



THE SEVENTH DAY & THE SECOND ADVENT

an appeal to Seventh Day Adventists

by A.D. Norris

AN APPEAL TO SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

In the pages which follow we try to examine some points of your faith in the light of the Bible. We do this, not from any enmity, but simply because we believe that in some respects your views are seriously mistaken. We admire both your zeal and your evidently sincere and upright manner of life, and we appreciate your obvious desire to honour the Bible as the Word of God. For this reason we ask you to give humble consideration to the evidence from the Bible produced in this booklet. If, as a result, you come to agree with us, we shall be very happy. If you do not, and would like to pursue the discussion further, you have only to ask:

THE CHRISTADELPHIANS,
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THE SEVENTH DAY
AND
THE SECOND ADVENT

by A. D. Norris

CHRISTADELPHIANS BELIEVE...

in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation:

in One God, the Father, Maker of heaven and earth, who gives to all men life and breath.

in Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten by the Father by the operation of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

in Jesus Christ crucified, dead and buried, conquering in his death the desires of the flesh.

in Jesus Christ risen bodily from the dead, the first to escape the sleep of unconsciousness which is the lot of all who die; so that death has no more dominion over him.

in Jesus Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, granted all power in heaven and in earth, and making intercession for his saints.

that Jesus Christ will return to the earth in visible, bodily form.

that Jesus Christ will gather before him all who have known their duty before God, living and dead, and judge them according to their works, giving a body like his own to the faithful, and punishing the unfaithful with everlasting destruction.

in the Kingdom of God, whose eternal Lord did choose Israel for his peculiar people and has now visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for his name, and will send Jesus Christ to reign over the world from his holy city until he shall have put all enemies under his feet.

in the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, wherein our old man is buried, and from which we rise to a newness of life.

in the Holy Spirit, whereby God inspired prophets and apostles, confessing our own need for God's help and strength.

in the fellowship of the saints, living in one hope of our calling in Christ.

Amen.

“Lord, I believe,
Help Thou mine unbelief!”

CONTENTS

The Seventh Day

Prophecy and the Second Advent

The inspiration of the writings of Mrs. Ellen White

The Law of Moses after Christ

Other legal problems

The Investigatory Judgment

Resurrection of good and evil

Heaven and Earth during the Millenium

Was Ellen White a prophetess?

The Seventh Day and the Second Advent

Seventh-day Adventists regard the Scriptures as “given by inspiration of God”, and “the only unerring rule of faith and practice”. They consider that baptism “should follow repentance and remission of sins”, and that “the proper form of baptism is by immersion”. They believe that “God only hath immortality”, and that man “possesses a nature inherently sinful and dying”, so that “the condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness”, and “all men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the resurrection.”¹

So do we. So we shall take these things for granted. It is a good starting basis.

There are other teachings which Seventh-day Adventists share with the major denominations of Christendom with which we should not be in full agreement: but since we are here concerned with the *characteristic* teaching of the Adventist Church we shall ignore such teachings here. What will concern us from now on is this characteristic teaching itself, and this we shall divide into three sections:

¹ These quotations are from articles 1, 5, 9, and 10 in “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists”, pp. 11-18 of the book “Questions on Doctrine” (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957). This book “can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church”, and will be regarded as such in the present work. Any quotations bearing the initials *QD* will be taken from it.

1. The Ten Commandments to-day (especially in connection with the Sabbath).
2. Prophecy and the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The inspiration of the writings of Mrs. Ellen White.

First we summarize the position taken up by the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

1. The Ten Commandments to-day

These are to be regarded as “great moral, unchangeable precepts, binding upon all men, in every age” (QD 6); “the fourth commandment of this unchangeable law requires the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath” (QD 7). It is recognized, though, that observance of this law “cannot save the transgressor from his sin, nor impart power to keep him from sinning”, which is the function of the saving work of Jesus Christ (QD 8).

Though not strictly related to the Ten Commandments, the obligation to pay tithes, “the divine principle of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel” (QD 18) is drawn and supported from the Law of Moses. Abstinence from the flesh of swine and other unclean foods (QD 17) is advocated for health-reasons; this is part of the Law of Moses, though we are told that the abstinence is not for this reason: “*not because* the Law of Moses has any binding claims upon us. Far from it” (QD p. 623). Abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and other stimulants and narcotics, are enjoined over and above anything which the Law of Moses contained. Many Adventists practice vegetarianism, and this practice appears to be the recommended one.

