

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

PAUL'S TEACHING IN II CORINTHIANS

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Editor's Preface

Even in his deep emotional distress over the possible reaction of the Church at Corinth to the strong rebukes in his first letter, Paul's mind turned to the deeper cause of their problems. A goodly number of the Church had come from the Jewish community, including the chief elder of the synagogue and possibly his successor, Sosthenes. To these Moses had been, and perhaps still was, a priority in their religious thinking and veneration. The Torah, written by him, was read every Sabbath. In fact, the record states that Moses was preached in every city (Acts 15:21). Paul, though reared even as they, had seen a different vision. He had plainly written in the first Letter, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock" (1:23). It is possible that the stumblingblock was still in the hearts of many of the Jewish converts. Paul, in this second letter, begins his theological discussion with the glory of the Law under "the ministration of death." He contrasts this with "the ministration of the Spirit" which he also terms, "the ministration of righteousness." This new ministration deals with the tables of the heart, and brings true liberty. He calls it "our gospel," and proceeds to enlarge upon it in the following chapters before Titus arrives from Corinth. Some very fundamental concepts are set forth: The "dying of the Lord Jesus" - what does that mean? Christ "made ... to be sin" for a purpose - what was the purpose? The "in Him" concept dominates whether from the viewpoint of God, or the need of man.

Just as we finished writing the analysis of Paul's teaching in his second letter, we received the December issue of *ALMA Torch* which contained the "Preface" of an appeal to the President of the General Conference. Informative but flawed, we have responded, and thus, the second article. While we had intended to discuss an article in the November issue of *The Remnant Herald*, also from Australia, we laid it aside for a subsequent issue of *WVN*. Due to the subject matter which formed the basis of the 4th Quarter's Adult Sabbath School Lessons, a special issue of *WVN* is being prepared.



Paul's Teaching in the II Corinthian Letter

Paul's deep concern for the Church at Corinth and his anxiety over their reception of the reproof he had sent to them by letter and by word through Titus dominates his thinking in the first two chapters of his second Epistle. When he reaches Troas and does not find Titus, he "had no rest in [his] spirit" even though a door was opened unto him to proclaim the gospel. He takes leave of the brethren there and goes into Macedonia (2:12-13). Even then he did not find Titus, and wrote - "our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (7:5). However, between the time he left Troas, and Titus did come, Paul penned the basic teachings found in his second letter.

The Ministration of the Spirit

In contrasting the "ministration of the Spirit" with the "ministration of death," Paul rests his exegesis on the experience of Moses when he descended from Mount Sinai with the second tables of stone on which had been engraved the Law of Ten Commandments. See Exodus 34:29-35. There was no question "the ministration of condemnation" was glorious, so glorious that the children of Israel could not look on the face of Moses. Moses had to "vail" his face when he spoke to them (II Cor. 3:13). But "if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory... For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" (3:9, 11).

Whenever as Adventists, we read in the Word, the slightest suggestion that anything connected with the Ten Commandments was done away, we become threatened and perceive it to be an attack on the Sabbath or to be some interpretation of Scripture whereby the Sabbath can be set aside. We react negatively to the truth which the Scriptures seeks to set forth. Here, clearly, Paul is speaking of that which was "written and engraven on stones," and calls it "the ministration of death" (3:7). There is, however, "the ministration of the Spirit," also noted as "the ministration of righteousness" (v. 9) which is to "exceed in glory" all previous ministrations and be written "in the fleshy tables of the heart" (v. 3).

So that a study of what Paul has written will not leave us apprehensive, let us first firmly underpin the Sabbath. It was established by God at creation, not entered into by man because he had completed six days of labor. It was God who had "worked" and then chose to rest after He had finished the creation. The Sabbath was Adam's first full day of life and thus at the very beginning of that life, God gave to him the Sabbath. His life began in commun-

ion with God, and was intended to continue so. There was no dictum which proclaimed, "and the evening and the morning was the seventh day," as at the close of the other six days. Sin disrupted that planned eternal communion. However, God did not take back the Sabbath from him nor his children (Gen. 4:3; margin).

