

*"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 (Moffau)

"PATTERN of DISSIDENCE"

Page 2

A Convicting Witness

Page 4

LET'S THINK IT OVER

Page 5

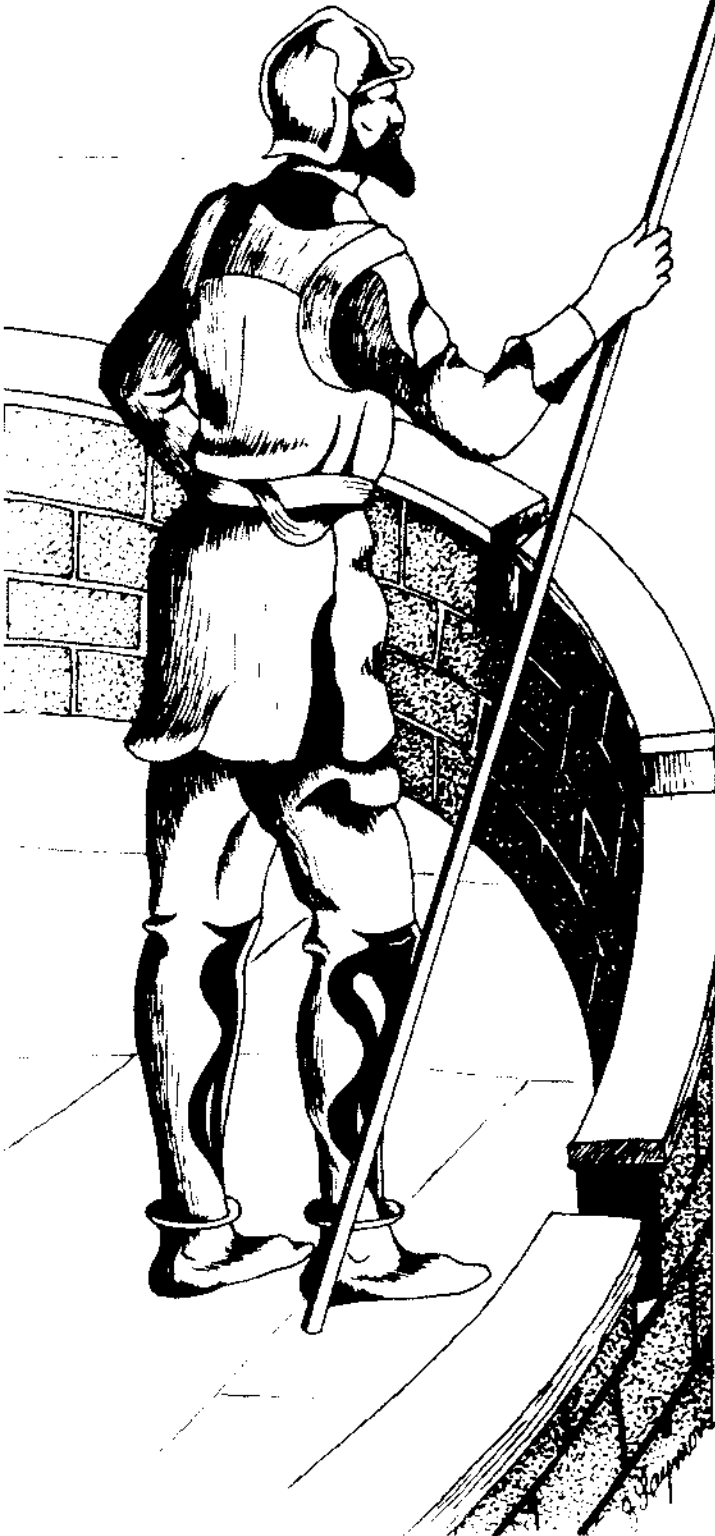
Editor's Preface

Last year, Pastor Eric Winter, Ministerial Secretary of the South Pacific Division, edited an insert for the *Australian Record* (Sept. 20, 1997), captioned, "The Church Under Attack." He selected three thought leaders in Australia besides himself to discuss various aspects of the "Attack." One of these was the pastor of the Memorial Church, Cooranbong, NSW, S. R. Goldstone. Goldstone wrote on the "Pattern of Dissidence." The staff here at the time prepared a response in a special Australian issue of *WMN* in which each of the articles of the insert was discussed. In organizing and writing this issue, Terrie Lambert, our librarian, thought that all who read *WMN* could benefit by the response to Goldstone's article in the *Record*, and has reproduced it as the first article.