2. Prophecy and the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ

The “resurrection of the just will take place at the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the unjust will take place a thousand years later, at the close of the millennium (QD 11). After the resurrection of the just “the millennium reign of Christ covers the period between the first and second resurrections, during which time the saints of all ages will live with their blessed Redeemer in heaven” (QD 21). During this period the earth will be “Satan’s desolate prison house” (QD p. 498), with the unsaved slain, the saved taken to heaven, and the unjust awaiting the second resurrection. At the end of it the unjust will be led by Satan against the saints now “descended to the earth”, “and fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them”, as a result of which “the earth itself will be regenerated and cleansed from the effects of the curse” (QD 21).

Though an early adventist preacher, William Miller, with his followers, expected the Second Advent in 1843-4, this is not the present view of the Adventist Church. The prophecy of Daniel (8. 14) is understood to teach that a period of 2300 years would pass from the arrival of Ezra the priest in Jerusalem in 457 B. C. to what Daniel describes as the ‘cleansing of the sanctuary’, which must then be dated 1844 A. D. At this time there occurred “the entrance of Christ as the high priest upon the judgement phase of his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary”, spoken of in Hebrews 8 onwards (QD 14). Since that time, and until his second advent, the Lord is engaged in “investigative judgement; first with reference to the dead, and second, with reference to the living. This investigative judgement determines who of the myriads sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of the living

multitudes are worthy of translation” (QD 16).²

3. The Inspiration of the Writings of Mrs. Ellen White

This is not referred to among the Fundamental Doctrines, and it is pointed out with emphasis that these writings are not regarded “in the same sense as the Holy Scriptures” (QD p. 89), and are to be tested by the Bible. Nevertheless, she is compared with those Biblical prophets who wrote nothing preserved to us, like Nathan and Gad, John the Baptist and Silas (QD p. 91), and is “recognized as one who possessed the gift of the spirit of prophecy”. Though she is said never to have claimed the title of prophetess, she did write “If others call me by that name I have no controversy with them. But my work has covered so many lines that I can not call myself other than a messenger” (quoted in QD p. 92). Her writings are regarded as containing “inspired counsel and instruction concerning personal religion and the conduct of our denominational work. Under the same inspiration she also wrote much in the great field of sacred history”. Anyone who loses faith in the inspiration of her writings and “later stirs up enmity among the believers” (QD p. 97) would be liable to exclusion from the church. And although in theory there might be other prophets and inspired teachers, it does not appear that the Adventists recognize in practice any other than Mrs. White.

With the ground sympathetically prepared with the Adventists’ own statement of their position, we can proceed to examine from the Scriptures the implications of these doctrines.

THE LAW OF MOSES AFTER CHRIST

All Bible-believers are agreed that the sacrifices of animals under the Law have now been abolished since the Lord Jesus Christ offered his own perfect sacrifice, and that the priesthood descended from Aaron which administered those sacrifices has given place to the perfect priesthood of Jesus (Hebrews 7:12-28; 9:12). To this must be added all manner of other prohibitions and ritual provisions, like the distinction between clean and unclean food (Mark 7:19 RV & RSV; Colossians 2:14,21; Romans 14:2-4; Galatians 2:11-14); and the observance of holy days (Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:5-6; as well as the practice of circumcision for religious reasons (Galatians 5:2; Colossians 2:11; Philippians 3:3). This is described by Paul as the “putting away of the handwriting of ordinances which was against us”, by Peter as the removing of a “yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear” (Acts 15:10), and by the Lord Jesus himself as the fulfilling of the Law (Matthew 5:17).

To this the Adventist replies: “We agree that the ritual and sacrificial law was abolished, but the Ten Commandments, and particularly the Sabbath, were not. The Sabbath in any case was instituted at Creation, which was long before the Law, while the Ten Commandments were given an honoured and unique place in the Ark of the Covenant, in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle of God.”

² References with simple numbers, like QD 16, refer to the list of Fundamental Doctrines. Those with paged numbers, like QD p. 92, refer to other pages in Questions on Doctrine.

Now it is true that the seventh-day rest of God is linked with the creation record (Genesis 2:3), and that one of the records of the Ten Commandments gives this as the reason why Israel should rest on that day of the week (Exodus 20:11). It is not certain as a historical fact that the Sabbath was kept before the time of Moses, for the first occasion when the word *shabbath* is used is Exodus 16:23-29 in connection with the giving of the manna, where it looks very much as though the Israelites are learning about the keeping of the sabbath for the first time. But even if it were provable that the sabbath was kept before the Law was given, this would in itself be no argument for its continuance. The Lord Jesus came and died to do away with an old order of things, and the practice of circumcision, which existed hundreds of years before the Law, is, as we have shown, among the things which are expressly abolished since He died.

