need this knowledge. [Get Allen Stump’s “must read” book, *The Foundation of our Faith*, to learn how the above three underlined words are related in the Greek. Study over 500 verses that re-enforce the Berean discoveries you will read about there. Comparing text with text such as: 2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Peter 1:9-11, tell us who the Holy Ghost is. Learn the historical facts about how the Catholic version of the Trinity developed, and how it was surreptitiously brought into Adventism 1200 years later, and much more.]

The following quote compares a group of worshipers who were attentive, as to what affected their salvation, with “the careless multitude” that worships complacently. Especially notice the source of the spirit each group received. It is a life-or-death matter.

“Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, ‘My Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace. I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up

to the throne, and pray, ‘Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children.” (*Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56) Something to ponder: Could Jesus breathe out another’s breath, or spirit?

What does a person do when it begins to dawn on him that he may be wrong about a major point of faith that he holds in common with most everyone he knows, loves, and has confidence in? This budding Berean can tell you that he trembled while he dug deeper, half hoping that his former understanding was correct after all. Why did not one of my trusted champions, one of the authors that had been so true to the Word until now, see what I was discovering, and write about it? That would give me some confidence, I thought, but I soon saw the irony of my wish. This was an anti-Berean attitude. This was the reason I had to confess that I had been living in a spiritual twilight zone through out my ministry. Below, in a “nutshell,” is the solution of my, and maybe your, problem also.

“Trustworthy confidence comes only from doing one’s own prayerful comparing of scripture with scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

We know that God always has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. I am anxious to be numbered among them in giving the three angels’ messages, along with a multitude of others. Hopefully you will be included too. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could also have a part in giving the fourth angel’s message? We would know for certain, then, that “we are nearing home.”

While I was digging deeper, several of my champions,

authors who had been true to the Word until now, men who had stoutly defended the “he also himself likewise took part of the same,” fallen human nature of Jesus, weighed in on what I was now sure was the enemy’s position. They actually defended the Trinitarian view. I concluded that they, most likely, had not read the “Heresy” article, since their defense of the Trinity did not address many issues raised there. (Many facets of it are not covered here, either.) I was quite sure though that these dear champions, unlike the “Heresy” author, did not understand that the Trinity package included denial, both of the literal fatherhood of the Father and the pre-incarnation sonship of Jesus. They were not yet aware that, in this area, they were reasoning from their forgone conclusions. They still had their Trinitarian glasses on, which allowed them to interpret certain E.G. White statements in a way that make her appear to contradict both the Bible and herself. Let’s pray for these champions, and for a multitude of new ones, to quickly warn our own church, and then the world.

What kind of friend was I, being so slow to try to help them? I should be shouting the good news I was discovering. Was not the battle the LORD’S? He could help me wield a pen in his cause!

It hurts to admit that oneself is a coward. It also hurts to see the strong hands of your friends faltering, about to drop the torch of truth they have held aloft so long. It hurts to realize that nearly all of us, including some of God’s champions, have ignored a challenge like that thrown down to “historic Adventism” in the *Issues* book. It hurts to see “Creeping Compromise” breaking into a gallop, and to admit it is because we have been listening to the wrong spirit. Yes, it hurts to admit that we have been wrong; that we have been negligent, blind and gullible.

We do not have to remain any of the above. In fact, we must not, if we expect to fulfill God's purpose for our lives. It is long past time that the "Remnant," in all churches, accepted that *Issues* challenge to historic Adventism "to return to a non-Trinitarian position." (*Issues*, p. 39) In fact, those Adventists that have not yet done that are withholding the essence of God's final warning to the world, since they have not yet understood that the first angel's message is strongly anti-Trinitarian, and that the second, third, and fourth angels' messages share its major anti-Trinitarian element.

The honor of our Father, of His only begotten Son, and our honor as their people, demands that we accept the *Issues* challenge. The "Heresy" article details well what is involved in that challenge, and is, in fact, a reiteration of it.

We must let the Savior take our reins in His hands, as He will, if we adopt a Berean-type search plan. Let us join their noble clan. Like their Spirit-led teacher Paul, let us admit it if we have been wrong in our view of God. Let us join him in proclaiming, with every ounce of strength remaining, that it is the Father's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ Himself, who is "the author and finisher of our faith."

God told Moses that after his death the people would "rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land ... and will forsake me, and break my covenant." (Deuteronomy 31:16) The Bible is a record of the repeated shameful fulfillments of that prophecy, interspersed with thrilling times of revival. "When the fullness of time was come" for the appearance of the Messiah, Israel was again in darkness, not worshipping idols of wood or stone, but teaching for doctrines the traditions and commandments of men. Jesus directed a small group of Jews,

whose understanding of their Scriptures had led them to be expecting the promised Messiah, to a clearer understanding of the “one God” and His promised Son, as revealed in their writings. They became His disciples.

The crucifixion of Jesus three and one half years later devastated His followers, as it completely swept away their hope in the promised restoration of the kingdom of Israel. During the forty-day interval between the resurrection and His permanent return to heaven, (His ascension) Jesus was able to help His dear friends understand that it was impossible for their God to physically restore the Kingdom until He had a people with restored hearts to give it to. Preparing such a people was to be their work.

Once the disciples had removed their “Earthly Kingdom” glasses, they were able to understand and accept the message of personal submission to, and worship of, the Father, and His only begotten Son, as prerequisites to the establishment of the earthly kingdom. The disciples were saddened, though, as they understood that Jesus was about to permanently leave them. There were many, so many, things they still had not thoroughly understood, and so much they feared they would not remember even though Jesus had promised that He would bring all things to their remembrance. How could they ever manage to cope without Jesus?

In John chapter 14, we see Jesus addressing that fear when He promised the disciples He would send another Comforter from the Father to abide with them forever. Jesus, in His usual engaging manner, is speaking about Himself in the third person. Listen! “This Comforter is the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees, nor knows him, but you

already know Him, because he is living with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (See John, Chapter 14, especially verses 16-18, paraphrased)

When the fire fell on the disciples at Pentecost, the once-mysterious words of Jesus burst into their consciousness. They knew it was the Spirit of their ascended Lord, for had He not told them that He would bring all things to their remembrance? And what was it they remembered?

“You will know Him, for He is living with you, and shall be in you.”

The disciples lost their fear of men that day, and before night saw three thousand souls join the kingdom of heaven through being baptized in Jesus’ name. That was just the beginning. Before many years had passed, their enemies were forced to admit that they had turned the world upside down. And now the rest of the story, the part the world could not know, because it did not know Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit of Jesus Himself, dwelling in His disciples, and working through them, that had turned the world upside down.

It is true that Seventh-day Adventists, like our fellow Sabbath keepers nearly two thousand years ago, have reverted to teaching, and enforcing, for doctrines the traditions of men. The good news is that another period of revival has already begun. Where will we stand?

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when Champions are few, this will be our test.” (E.G. White - *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 136)

May God Bless you with His Holy Spirit to guide you as you prayerfully study His Word.

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