The selection of the second article should make profitable reading for those interested in some of the linguistics behind the words used in the Old Testament which define the Godhead. It should challenge our thinking to comprehend as far as mortals can the deep things of God. Some theories advanced, and such they are, come perilously close to blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Of course, the article selected does not give an answer, but it does provide a basis for some thinking beyond its scope.

The final article, "Let's Think It Over," coming as near as possible to the usual editorial title, "Let's Talk It Over," as one could without using it, discusses a very real problem involving doctrine and Christian experience. The key is truth which is to be expressed in both concept and life even as He who is the Truth did when He lived on earth as the Son of man.

By the time you are reading this issue, the Lamberts will be back in Australia, where they will jointly assume responsibility of the Foundation there. Each month the unused page 8 (they mail *WMN* in an envelope) will carry an Australian oriented article. It may even ask the Australian reader to "think over" what is written in "Let's Talk It Over."



"Pattern of Dissidence"

Pastor Goldstone begins his article by highlighting the Great Controversy theme, which has been, as he states, "a unique part of Adventist preaching." He comments that within this central theme of the conflict between Christ and Satan, of good and evil, lies a history of dissidence, which even a theological awareness has not been a deterring barrier to its reoccurrence. Goldstone notes what he calls a "pattern of dissidence" in the Scriptures, by which we could test all dissidence, as "it is imperative as individuals that... we should prepare ourselves to discern and reject dissidence."

A dissident is one who disagrees or opposes the authorities. The two examples cited by Goldstone, that of Lucifer and Korah, Dathan and Abiram, emphasize God's attitude towards revolts against His kingdom and authority. God is the supreme ruler of the universe, a principle that Lucifer rejected because of an over-inflated opinion of himself. Likewise, Korah, Dathan and Abiram rejected the authority that God had given to Moses as the delegated leader of His people. The results were and are indeed tragic as rarely does a dissident against God's government suffer the consequences alone. (see Numbers 16:32,33)

Pastor Goldstone lists eight progressive steps of Satan's fall and by comparing them to the Korah, Dathan and Abiram incident, suggests that a pattern is apparent whereby we may test all dissidence. These steps are: 1) Leadership does not give automatic exemption from dissidence; 2) Secrecy is an early evidence of dissidence; 3) Outward claims of loyalty are no proof of fact; 4) Resistance to counsel demonstrates personal pride; 5) Dissidence is not easily discernible in its early stages; 6) Distortion of the motives of others is a clear indication of dissidence; 7) Fomenting discontent by publicly sharing expressions of disquiet; and 8) Dissidents go public when it is thought that the weight of public support will carry the day.

The underlying principle, which Pastor Goldstone fails to distinguish, is that God is the supreme authority to a Christian. And in that sense only, dissidence is a sin, as it is rebellion against God and His government, whether in Heaven or on earth. Therefore, the question must be asked, is all dissidence sin? The answer depends upon whose authority the dissenter is questioning. If the authority to which a dissenter is in disagreement is itself in opposition to the government of God, then he is merely exercising his right of religious freedom and, quite possibly, the Gospel commission. The Scriptures are replete with such examples of this type of dissidence.

The history of God's chosen people reveals that many of the Prophets of the Old Testament were dissidents in the true sense of the word. They disagreed and spoke out against the leadership. However, it was the apostasy of

the leadership that necessitated these messages from God. Therefore, the leadership also were dissidents, in that they disagreed with the authority of the true God by bowing down to idols. Notice the exchange between Ahab, king of Israel, and Elijah, the Lord's messenger:

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. (1 Kings 18:17,18)

While both Ahab and Elijah accused each other of being dissident, it was Ahab's dissidence that did more to provoke "the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (1Kings 16:33). Why? Because it was a direct revolt against God and His laws. And, interestingly, it is Ahab's position which can be listed under Goldstone's "progressive steps" to discern dissidence. Ahab's leadership did not give him automatic exemption; he worked in secrecy until he gained the weight of public support; he made outward claims of loyalty but resisted counsel given by God's messengers; and he distorted the motives of Elijah before suffering the terrible consequences of his sin.