But in any case, the suggestion that the Ten Commandments are to be treated separately from the rest of the Law is not borne out by Scripture. When Paul wishes to describe the abolition of the Law through the work of Christ, he writes (2 Corinthians 3:7-14 RV):

“if the ministration of death, *written and engraven on stones*, came with glory... which glory was passing away, how shall not rather the ministration of the Spirit be with glory. For if the ministration of condemnation is glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory...”

in spite of the difficulties of the language here, it is entirely plain that Paul is speaking of the passing away of the Law because of the work of Jesus Christ, and that he uses the Ten Commandments to illustrate that passing, since they alone of all the Law were “written and engraven on stones” (Deuteronomy 5:22). The Ten Commandments are *not* a special case: they are in fact an example of what happened to the Law as a whole when Christ died.

But at this point the Adventist replies again: “Are you claiming,” he says, “that none of the commandments in these Ten is valid any longer? In addition to freedom to break the Sabbath, do you now claim the right to worship more than one God, to make graven images, to take the name of the Lord in vain, to murder, steal, commit adultery, covet, and bear false witness? If not, you consent in practice to the fact that nine of the ten Commandments are still in operation: why, then, do you exclude the tenth?”

The point is well made. And we would answer at once that we do *not* claim liberty to live contrary to the other nine commandments. We would note, however, that the unity of God is reaffirmed in the New Testament (Mark 12:29; 1 Corinthians 8:6), that the worship of images and likenesses of Him is expressly condemned (Romans 1:23; Acts 14:12-16; 19:23-41); that swearing by the name of God, or at all, is directly discouraged (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12); and that the spirit of all the last six commandments is either positively, or by implication, several times inculcated in the words of the Lord Jesus and His apostles (Matthew 15:4; 19:19; Ephesians 6:2; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 5:21,27). The reason for obedience to these commandments is different: they are to be kept, not so much because there is a simple commandment to that effect, or a “Thou shalt not” against the breach, as because the

two great commandments carry these details along with them. One cannot “love the Lord thy God” (which was not one of the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy 6:4) and still make images to other gods, or swear falsely by His name; and one cannot “love thy neighbour as thyself” (again not one of the Ten Commandments, Leviticus 19:18) and still kill him, steal from him, seduce his wife or covet his property.

But in all these lists the Sabbath is conspicuously absent. Nowhere in the New Testament is the Sabbath enjoined on any one. Jesus heals on the Sabbath, and His disciples glean corn on the Sabbath, and when the rulers protest, they are met with “It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day,” and “The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath”. Though the Lord frequented the synagogues on the Sabbath, it is difficult to see when else he could have gone there. The same is true of the apostles’ preaching as recorded in the Acts. And when the Gentiles are exempted by the apostles from keeping the Law of Moses, the conditions which are laid upon them make no mention of the Sabbath at all.³

The case of the Christian communities outside Judaea is particularly important. Though some who had attended the Jewish synagogues sympathetically would be aware of their Sabbath customs, what Gentile would be able to read: “one man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” without feeling free to refrain from keeping the Jewish Sabbath? When James, accepting the recommendation of Paul and Barnabas that it would be wrong to impose circumcision on the Gentiles, advises that there should be laid upon them “no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well” (Acts 15:28-29), it is unbelievable that Sabbath-keeping could have been in his mind and that of the Christians of Jerusalem, without being added to the list.⁴

When, moreover, Paul tells the Colossians (2:16) that no one is to be allowed to judge them in the matter of “a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of things to come”, they are told specifically that there is no Sabbath-obligation for them. There is, of course, an Adventist answer to this. We are told that the Sabbaths here are not the weekly sabbaths, but certain high days (John 19:31) associated with the annual feasts, which would be abolished together with the feasts themselves. But why should either the Colossians or the Adventists suppose any such thing? The word is simply “sabbaths”: annual feasts have already been dealt with under “a feast day”, and monthly observances under “a new moon”, and the sequence leads naturally to the weekly customs under “a sabbath day”. Similar wording is found in Hosea 2:11 in the Old Testament (“her feasts, her new moons, and her

³ Passages to be turned to in this section are so numerous that their inclusion would have cumbered up the text. They are Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 1:21; 2:23-28; 3:2-4; Luke 6:1-9; 13:14-16; 14:1-5; John 5:9-18; 7:22-23; 9:14-16; Acts 15:19-20, 28-29.