[Perhaps an observation or two might be in order at this point. If man was to observe the day on which Adam first kept the Sabbath based on the days of his existence, then man would observe the second day, Monday, as his Sabbath, but it is God's Sabbath given to him that he is to observe. Man is to rest on the Sabbath not because of the work he has done for six days; but to rest from, lay aside, his work and renew his spirit in the power of God. It is the laying aside of a reliance in his own works, and turning by faith to a trust in what God has done and wants to do for him that is the essence of the true Sabbath under the ministration of righteousness, the ministration of the Spirit.]

When God chose Abraham and established through Abraham a people for Himself, He gave to them "a perpetual covenant" based in the Sabbath as "a sign between [Him] and the children of Israel forever;" and the reason it was so given is stated - "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:14-18). It is because of what God did, not what man does that the Sabbath is to be kept. (Man rests from his daily toil every day) That "perpetuity" involves us also. Paul wrote - "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

In His earthly ministry, Jesus had various conflicts over the Sabbath. Many of His miracles of healing were performed on the Sabbath. See John 5:16; 9:14; Mark 3:1-4. It would seem that Jesus deliberately chose the Sabbath on which to perform some of His miracles of healing so as to confront the legalists of His day. However, in all of these recorded incidents, not one concerned the question of which day was the Sabbath. That had been settled from the beginning and was non-negotiable. Thus, when Paul speaks of the ministration of death written and engraven in stones - and the Sabbath was one of those engraven commandments - he was not seeking to teach, or even to suggest, that the Sabbath had been abrogated. It was the matter of "the letter" versus "the spirit." He wrote - "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6). We can still preach the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa which had neither dew nor rain. The Law cannot give life; but "the Spirit of the living God" can. However the life-giving Spirit's work is not in stone, but in the "fleshy tables of the heart" (v. 3). Jesus did not hold up tables of stone and say, "This is the way," but rather, He said, "I am the way." This is why, Paul could write in his first letter to the Corinthians - "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).

We fail to sense that the Ten Commandments are not life,

but merely the statements of what life is, or not, to be. On the first day of his existence, all that Adam knew of "do's and don'ts" was a single prohibition, and his work schedule. (Gen. 2:15-17) The Sabbath which was the next day was to be a special day of communion with his Maker. If one were to define the relationship that then existed between God and Adam and Eve, and between Adam and Eve themselves, he would have a perfect code of conduct for perfect beings; but it would not be the Ten Commandments as proclaimed from Mt. Sinai. For example, if God had said to Adam and Eve that first Sabbath - "Thou shalt not commit adultery," how would they have responded? The Ten Commandments was God's response to life as it became, and not as it originally was. The Law which governs the relationship between all sinless beings and their Creator was stated by Jesus. He said:

"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 commandment. 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)

[If one desires to study further on this aspect of the Law, see *The Book of Hebrews* by M. L. Andreasen, pp. 314-315]

To Paul the difference between the ministration of death and the ministration of the Spirit is the difference between the Ten Commandments, and the "two commandments" upon which the law and the prophets hang. One is living under the condemnation of sin, and the other, freedom from that condemnation (Rom. 8:1). One is "under law," and the other "under grace" (Rom. 6:14-15). This is the very heart and core of the gospel as proclaimed by Paul.

This distinction between law and grace, Paul would set forth emphatically in his first letter to Timothy. He reminds Timothy that "the end (objective) of the commandment is charity (αγαπη) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned." He warns him that "some having swerved have turned aside into vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, or whereof they affirm" (1:5-7) Then Paul affirms his understanding of the place of the law: "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." And what is its lawful use? "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient;" and he lists various sins covered in the Ten Commandments. (vs. 8-10) He declares his position to be in harmony with the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to [his] trust" (v. 11).