Moving into New Testament times, we see the same illustration occurring in the life of the Son of God. Jesus Christ was accused many times by the leadership of the day, of being both dissident against their authority (John 18:22), the authority of Jehovah (John 10:33), and of being dissident against the authority of Rome (John 19:12). This last accusation was prefabricated in order to deliver Him up to death. The leaders told the people that the work of Christ was satanic (Matt. 12:24), and the rank and file of Israel completely trusted their religious judgment. Their leaders were wrong and the result was that an entire nation was blindly led to its destruction. In 70 AD there was starvation, cannibalism, and a massacre in Jerusalem – the bitter fruit of unquestioning trust.

The facts are that it was the Jewish leadership who were the true dissidents in denying and then opposing the authority of the Son of God. Again, Pastor Goldstone's list applies as; 1) Their position of leadership did not give them automatic exemption (Matt. 23:2,3); 2) They worked in secrecy to trap Jesus (Luke 20:20), while Jesus did nothing in secret (John 18:20); 3 & 4) They made outward claims of loyalty but resisted council because of their pride (John 9:33,34); 6) They distorted the motives of Jesus (Mark 3:22); 7) They fomented discontent by publicly sharing expressions of disquiet (John 7:40-52); 8) They finally went public when they thought they had the weight of public support (Luke 22:5).

Interestingly, the word "dissidence" does not occur in the Bible, but a related word "dissension," meaning "to stand up against," occurs three times in the New Testament. In

the first instance, Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension" with certain men who came from Judea, who taught that in order to be saved one had to be circumcised (Acts 15:1,2). The Bible is clear that it was Paul and Barnabas who created the dissension and disputed with those who came, in all probability, with authority from Jerusalem. However, they were not in the wrong for doing so, but merely openly and frankly arguing the truth of righteousness by faith against the heresy of righteousness by works.

The next two instances of "dissension" occur in the 23rd chapter of Acts, where Paul is brought in before the Sanhedrin. After calling the high priest a "white-washed wall" and then "apologising," Paul undertakes another strategy:

But when Paul perceived that the one part was Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. (Acts 23:6,7)

Here Paul, the dissident, opposing the authority of the Sanhedrin, turns the tables on his opposers by revealing their internal dissidence. The Pharisees and Sadducees, while united against the work of the Messiah and the fulfillment of prophecy were in disagreement on basic doctrines.

How ironic it is that history has repeated itself today. We find that the Church (the modern-day Sadducees), having rejected the fulfillment of Luke 21:24, have to spend a great deal of time defending themselves against the Independents (many being modern-day Pharisees), while both are rejecting the truth. While the Standishes and Pfandl are quibbling over the nature of Christ [see WWN Australian Special Issue, Nov. 1997, "Standish - Pfandl, No Alternative?" p. 10, by Darren Lambert], neither have the Truth. Both are dissident against the authority of the Scriptures, and the Incarnate Word.

Returning to the essence of Pastor Goldstone's article, it is evident that he sees the independent movement as dissident against the authority of the Seventh-day Adventist corporate structure. While this may be true, we need to ask ourselves, is the corporate structure itself, in any way dissident against the authority of God, as has occurred with the professed people of God in the past? Pastor Goldstone's own list should give us the answer:

1) Has the leadership of the SDA Church been given an automatic exemption from dissidence?