⁴ Why these particular prohibitions were issued is debatable. In our view the most acceptable answer is that dedication of food to idols (1 Corinthians 8:1-13), libations of blood, ritual strangulation, and temple-prostitution, were all marks of the practising pagan. The advice then becomes: “We will not impose on you the obligation to become Jews: but you must make it plain to all that you are no longer pagans.”

sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies”), and in 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; and Nehemiah 10:33. It is perfectly obvious in all these places, and therefore in Colossians too, that the weekly sabbath is intended, and it is now impossible to escape the conclusion that Paul is giving liberty to the Christian to observe the Sabbath no longer.

The only remaining enquiry is, nevertheless, an important one: “Why is it that the Sabbath, alone of the Ten Commandments, is not reaffirmed for the Christian?”

With one claim of the Adventists we must immediately agree. There is certainly no justification in seeking to change the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first, whether by the authority of Constantine or by that of the Roman church. When the Greeks call our Saturday, even now, by the name *Sabbaton*, they do rightly. There *is* warrant for treating the first day of the week as a specially joyful day, since it is the day on which the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples after the Resurrection (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:9), on which two disciples ‘broke bread’ with Him and He shared a meal with others (Luke 24:1,30,42), on which they met for their celebration of the Lord’s Supper and for exhortation (Acts 20:7), and on which they assembled and brought together their offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2). Long before the time of Constantine it is witnessed that they broke bread on “the day which is called the day of the sun”, and treated this as a day of gladness because of the Resurrection.⁵

But this does not make Sunday into the Sabbath. The true situation is rather this: the spirit of the commandments in the Law was preserved intact even when the Lord Jesus fulfilled it by his death. Love of God, the first great commandment, meant that the heart of the believer must respond to the divine will, as well as his outward observances. He must cleanse his mind as well as his garments and his body. Love of one’s neighbour, the second great commandment, meant that one must *desire* his good as well as *doing* him no harm. And the Christian life must go beyond keeping only one day holy: his whole life should be a sabbath life, as of one who has already entered into God’s ‘sabbath-rest’ (*sabbatismos*, Hebrews 4:9), and looks for the fulfilment of the perfect rest which is to come at the return of the Lord (Colossians 2:17, “a shadow of the things to come”). The whole Christian life, in labour or in leisure, should be holiness to God.

OTHER LEGAL PROBLEMS

In this same connection we must obviously consider the practice of tithing as “the divine principle for the support of the gospel” (QD 18). It is noteworthy that the Old Testament passages quoted (Leviticus 27:30 and Malachi 3:8-12) each unquestionably refers to Israel living in their land; while the New Testament passages (Matthew 23:23; 1 Corinthians 9:9-14; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15) either, as in the latter two, do not mention tithes at all, or, as in the former, do not commend them. A further New Testament passage could have been quoted (Luke 18:12) in which the Pharisee is made to boast, “I give tithes of all that I get,” but once again the man is not commended for this or any of the good works he professes. In that book of the New

⁵ Ignatius of Antioch, who died around 107 A. D., and Justin Martyr, who died around 165 A. D.

Testament which, above all others, is concerned with pointing out the passing of the Law into disuse as the better way of Christ takes its place, tithes are mentioned (Hebrews 7:1-9) only as part of the system which is about to vanish, and are in no way confirmed as valid for the present age.

It is, beyond all doubt, commendable to give generously to the Lord's service. Those who choose of their freedom to pay tithes, or more, will no doubt profit from the promise, "He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully": yet in this passage, so far from laying tithes, or any other proportion, on believers as a duty, the apostle lays down a principle utterly different: "Let each man do according as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, nor of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

Churches which tithe no doubt profit enormously financially from the practice. Those which do not might well reflect whether their members are as wholehearted and bountiful as the apostle advises and encourages them to be. Yet the idea of a supervised collection of 10% of the gross income of each member which is, at least in some of these communities, put into effect as a matter of duty, so far from being a divine principle is very near to be a violation of one: "Do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them. When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:1-4). Believers should no doubt be more generous than they are in the Lord's service: but an imposed discipline is *not* the New Testament's way of bringing this about.