How can we relate our experience to this gospel? If we have honestly taken a look into the mirror, we know that we are not righteous. How can we say then that we are not under condemnation? To Paul, it was the difference between being under the ministration of death, the reality of the flesh, or by faith in the promises of God coming under

the ministration of the Spirit, the ministration of righteousness. He concludes - "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are being transformed (μεταμορφουμεθα) into the same image from glory to glory by the Lord, the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18, Gr). We are being transformed. Here is the difference. This Greek verb is in the present tense, passive voice. We are being acted upon by the Lord, the Spirit. Our gaze is fixed on a different mirror, and we see the glory of the Lord, the fullness of grace and truth. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1-2). The answer is being "in Christ." This experience, Paul emphasizes further in the next chapter.

The Dying of the Lord Jesus

Returning to what he terms, "our gospel," and Paul means that which he has set forth as the "the ministry of the Spirit," in contrast to the ministry of death, he declares it is hid from those whose minds "the god of this world hath blinded" that they "believe not" (4:3-4). Blinded to righteousness by faith, what have they lost? "The light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God." Simply stated, through unbelief they miss the restoration (transformation) to that which was lost through sin - man in the image of God. Referring back to creation, Paul writes:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (vs. 6-7)

Here another factor of our failure is indirectly introduced. Besides the blindness of unbelief, there is the unwillingness to recognize our inability to achieve - our nothingness. But regeneration, transformation, restoration, sanctification - by whatever name we call the process of our redemption - cannot begin until we recognize "that the excellency of the power" is of God, and not ourselves. On one occasion, Ellen White asked the question, "What is regeneration?" To her own question, she replied - "It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless." (*Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers*, #9, p. 62) Once that fact is accepted as the reality of what is, then God can and will accomplish that which we in our inmost souls truly desire. (See *Education*, p. 29) Under the ministration of the Spirit, nothing is impossible, but it is the Lord, the Spirit doing it, not us. If we deny the Lord, the Spirit, and count Him but an influence, we do "dispute unto the Spirit of grace." (See Heb. 10:29)

Paul does not leave in doubt as to how this process is to begin, and how it is to continue unto the end. He wrote: *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord*

Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (vs. 10-11)

Observe the two uses of the word, "always." In the Greek text, these are two different words: the first, "at all times," the second, "perpetually." And what is to be that perpetual experience - "the dying of the Lord Jesus," "delivered unto death." This is not Calvary; there He died. This is Gethsemane where He the Author of Life accepted the "counsel of peace" that was between the Two of Them which required that He die. (Zech. 6:13; Rom. 4:25-5:1) In His humanity, it was not His will that was to be done, but God's will. Thus for us the "dying of the Lord Jesus" means specifically that the human forces - our fears, our dedication, our desires - are submitted to God that His will may be carried out as He designs regardless of the nature of "the cup" He assigns, and that cup may be our Calvary. If we will honestly evaluate every past decision which ended in failure for us, it comes to a single bottom line, we did not go to the Garden with Jesus. We were not willing to recognize that "self," which is "worthless," has but one legitimate place to go, and that is to the Cross. By not accepting "the dying of the Lord Jesus," we bypassed the cross. We did not die, neither was "the life also of Jesus... made manifest in our body." We remained under the ministration death rather than finding the glorious liberty of the sons and daughters of God under the ministration of the Spirit.

The Divine Constraint

The great constraining, motivating, and moving influence in Paul's life was "the love of Christ" (II Cor. 5:14). Why? Because if Christ died for all, then all were dead. Those who find life through Him "should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again" (ver. 15). We are not our own to live as we choose, for we have been bought with a price, a figure that cannot be expressed by human estimates, even "the precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:19). The new life accorded us is "in Him." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (ver. 17)

"In Him" is the focal point of redemption. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (ver. 19). In Christ, He confronted mankind is a new Son of man. Even as Adam was a son of God (Luke 3:38), so the Word became a second Adam, to stand at the head of the race, a son of God (John 1:14) and a Son of man. He was to be the surety of a new covenant of life (Heb. 7:22). The broken communion because of sin was restored in Christ. To Christ, as the son of man, God said to Him, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22).