Men who are entrusted with weighty responsibilities, but who have no living connection with God, have been and are doing despite to His Holy Spirit. They are indulging the very same spirit as did Korah, Dathan and Abiram, as

did the Jews in the days of Christ... (Testimonies to Ministers, p.78)

2) Has the SDA leadership ever acted in secrecy, with "clandestine meetings, and meetings behind closed doors, or suggestions that 'these matters are best not discussed with the [laity] and pastors'"? M.L. Andreason answers:

As the negotiations [between Martin and SDA's] were considered top secrets it was some time before any definite news leaked out. When it did it was disturbing. Washington furnished little news, and all others informed me they had nothing to say. ... Our first authentic news did not come from our leaders or through our journals, but from an Evangelical publication dated September 1956, which issued a special edition with an account of what took place. This account was so unbelievable that we hesitated to give it credence. (Letters to the Churches, p. 34)

3) Has the SDA leadership made outward claims of loyalty while acting in a dissident way? Again Andreason:

I do not know how our leaders conducted themselves while with the evangelicals, but they left the impression upon these men that "the majority group of sane leadership (which) is determined to put the brakes on any members who seek to hold views divergent from that of the responsible leadership of the denomination." Eternity Extra, September 1956. (Ibid, p. 59)

4) Has the SDA leadership resisted counsel, demonstrating personal pride? Andreason quotes a letter to him:

Now for you to go forward and broadcast a matter like this certainly puts you in an unenviable light. If you do this, we shall have to do some broadcasting too. This will again place you in plain opposition to your church, and will undoubtedly bring up the matter of your relationship to the church. In view of all this, the Officers as I have previously written, earnestly ask you to cease your activities. (Letter dated Dec. 19, 1957, from SDA church to M.L. Andreason; Ibid, p. 65)

5) Was dissidence not easily discernible in its early stages? Andreason speaks yet again:

Our members are largely unaware of the conditions existing, and every effort is being made to keep them in ignorance. Orders have been issued to keep everything secret, and it will be noted that even at the late General Conference session, no report was given of our leaders' trafficking with the evangelicals and making alliances with them. (Ibid, p. 15)

6.) Has the SDA leadership ever distorted the motives of others?

Some claimed that Andreason was offended for not having

been invited to participate in the discussions which had taken place with Walter Martin and Donald G. Barnhouse. Andreason was then in retirement. This was perhaps one of the reasons he was not invited. But the true motive was indubitably his well-known position with regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ. (Christ Manifested in the Flesh, J.R. Zurcher, p. 132)

7) Has the SDA leadership fomented discontent by publicly sharing expressions of disquiet? Read what the Adventist leadership told Barnhouse and Martin:

... regarding the nature of Christ while in the flesh, which the majority of the denomination has always held to be sinless, holy and perfect, despite the fact that certain of their writers have occasionally gotten into print with contrary views completely repugnant to the Church at large. They [leadership] further explained to Mr. Martin that they had among their number certain members of their "lunatic fringe" even as there are similar wild-eye irresponsibles in every field of fundamental Christianity. (Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" Eternity, September, 1956, p. 6)

8) Did the SDA leadership go public when it thought that the weight of public support would carry the day?

In 1957, the church published the book, Questions on Doctrine, as the result of the evangelical conferences, assuming that they had "softened up" the ministry enough to get their compromises generally accepted. They were wrong, and it took until 1980 before they could make another definitive statement that was well received.

As Pastor Goldstone has stated; "dissidence is a disease... Indiscernible at first, it spreads silently." We agree with him entirely that it is imperative that we discern and reject it. However, we leave it to the reader to determine who the true dissidents against God and His Truth really are.

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A Convicting Witness

[The following story, written by David L. Cooper D.D., was recently discovered among a pile of papers in the ALF Library. For its clearness and conciseness, we include it here.]

One day as I was journeying from Los Angeles to Denver, I had a most delightful interview with an elderly Jewish man. I was sitting in the carriage reading my Hebrew Testament when this man appeared at my side. "You cannot read that," he declared.

Immediately I gave him a practical demonstration by reading a passage. With a shrug of the shoulders he asked, "Where

did you learn that?"

"In the seminary and University."

"Well you do not know what it means." Again I read it and translated a verse for him. "Hum - and you are not a Yid," he commented.

Moving over I invited him to a seat beside me and introduced myself. My new acquaintance told me his name was Baron. Then we settled ourselves for a chat.

"Can you read this Mr. Baron?" I asked. "Sure." At once he read fluently the passage I indicated. "Now will you tell me what it means?" He translated with difficulty although he seemed to understand the substance of what he had read.

"Mr. Baron are you acquainted with this book?" I enquired. He turned to the title page. He read the words, "New Testament." He had never seen it before.