When we come to the matter of food and drink a quite serious situation arises. It is true that the Adventist Church does not claim that it is a duty to follow the Law of Moses in the matter of clean and unclean foods. In practice, though, the Law's precepts are strongly encouraged, and in vegetarian practices the Law's provisions are immeasurably tightened. To object to this being done is not, of course, to deny anyone the right to decline swine's flesh, or flesh of any kind, if he chooses to do so. Nor is it to suggest that the original division into clean and unclean foods under the Law was ill-founded. Paul writes sympathetically of the "weak" brother who eats only herbs, or vegetables (Romans 14:2). But it is not weakness which prompts the conscientious Adventist to be vegetarian, and it is not sympathy for which he asks: what is claimed is a superior judgement of what is good for him, and in so far as he claims the right to promulgate and require acceptance of these practices (which, it seems, he does, for "it is true that we refrain from eating certain articles", QD p. 623), he would seem to be in danger of "judging another man's servant" (Romans 14:3-6), even of denying that the Lord "made all meats clean" (Mark 7:19), and of repudiating Paul's statement condemning those who "command to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For *every* creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:3-5). Without denying in any way the honourable motives which prompt the restrictions, we are bound to question very severely what looks like perilous tampering with the liberty which God grants to His children.

The same is true of the Adventist attitude to intoxicants and stimulants. Once again, there is nothing to discourage the abstemious from abstaining: John the Baptist was one such. There are frequent exhortations in Scripture against over-indulgence, in

both Testaments. Yet even the exhortations to moderation in “not quarrelsome over wine” (1 Timothy 3:3 RVM), “not given to much wine” (3:8; Titus 2:3), concede the case against total prohibition; Paul’s licence to Timothy, who evidently preferred total abstinence, to let his health be paramount, and “take a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Timothy 5:23), points the same way. The Lord’s presence at the marriage feast in Cana (John 2:1-11) with his willingness to make wine from water, so excellent that men who had drunk well could still recognize its quality, his parables of wine and wineskins (Mark 2:22), his frank recognition that “the Son of man is come eating and drinking”—in contrast with John the Baptist, and allowing slanderers to accuse him of being “gluttonous and a winebibber” (Luke 7:34), as well as his choice of wine as the symbol of his blood of the new covenant (Matthew 26:29): all these make it plain that it was no part whatever of the Lord’s plan to inculcate the duty of total abstinence.

Liberty to abstain is one thing; even encouragement to avoid habits which might lead “him that is weak” to excess may be praiseworthy. But it is quite another thing to say in one of the “fundamental beliefs” (QD 17) that followers of Christ “in eating and drinking... should shape their lives as becometh followers of the meek and lowly Master. Thus the followers of Christ will be led to abstain from all intoxicating drinks... and to avoid every body- and soul-defiling habit and practice.” It needs a very bold confidence in one’s own policies to be able to ignore, or shockingly to criticize, the habits of the Lord himself.

In summary, whatever denials may be offered, the attitude to the Law of Moses of the Adventist community is very different from that which the Lord Jesus and his Apostles have established. The Sabbath is maintained as a positive duty; and various practices are asserted as either divine principles or (at the very least) divinely commended practices: when the Lord and his followers do neither the one nor the other. What might be harmless, even helpful, if accepted as a personal discipline, becomes something much more menacing when adopted as compulsory or near-compulsory observances, sometimes in direct opposition to the judgements of the Scriptures.⁶

⁶ One piece of exposition which is difficult to take seriously should be mentioned. So convinced is the Adventist community that Sunday-observance is, in addition to being unfounded in Scripture, actually sinister in its import, that it regards the ‘mark of the beast’ (Revelation 16:2; 19:20) as compulsory keeping of Sunday, to be imposed by a papal edict at some time prior to the return of the Lord Jesus, and to be resisted by the truly faithful. The view that this mark represents some form of subservience to a power of Antichrist is widely held, but the Seventh-day Adventists seem to be alone in linking it with the Sabbath-issue. It was apparently an original idea of Mrs. White (QD pp. 178, 183-4), and one suspects that it is only retained as a penalty for regarding her as a prophetess, whose views cannot lightly be repudiated.

THE INVESTIGATORY JUDGEMENT

All communities believing in the fulfilment of Bible-prophecy — our own among them — have been attracted by the time-periods of certain prophets (principally Daniel, and John in the Revelation) and tempted to use them in order to predict the time of the Lord Jesus' return. When, despite the Scriptural assurance that it will be in such an hour as we think not that the Lord will come (Acts 1:7; Matthew 24:44,50; 25:13; Luke 12:39-40, and others), dates have been fixed for the Advent and hopes fixed on it, there have been, inevitably, frustrations and disillusionment.