But not alone via "the ladder" of restored communication

(John 1:51) does God deal with humanity through Christ, but it was set up on the earth so that man might ascend that ladder in Jesus Christ to the Father. Jesus could say, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6) To those constrained by the love of Christ is committed "the ministry of reconciliation," and through these "ambassadors for Christ" is extended to fallen man the message, "Be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20)

The cost of reconciliation carried a heavy "price tag" for the second Adam. He was made "to be sin for us who knew no sin" (v. 21) How? He took upon Himself the fallen nature of the first Adam - the slave form of man (Phil 2:7), and in that form the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6). For what purpose? "That we might be made [may become - Gr] the righteousness of God *in Him*." While it can be mine now by faith "in Him," it is an integral part of the blessed hope (Gal. 5:5).

Unequally Yoked

In II Corinthians 6 is to be found an admonition to which we too often give a very limited application. Paul wrote - "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (v. 14). There are two factors in this counsel, inequality and the matter of faith. "Unequally yoked" is one word in the Greek text (ετεροζυγουντες) but it is a compound word. The first part (ετερος) is also one of the Greek words for "another," but noting two of a different kind, which in this usage are unequal. Such a union, whether in marriage, in business, or in religious affiliation is forbidden. "Unbelievers" involves our word "faith." Applied, Paul is writing that any yoke which involves one of a different faith is forbidden.

While, as often interpreted, this does enter into the choice of a marriage partner, it can apply also to the ecumenical religious movement as well as any organizational arm which is a part of it. It is evident from the context of what Paul quoted concerning the uniqueness which God envisioned for His ancient people Israel, that he was indicating that the same distinctiveness was to mark the new "Israel of God." Because of this, Paul coupled the admonition, not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers" with the word of the Lord, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (v. 17).

God used the mouth of Balaam to describe the separateness which he designed should mark that ancient people - "the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9). The story of Israel's decline as a nation and its captivity in Babylon is largely attributable to an unwillingness to accept this design of God. The rejection of God's chosen government for them was based upon their desire to be "like all the nations" (I Sam. 8:5). In this request, God told Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (v. 7). In Babylon, they finally learned the lesson that compromising their faith separated them

from God. Then they went to the other extreme of an exclusiveness which blunted the witness God intended them to give to the world. This exclusiveness is echoed in the condemnation that the Pharisees levelled at Christ - He ate with Publicans and sinners. What then is the fine line that can drawn from this history of Israel? We are to be "outgoing," but only to the point that our faith remains uncompromised. This faith must be based on the Word of God, and not be a fanatical interpretation of that Word.

The two causes which contributed to Israel's downfall - an unwillingness to dwell alone, and a desire to be like the nations - are the very causes which have corrupted the professed Israel of this hour. We abhorred being considered a "cult" by the religious world. So when the opportunity presented itself, we compromised basic fundamentals of our faith with the Evangelicals. The outward results were phenomenal - the membership of the Church increased markedly. A unilateral contact which later the Church approved and nurtured resulted in representation on the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. An Adventist voice was to be heard among the theologians of Babylon. But what has the real price been? The betrayal of the sacred trust which God committed to His people in the Three Angels' Messages. The Second Angel's Message was clear that Babylon had fallen, why then any fellowship with Babylon. We had a message for those prophetically considered as Babylon, not they for us.

Further, another definitive line enters the picture. Paul specified that the follower of Christ was not to be yoked with "unbelievers." Who is a "believer" and who is an "unbeliever." It is obvious that the gospel is the determining factor. This has been the emphasis in the letter, in fact it is the emphasis in all that Paul preached and wrote about. See II Cor, 4:3-5. The unbeliever then is one who does not follow the gospel of Christ.

The application of this definition was a troublesome question in the apostolic church. The Church's leadership in Jerusalem considered continued fellowship with the Jewish church acceptable. James could point to the "many thousands of Jews which believed," and indicated that they were "all zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20) These "thousands" were involved in the synagogue worship, and followed various rites in the temple services (ver. 26; James 2:2, margin). Not so Paul. Those Jews who rejected the gospel were not "believers," and he separated those who accepted the gospel from their fellowship (Acts 19:8-9).