Reaching for my grip I pulled out my Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and said; "Mr. Baron I want to ask you a question. What is the meaning of the word Elohim?"

"It means God."

"But," I said, "my teachers have told me that this word means 'Gods.'"

"They do not know what they are talking about," he retorted emphatically.

"But Elohim is a plural number".

"You are wrong," my friend declared, "I went to Yeshibah (Rabbinical School) and I know Elohim means God - singular."

"What is the meaning of the word Baal Mr. Baron?" I enquired.

"Master," was his ready reply.

"What is the meaning of the word Baalim?"

"Masters," was his ready reply, "More than one."

"What is the meaning of seraph?"

"One of the angels," he said.

"Seraphim?" I asked.

"Many of them," he answered, "more than one."

"Then if Baal-im and Seraph-im, mean more than one would not Elohim also mean more than one?" He looked puzzled.

"Let us turn to the Ten Commandments, and notice the 2nd

Commandment - 'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.'
Now what does the word 'Gods' mean?"

"It is plural and means many - more than one," he replied and added, "It means all those heathen gods".

Turning back to the first verse of the book of Genesis I said, "You admit that Elohim in the passage we have just seen means 'Gods.'" He nodded.

I continued - "Then what about the same word here at the beginning of the book of Genesis." For an answer my companion put his hand to his head in a quick gesture of complete surprise.

"The rabbi did not tell us that".

"Never mind about the rabbi," I rejoined. "If the word is plural and means 'gods' in one instance, then it must be plural in the other instance for it is spelt exactly the same way."

"That sounds right," he admitted, "But I wonder why they did not tell me that at the Rabbinical School?"

"Mr. Baron what is the meaning of Shema (The rabbinical name of the great confession of Deuteronomy 6:4)? I want to ask you particularly about the meaning of the Hebrew word Elohenu? My instructors have taught me that it meant 'Gods,'" I continued.

"Well they are wrong. It means one God."

"What is the meaning of the word Abhothenu?"

"Our fathers."

"Of Eholayenu?" I asked.

"Our sicknesses."

"Pesha 'enu?"

"Our transgressions."

"And Avonothenu?"

"Our sins"

"Then Mr. Baron," I concluded, "If all these words ending in enu means 'fathers,' 'sicknesses,' 'transgressions' and 'sins,' surely Elohe-enu means 'Gods' - plural." For an answer my Jewish friend threw out both hands in a gesture of helpless perplexity. "But the Rabbi's," he breathed -

"We are not interested in the Rabbi's just now," I told him. "You admit that it is right that we should translate it plural do you not?" He slowly nodded. I continued, "One more question - What is the meaning of Echad?"

"One," he promptly replied.

"My teachers have told me that it is a word which means Unity!" I replied.

"Well you were taught wrong," he retorted quite hotly.

"My friend, here in the first part Genesis we are told that there was evening and morning making one day. There was darkness and light, two different and opposite things. Put them together and they make one. A little farther on we are told that a man was to leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and the two were to become one flesh. When the two are married they become one. That is Echad. God speaks similarly about Himself. The Shema really says, "THE LORD, OUR GODS IS ONE LORD" - Echad - a unity."

I then took him to various passages of the Old Testament and concluded with the words, "The Scriptures teach that there is a Godhead of more than one, and that the second person of the Godhead came to earth to dwell among us and gave his life for us all."

His face was a study. He said, "I am old now, if I had only met you many years ago, how different my life would have been." He then said, "I certainly would have changed my religion."

I urged him to change then and there. This was bringing home the truth to a Jew in a language that he understood clearly.

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Let's Think It Over

There are two statements made in the above story that need to be carefully considered. Mr. Baron, after hearing and seeing the truth from the written word, exclaims, "If I had only met you many years ago, how different my life would have been." And then he remarks, "I certainly would have changed my religion."

The acceptance of truth for many of us has necessitated a change of religion. However, is it possible to change religion and yet not for our life to be changed? Our "lifestyle" might alter, but do we allow the truths we hold to transform us into better people? Is there a difference between truth and doctrine, and just how important are they in the development of a Christian character?