Faced with these disappointments, some have reacted by losing their faith in prophecy altogether. Others have admitted some mistake in their own computations, and either tried again or given up the attempt. Yet others have insisted that their calculations were correct, and have had no other choice than to redefine the event to which the calculations pointed. This was the policy of the Jehovah's Witnesses who, when the Lord did not return in 1914, decided that it was not his visible coming at all which should occur then, but an invisible *parousia*, or presence, dating from that time.

It has been the policy of the Adventists also. Since 1844 was the date determined by their figures, it could not have been the literal Second Advent to which that date referred. It is indeed the case that Daniel 8:14 does not say that Christ, or Messiah, would come at the end of the 2300-day period. It says that a power of evil would triumph for this period, and the sanctuary of God trodden under foot. At the end of this time it would be cleansed. Taking up these words about the cleansing of the sanctuary, Adventists move into Hebrews 8-10, where the Tabernacle of the Jews is treated as a shadow of the work of Christ. The crucified and risen Lord is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man" (8:2); by his blood he has entered in once for all into The Holy Place (9:12); and by the same he has cleansed "the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices" than those of beasts (9:23).

On the basis of the admitted verbal similarity, an extraordinary exposition is constructed. Daniel says that the sanctuary shall be cleansed: so does Hebrews. Therefore in Daniel, as well as in Hebrews, it is Jesus who cleanses the sanctuary. Daniel (*sic*) dates this event in 1844: therefore it was in 1844 that Jesus entered into the inmost sanctuary of God. No-one in either place says anything about an investigatory judgement: this is a pure invention. The idea of the Adventists is that Jesus has for more than a century and a quarter engaged in sifting the evidence so as to decide who shall be blessed with him at his coming (when this takes place) and who shall not. But none of the passages cited in support of the idea has anything to do with it at all (QD 16). When Peter says that "the time is come for judgement to begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17) he does not mean that it will have come 1780 years later and will take place unnoticed: he is actually referring to the behaviour of the house of God under persecution. When Daniel 7:9-10 speaks of the judgement sitting and the books being opened, the scene he depicts is like that of Revelation 20:11-15, though possibly at a different period: and the decisions of that judgement were immediately put into effect. Revelation 14:6-7 is concerned with the witness to the gospel among the nations because of a judgement yet to come, and gives no details of that judgement at all. And Luke 20:35 speaks of those worthy to be blessed at the resurrection of the dead, without in any way discussing how their worthiness has been

ascertained.

The plain fact is that this is an exposition born of a bankrupt interpretation of prophecy. Daniel 8, whatever its timing, refers to the deliverance of a sanctuary from heathen oppression and downtreading; while on the other hand Hebrews 8-10 pictures the Lord Jesus going into the closest presence of God, the heavenly Holy-of-Holies immediately on his ascension, not allowing the slightest possibility that he would remain outside for eighteen centuries more. And his presence there at God's right hand is to plead for his saints and minister to their needs as they pray to God through him, and through him "approach boldly before the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need". It has nothing to do with an unlikely and protracted examination of the records of men and women, which must be known to God perfectly and instantaneously.

It would have been better to admit that the calculations had gone wrong than to fasten upon Scripture an exposition such as this.

RESURRECTION OF GOOD AND EVIL

According to the teaching of the Adventist Church, and some others, when the Lord Jesus returns to the earth only the righteous dead will be raised. These will then be joined by the righteous living, and go to be with their Lord in heaven. The unrighteous dead will not be raised until the end of a thousand years during which the world lies desolate. Three passages are quoted in support of this (QD 11): John 5:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and Revelation 20:5-10. But the passages are ill-adapted to support the view expressed: the two last, as far as they are quoted, do not, indeed, mention the presence of the unworthy before the Lord at his return to the earth, but this is not the same thing as denying that they will appear. For the object of both these passages is to bring comfort and hope to those who suffer, or to those who have been bereaved. "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep," says Paul in the former (1 Thessalonians 4:13), "that ye sorrow not as the rest which have no hope." The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of that of his saints, and there is no place in that message for a discussion of what happens to the unworthy among his followers.

The latter is written to reveal the ultimate reward of those "who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" (Revelation 6:9-11; 20:4). It is true that this last reference tells us that "the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished", but the message is there simply that there will be no further resurrection after the Lord's return until the thousand years are over, without deciding the question as to who may already have been raised.