This same distinction and issue we face today. Is the "gospel" of the Evangelicals, the same as the "everlasting gospel" of the First Angel's Message? The same question can be asked in regard to the gospel held by the World Council of Churches and defined by the Faith and Order Commission. Neither is this question foreign within the community of Adventism. Is the modified tridentine gos-

pel proclaimed by certain "historic" Adventists, the gospel which Paul claims was given to him by Jesus Christ? (Gal. 1:12) This question has further implications. If the gospel of the Evangelicals is not the "everlasting gospel" and the Church has joined fellowship in that gospel, then what is to be my relationship to the Church? Paul wrote - "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Then he drew the line distinct and sharp by a series of questions. As you read these questions keep in mind that Paul was writing to a Church whose membership included many from the synagogue of Corinth including its chief elder(s). (Acts 18:6-8) Paul asked:

What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? (6:14-16)

"Let Us Cleanse Ourselves"

Actually the chapter break between II Corinthians 6 & 7 should have placed 7:1 as 6:19. One can readily see that "these promises" refer to the precious promises that Paul quoted in the final verses of the 6th chapter. These read:

God hath said, "I will dwell in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (6:16-18)

Because of these promises, we are "to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (7:1) The question is - "But HOW? Honesty requires the frank admission that though we have struggled often and long, we have not realized the goal. Is the answer then that we have not followed the right "works" program, and if we had, we would now be in possession of a cleansed spirit and "holy flesh"?

It is true that we have not followed in the right "work" program. Jesus said to those who asked Him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" - "This is the work (singular) of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:28-29). What has Jesus provided? The very first revelation of Jesus in the final book of the Bible as He is related to us is that He "hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5). He is revealed as "a Lamb as it had been slain" (5:6), and of the final victors it is recorded that they "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14). The provision for victory has been provided; it is but for us to act, and the act is an act of faith. To Jairus who had received the message that his little daughter had died, with the counsel, "Why troublest the Master any further?" - Jesus said, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:35-36). Instead of our earthly fears, we need to "perfect

holiness in the fear of God." Ours is to yield, bearing about in our bodies "the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life (perfect holiness) of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," We go to Gethsemane with Jesus, and we walk with Him to Calvary to realize the promises of God.

"Examine Yourselves"

Paul finalizes his second letter to the Corinthians with counsel we all need to ponder carefully and above all, honestly, to do. It reads:

Examined yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own sleeves. (13:5)

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"An Appeal to the General Conference President"

In *ALMA Torch* (December, 1998), was printed "The Preface of an Appeal to the General Conference President." The article indicated that it was formulated by Elders Ron Spear, Ralph Larson, & Colln Standish. It became obvious in reading the "Preface" that it was written by one man, not three, and the context indicates that one man to be Dr. Ralph Larson. That is understandable as only Larson is the theologian; and the "Preface" plainly stated "the issues before us are theological in nature." (It may be necessary to read the entire "Appeal" to see what "theological" contribution, if any, the non-theologians Spear and Standish made)

The basic attack was levelled at Froom, Ford, Heppenstall, and Sequeria, and rightly so on the issues raised. Dr. Larson has done a very commendable work in his critical analysis of what these men have written, especially documenting their own contradictions and deliberate falsification of quotations used to support their false positions. The "Preface" is based on the premise that three different "theologies are now competing for the church's attention;" namely, "Original or Historic Adventism;" "Liberal Adventism;" and "Calvinistic Adventism." Theologically, this is so, but what is now termed, "historic" Adventism in which category the three named persons - Spear, Larson, and Standish - wished to be placed is not "original" Adventism on various theological issues. This distinction must be kept in mind in any survey of present tensions currently facing Adventism.

A false premise leads to false deductions, and the very first premise taken in this "Preface" is false. It reads:

Original or Historic Adventism, the theology established in the Bible conferences conducted by our pioneers, further refined through the ongoing influence of Ellen White, and

presented in every statement of faith that our church has ever published, including the most recent 27 doctrines.