In the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, we find recorded an interesting statement made by Jesus. After healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-15), and then declaring God to be His Father (5:17), the Jews "sought

the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (5:18). Taking advantage of the crowded temple situation, Jesus is able to expound, and explain the witness of the Father. Then He states, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (5:39,40).

It is impossible to determine from the Greek text if this passage is to be read as a command, "Search the scriptures!" or as a simple statement, "Ye search the scriptures." Commentators disagree as to its use, whether in the imperative or indicative mood, however either case makes good sense. It is clear that men ought to search the scriptures, but that also the books of the Old Testament were never more diligently searched than at that very time. The Jews were in expectation of the immediate appearing of the Messiah, but also they believed the Scriptures to contain the promise of an eternal life.

Jesus said to them, "In them ye think ye have eternal life." It was ancient Jewish thought that a knowledge of the law would itself assure a man of eternal life. "Thus, Hillel, a rabbi of the 1st century BC, is reported to have declared: 'One who has acquired for himself words of Torah, has acquired for himself the life of the world to come.'" (SDA Bible Commentary, No. 5, p. 955) It was in this way, by placing emphasis on the written word, to the exclusion of the Incarnate Word, that the Jews were able to turn a knowledge of that word into the means of salvation, and thus rejected Him who is the truth. Although their doctrines were based in the Torah, they allowed the wickedness of their hearts to corrupt their perceptions of the coming Messiah. Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Even though the Old Testament bore evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, and although they professedly searched it to learn the way to life, yet they would not come to Him to obtain that life.

They [the Jews] clung and appealed to Moses; ... Their elaborate searching and sifting of the Law in hope that, by a subtle analysis of its every particle and letter, by inferences from, and a careful drawing of a prohibitive hedge around, its letter, they would possess themselves of eternal life (John 5:39), what did it all come to? Utterly self-deceived, and far from the truth in their elaborate attempts to outdo each other in local ingenuity, they would, while rejecting the Messiah sent from God, at last become the victims of a coarse Messianic impostor (John 5:40-43). And even in the present, what was it all? Only the letter – the outward! ... It was all utterly mistaken; utter, and alas, guilty perversion, their elaborate trifling with the most sacred things, while around them were suffering, perishing men, 'lame hands' into emptiness, and walling out their mistaken hopes into the eternal silence. (Alfred Eder-sheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p. 322, 323)

The sad history of the Jewish nation is there for us to read, so that we will learn and not repeat the mistakes of the past. Their love and respect for their doctrines was commendable, but they had no such love for the source of all truth, nor for the people for whom the truth was sent to save. They had the religion, but not the life. They had the doctrine, but not the Truth.

The word "doctrine" is a common New Testament word that may denote the act of teaching (*didaskalia*), or the thing that is taught (*didache*). The word for "truth" (*aletheia*), is much broader in application, and has the fundamental meaning of reality, as opposed to mere appearance or false pretence. There are distinctive differences in the use of this word by Paul and John. In the writings of Paul there is a constant use of "the truth" to describe God's will as revealed to man (Rom. 1:18, 25), but especially in the gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:2; Gal. 3:1 etc.). Thus "the truth" becomes synonymous with the gospel (Eph. 1:13, Gal. 2:5,14). In his Pastoral Epistles the gospel as "the truth" or "the word of truth" appears to pass into the sense of a settled body of Christian doctrine.

In the books of John, "the truth" stands for the absolute Divine reality as distinguished from all existence that is false or merely seeming. Jesus came from the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), and truth came by Him (vs.17), because, as the Word of God, He was full of it (vs.14). The truth is incarnated and personalized in Jesus, and so He is Himself the Truth (14:6). The truth that is in Him He imparts to His disciples (8:31); and after His ascension He bestowed the Spirit of Truth to abide with them and be in them forever (14:17). Hence the truth is in the Christian as the essence of his spiritual being (1 John 1:8, 2:4, 2 John 1:2). It is there both as a moral and intellectual quality, something not only to be known and believed (8:32, 45f), but also requiring to be done (3:21, 1 John 1:6). Primarily it is a moral power, as distinguished from doctrine, which is purely intellectual. Truth sets us free (John 8:32); it has sanctifying power (17:17-19); it ensures the keeping of the commandments (1 John 2:4); and a life of Christian love (3:18).