It is on this point that the first passage is decisive. We have found no passage which affirms that unjust persons will not be raised at the same time as the just: now we are confronted with one which clearly affirms the opposite: "The hour is coming," Jesus says, "in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgement" (John 5:28-29). In the preceding verses the Lord has spoken of an hour of opportunity, when men may make up their minds to obey the gospel; now he speaks of an hour of judgement, when *at one time*, the worthy will be

blessed with endless life, and the unworthy condemned to the loss of it.

The words are in fact an echo of Daniel's prophecy that "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:2). This, too, is located at a single time, a time of trouble such as never was when the great prince shall stand up (12:1). This verse is, surprisingly, not quoted in "Questions on Doctrine" at all, but it is undeniable that it teaches the simultaneous judgement of worthy and unworthy at the Lord's coming.

Of course there are other passages equally clear. The Lord says, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-7), so that simultaneous judgement is offered both to the Lord's worthy followers and to the unworthy, the one justified and the other condemned at the day, the same day, of judgement. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory," he says further, "then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matthew 25:31-46); and whereas the passage which follows makes no reference to resurrection, this is clearly a judgement for life for the Lord's faithful who "enter into the kingdom prepared" for them (25:34), or for rejection for the unfaithful, who "depart into the everlasting fire" (25:41). That the two occur together is emphasized again in the verse which summarizes the account: "These shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (25:46).

The Apostle Paul is equally precise as to the timing of the judgement of worthy and unworthy: "The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1), which leaves no room for the one party to this judgement being held in waiting until that kingdom is a thousand years old. "We must all, " he says further, "be made manifest before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10), which reveals plainly that good and bad will together learn the pleasure and displeasure of their Lord. There is, he says, a "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgements of God, who will render to every man according to his works: to them who by patience in well doing seek glory and honour and incorruption — eternal life; but unto them that are factious and obey not the truth... —wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ" (Romans 2:5-16). This is one day, when eternal life will be granted to some, and tribulation and anguish to others.

To the Thessalonians (to whom he is supposed to have said that the righteous only will be involved in decision at the Lord's first coming), again he writes that "God will recompense tribulation to them that afflict you... at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his power when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).

The Book of Revelation completes the message, for it is when God through Jesus takes to Himself His great power to reign that the dead are judged, the servants of

God are rewarded, and the destroyers of the earth are destroyed (11:18).

In brief, the case for a simultaneous judgement of good and evil men and women, all who up to that time have come to understand the call of God to them, at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is overwhelming. It is true that, where the Lord and his apostles are only concerned to offer comfort and counsel to true believers, that a few passages exist where their condition at that time alone is under discussion (and we could add Luke 20:35; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; and Philippians 3:11 to those passages cited in the Adventist summary); but none of these passages says that the unworthy category will not be present too, and those others which do are irresistible. The Lord will, indeed, judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

If we are asked, then, what scope there is for a further rising of the dead when the thousand years are finished (Revelation 20:5), the answer will be found by discussing the next major point of Adventist doctrine:

HEAVEN AND EARTH DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Adventist teaching is that during the period in question the earth will be desolate, roamed miserably only by Satan⁷ (QD p. 498); while the true believers will have been transported to be with Christ in heaven (QD 21). At the end of the millennium Christ and the believers will return to the earth, to be confronted by Satan with the wicked dead, now raised; and in the resulting conflict the latter will be wholly destroyed, and the earth made pure forever.

This concept is almost totally mistaken.

Nothing in the three passages cited in this summary (QD 21: Revelation 20; Zechariah 14:1-4; and 2 Peter 3:7-10) says anything about the saints going to heaven, or about Satan roaming the earth (for whatever Satan means he is described in Revelation 20:1-3 as chained in the abyss), or about the total extinction of human life on the earth. If 2 Peter 3 were held to prove this last, it would prove too much, for if its terms were literal the earth would have been totally eliminated, to be replaced at once, at the second coming of the Lord (3:4,10) by a different one.

Though in an earlier section 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 has been used to speak of the resurrection of the worthy at the coming of the Lord, and might be used to support the view of the saints reigning in heaven, since they will “meet the Lord in the air” (4:17),

⁷ The identity of Satan has had to be left open in this essay, since to deal with it expressly would greatly have lengthened the work, and, also, since this view of Satan is by no means a characteristic of the Adventist Church as such. Lest our position should be misunderstood, however, we must say that we believe that the words Satan and Devil in the passages employed in this work refer to human evil, individually and corporately, and not to a supernatural fallen being.