To say that the theology expressed in the original 1872 Statement of Beliefs is the same theology expressed in the 27 Statements of Fundamental Beliefs as voted at Dallas, Texas, in 1980 is sheer Laodicean blindness. The Statement of 1872 and those appearing in the *Yearbook* editions of 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 are fundamentally the same. A new revised Statement appeared in the 1931 *Yearbook* which was confirmed at the 1946 General Conference session, and briefly altered at the 1950 session. The major changes occurred in 1980, and has been the basis of theological tension ever since.

Let us note some of the differences between the "historic" position, and the present position as voted in Dallas in 1980:

1872 - "The Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments ... are the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

1980 - "The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will."

(One word, "only" makes a vast difference in meaning and application)

1872 - "There is one God, a personal spiritual being, ... and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit. There is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the One by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist."

1980 - "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons."

[The 1980 Statement is unabridged Roman Catholic teaching. The *Adult Sabbath Bible Study Guide*, 4th Qrt, 1998, even defined "Person" according to Romish perception (p. 24)]

1872 - "There is one Lord Jesus Christ ... that He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of the fallen race; that He dwelt among men full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where with His own blood He makes atonement for our sins."

1980 - "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. ... Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God."

(The definitive statement (or one meaning the same thing) on the incarnation in the 1872 Statement - "took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of the fallen race" is missing in the 1980 Statement)

1872 - "That the new birth comprises the entire change necessary to fit us for the kingdom of God, and consists of two parts: first, a moral change wrought by conversion and a Christian life; second a physical change at the second coming of Christ, whereby, if dead, we are raised incorruptible, and if living, are changed to immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

1980 - "Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment."

1872 - "Jesus Christ ... ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where, with His own blood He makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of His work as priest."

1980 - "There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross."

The meaning of the phrase, "the benefits of the atonement" must be understood in the light of the definitive statement made in the book, *Questions on Doctrine*. There one reads - "Only Christ, the Creator, the one and only God-man, could make a substitutionary atonement for man's transgressions. And this Christ did completely, perfectly, and once for all, on Golgotha." (p. 400)

It should be clear to even the most casual reader that the 1980 Statement ("the most recent 27 doctrines") does not speak the "Original or Historic Adventism" as claimed in this "Appeal to the General Conference President" This Statement and the compromises leading up to the Statement is the cause for the "theological tensions" presently in the Adventist Community. The tensions can never be solved by falsifying the basic facts in the issue as has been done in the very beginning of this "Appeal." Starting from a false premise can lead only to more confusion and tension.

It is also evident in the "Appeal" that certain statements made by Larson with Spear and Standish's concurrence need to be corrected as well as amplified to give a picture that coincides with the facts. If one charges another with inaccurate use of data, as has been done in the "Appeal," then that one needs to be doubly careful that statements are accurate to the finest detail of fact possible.

In this "Appeal," Larson suggests a solution. He wrote:

One of the reasons why our pioneers did so well in their Bible conferences is that they engaged freely in challenge, dialogue, and discussion. They did not follow the thinking of any one man and thus partake of both his strengths and weaknesses, as did the followers of Calvin, Luther, Wesley, and so forth.

May I appeal for more of that spirit today.

While this suggestion has merit, it still is not the counsel that the Lord's messenger indicated should be the approach. She wrote:

Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions are crossed. This was the spirit cherished among us forty years ago (circa 1850). We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with solemn awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. (R&H, July 26, 1892)

Why this approach - all on the table, studied one point at a time? In the same article is found the statement - "We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn." All that goes by the name "Historic Adventism" is not Biblically grounded; there are things to learn and many, many things to unlearn.

What is strange about the "Appeal" with the suggestion for "challenge, dialogue, and discussion" is that both Spear and Standish have been invited, at least twice, to take part in such meetings, and they came up with excuses so as not to attend. Now they are endorsing such a call. Do they think that getting under the "coat-tails" of a theologian, their questionable teachings can be sustained? Beside this, information has been received that Colin Standish and his brother are planning this year to release a book captioned, *Every Wind of Doctrine*. One wonders how many chapters will be devoted to their teachings.

The release in *Alma Torch* was only "The Preface." We look forward to reading the whole, "Appeal."

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