Jesus said, "If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). He who sincerely desires to do the will of God, will be enlightened by God; he is promised an understanding of doctrine. But there is a prerequisite to receiving that light, in that the seeker for truth must be willing to follow in the light that may be revealed. This is a life-changing experience. This verse does not read that he who knows doctrine will seek to do His will. A theoretical knowledge of doctrine, in and of itself, has no power to transform the life.

Paul exhorted Timothy; "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). The Phillips' Translation reads; "Keep a critical eye both upon your own life and on the teaching you give."

Clearly the importance of sound doctrine cannot be denied, however, if our life does not correspond to it, it is worse than useless. The following quote, taken from the SDA Bible Commentary on this verse, states this very succinctly.

The apostle asserts the primary importance of dependable Christian character as a qualification for service to the church. Acquaintance with teachings of the church is important, but this knowledge can never compensate for a questionable reputation. The most winsome argument for Christianity is not unanswerable logic but the fragrance of a Christ-like life. Sincere seekers for truth are not interested in theory, but in a working philosophy of life that can solve their problems and help them to overcome their weaknesses. When non-Christians who are honest in heart see that the gospel changes selfish, vain, timeserving men into pure, unselfish Christians, they will be drawn to the Christ of the Gospel.

It is a tragic inconsistency for a minister to attempt to reform the lives of others if his own has not been re-created by the power of God. He who would preach kindness and love must first exemplify these qualities in his own life. The preaching of the gospel is hindered or hastened by the lives lived by professing Christians. (SDA Bible Commentary, No. 7, p. 307)

The following comment is found in the Writings:

'Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine.' Thyself needs the first attention. First give yourself to the Lord for sanctification to His service. A godly example will tell more for the truth than the greatest eloquence unaccompanied by a well-ordered life. (Review & Herald, August 19, 1902)

Yes, Jesus is the Truth, but He gave a broader threefold description of His existence in John 14:6. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He is the way from earth to heaven; through His life and His death, His humanity and divinity, the necessary ladder was provided. He is the truth; a living revelation of the Almighty. He is the life; all that composes life here, physically, intellectually and spiritually, as well as the life to come. All these aspects of life we may have in abundance (John 10:10). How silly would it be to seek only intellectual knowledge and miss out on all the other blessings Jesus has to offer us.

In Adventism today there can be found two extremes. On the one hand we have the thinking of the liberal majority that an understanding of doctrine is unnecessary, and that all we need is to "know Jesus." On the other hand, there is a minority view, equally dangerous, that pure doctrine is all we need; if we just get the doctrines right then everything else will fall into place. Clearly we need to learn from the mistakes of the past and find that middle ground where doctrine, pure and unadulterated, has its right and proper place and our lives are a reflection of its teaching.

The words of Paul are given for our admonition and should shock us out of any self-complacency. He writes; "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

The reason that the Lord can do so little for those that are handling weighty truths is that so many hold these truths apart from their life. They hold them in unrighteousness. Their hands are not clean, their hearts are defiled with sin, and should the Lord work for them in the power of His Spirit corresponding with the magnitude of the truth which He has opened to the understanding, it would be as though the Lord sanctioned sin. (Councils to Writers and Editors, p.81)

As Adventists we are privileged with some of the most challenging doctrines ever given to man; the Sanctuary, the fulfillment of Prophecy, the Incarnation, the Godhead, to name but a few. However, truth encompasses more than even these great and necessary doctrines. While we may classify some of them as "present truth," they are no more vital than, say, the Beatitudes of Matthew 5, or the Fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23. All are necessary, challenging and, if we allow them to be, life-changing. They are not the means of salvation, but avenues by which we find eternal life, providing we come to Jesus to receive that life.

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In Canada, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Canada, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, ON P0E 2J0.

In Australia, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P.O. Box 846, Belmont, Victoria 3216.

Caribbean Contact - P. O. Box G M 537, Castries, St. Lucia

Editor

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

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Our 800 Number is 800-4-LAYMEN (800-452-9636)
FAX - 501-292-3745 Regular Calls - (501) 292-3721