This matter is dealt with fully in the book entitled “The Devil and Satan” by P. Watkins available free of charge on application to C.A.L.S., 3 Regent Street, Birmingham B1 3HG.

this is not what the passage says. The saints will be “caught up” to a place of meeting in the same way (using the same word) as Philip was miraculously caught up to be transported to a new location on the earth (Acts 8:39). And whether it is or is not in the air as we think of it that they first encounter their Lord, the evidence is overwhelming that the place which they share with him after their judgement and acceptance is the earth.

Thus the Lord Himself describes Jerusalem as “the city of the great King”, by whom he meant himself (Matthew 5:35). He tells his disciples that when he is enthroned they will “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:30). When he returns to the earth we learn that “the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). His coming as prophesied in the book of Daniel is that of a stone which destroys the image of human dominion, and becomes itself a great mountain to fill the whole earth, which is interpreted by the prophet to mean that, in the last days, “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left unto other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44). When the nations rage against God, and His Son smites them with a rod of iron, God says, “Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6).

This is a mere specimen selection from a vast mass of evidence. So also is the following sample from the Scriptures’ store of witness that the Lord Jesus, though his coming will bring great loss to the nations which rebel against Him, will have a populated world of mortal people to reign over when He comes: nations will say “Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths” (Isaiah 2:3); Jesus the Son of Jesse’s stock will rule, and “with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth” (2:4); when he returns to Jerusalem the Jews now regathered there will “look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son” (Zechariah 12:10) and be allowed inheritance there as the fruit of their repentance.

In the light of this it is plain what is meant by the saints living and reigning with him a thousand years: they will be assisting their Lord in his control of the earth (Revelation 20:4, 5) until such time as he shall have put all enemies under his feet (1 Corinthians 15:23-25). And as to those who are defeated by the Lord at the end of this thousand year period, there is no suggestion at all in Revelation 20 that these are raised sinners. They are “the nations which are in the four corners of the earth”, and have evidently been there all the time (20:8). And since there will be such mortal nations receiving instruction and blessing during this period, but dying also as the time for each one comes (Isaiah 65:20), for the last enemy will not be removed until the end (1 Corinthians 15:26), it is easy to see from what source “the rest of the dead” are drawn, who will receive their rewards and punishments in the last great assize (Revelation 20:11-15), before everything which offends is finally eliminated by, in the symbolism of this chapter, being “cast into the lake of fire”.

WAS ELLEN WHITE A PROPHETESS?

Leaving aside whether she actually claimed the term, the Adventist community is committed to the view that she is to be compared with prophets such as Nathan and John the Baptist. Accepting that she is not regarded as on a level with Scripture, yet if her utterances are supposed to be inspired they cannot fail to impinge seriously on how Scripture is understood. And if, as “Questions on Doctrine” so clearly suggests, she is to be regarded as the promulgator of the doctrines which have been analysed in this essay, it seems evident that her pronouncements have been seriously detrimental to the correct understanding of the Word of God.

If on this ground alone, therefore, the position assigned must be denied her. But on other grounds, too, the same is true. Her writings are voluminous, and contain much which is innocent, Scripture simply retold, and some which is edifying. But on doctrinal issues her guidance is evidently faulty, and unbecoming a prophetess. Thus she says of Jesus that “He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions” (QD p. 59) which seems inconsistent with her admission that he was tempted in all points like as we are (for without the same susceptibilities how could he be?). She rightly admits that sin was a possibility for the Lord, but fails to see that this is inconsistent with the eternal godhead which she ascribes to him (QD p. 63). She speaks of the faithful going to heaven, which we have seen to be contrary to Bible teaching (QD p. 141). She proffers the strange interpretation about the mark of the Beast to which we have already referred (QD p. 178, 183-4). The idea of the investigatory judgement from 1844 in the Most Holy Place is attributed to her thinking (QD p. 421). Her words, “As the books of record are opened in the ‘investigative’ judgement, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation...” and much more, are pure invention for which there is no particle of justification in the Bible (QD p. 443).

But there is no need to elaborate further. Claims for Mrs. White might not be substantiated if her doctrine were right, but they are certainly invalidated if it is not. And this essay has shown sufficiently with what defects that doctrine is encompassed.

It is a pity. The zeal, integrity, and devotion of Adventists can well serve as a model even to their critics. But how much better it would be were that zeal welded to a more Scriptural system of teaching. Perhaps this short analysis will help some of that church to think again, and, by God’s grace, choose a more excellent way.

A. D. NORRIS.