



2 Cor. 3:18

Open Face

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THE SABBATH AND THE TRINITY

Kaj-R. Nilsen



Among Seventh-day Adventists it is generally agreed that the Sabbath will be the all-important question in the last days, before the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. A lot of focus is put on the Sabbath, and of course we should keep the Sabbath, but is something wrong with this end-time scenario? Is this all there is to it? Is it so simple that based upon the practice of either keeping the Sabbath or not, people will be separated into two parties; one prepared for destruction, the other for eternal life?

Now first of all we must remember that the keeping of the Sabbath in and of itself has no merit whatsoever. Keeping the Sabbath will never save us. In fact, we will never be saved by works in any way. Only through faith in the righteousness of Christ can any of us be saved, and only as this faith produces a willing heart of obedience, will there ever be any true Sabbath-keeping. We need a faith that works, not faith plus works. Notice the Word of

the Lord concerning this point:

Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. – Ezekiel 20:12

The sabbath is the covenant sign. The keeping of the Sabbath signifies a rest in God, a rest from our own frustrating attempts to be justified by our own efforts. It signifies faith in a living God that loves, that redeems and that gave His only begotten Son for us. He is able, and we must die to the flesh. So behind the Sabbath day there are much deeper issues at stake: faith, righteousness, love, a spirit-filled life of obedience – Christ in you, the hope of glory. “Not I, but Christ” is the watch-word of the believer.

The true believers who have experienced the deeper significance of the Sabbath, will keep it both in the spiritual and the practical sense. It will be a sign between them and God that they belong to Him, that there is a living connection operating.

REJECTORS OF THE SABBATH

But our attention will now be turned to those that learn about, but reject, the true understanding of the Sabbath day. We are told by Ellen G. White that there will be Adventists that will advocate the keeping of Sunday from their own pulpits. Many of those Adventists will no doubt keep on worshipping on both the Sabbath and on Sunday, and in doing so they will in reality reject the Sabbath. Another group of Adventists will keep the Sabbath only on a practical level, and not keep it in a spiritual sense

as they do not rest in Christ and His righteousness. This group have either gone into a subtle form of legalism, or anti-nomianism / liberalism. Lastly, the majority of the world will learn about the Sabbath day and its significance, but will also reject it.

But the great question is, “Why will even Adventists advocate Sunday as a day of worship?” And why will the Sabbath be evaluated as a question of minor importance by the world? Why is it even today seen as such?

THE BASIS OF ECUMENISM

The truth is that there is a particular reason the Sabbath is, and in a stronger sense will be, seen as not of primary importance. It has very much to do with ecumenism.

What is ecumenism? It is a principle built on one very simple idea. This idea is that those people that worship the same God, should have no problems coming together and having fellowship even though they disagree on other doctrines.

This idea is built on the premise that after all there is only one all-important doctrine.

The question is, if you are in agree-

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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ment on this most fundamental doctrine, then why care so much about the other doctrines? They are, after all, only secondary and of minor importance, it is claimed.

Now the most important thing is the identity of the God you worship, and I guess everyone will agree with that. This is a reasonable idea that makes sense to many people! Not only is it reasonable, but it is Biblically correct too!

So the ecumenical world is built on one single article, that everyone has to accept. This article consists of their definition of the god that they worship – and this is a god in Trinity!

Notice: The Trinity god is the god of the ecumenical movement. It is the god of almost the whole Christian world.

This will not change, you can be pretty sure. Oh yes, the whole ecumenical world **WILL** come together, as prophesied in Revelation chapters 13 and 17, and they **will** stick to this fundamental principle: The worship of the Trinitarian god.

Is it a safe thing to follow the ecumenical movement? What spirit is leading

those who are involved in it? Do they worship the true God? Given the end-time picture as presented in the Bible, we can be certain that any god that is worshipped by almost all of Christendom, cannot possibly be the true God of the Bible. The god that is worshipped by the majority of the world will have to be a false god. Why is this so? Read what John says:

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. – Revelation 13:3

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. – Revelation 13:8

It is **all** the world which will engage in false worship, and this includes the great majority of professing Christendom. We are talking about the greatest deception that has ever come upon human beings! And we see it being prepared now. Alliances that no one dared to hope for only years ago, are now being formed. Lutherans and Catholics, Evangelicals and Catholics. Yes, we are stunned to read that there has even been cooperation between Catholics and SDA's in Poland for many years, below the surface. Nothing is as revealing as that in signifying the time in which we live. When fundamental Islam is "conquered" and the US Constitution laid to rest in the dust, the whole world will be ready for the Papacy and the US working in union to subjugate the world.

THIS IS HOW

I submit to you that this is how Adventists will be persuaded to drop the Sabbath. The argument that the whole Christian world worships one and the same god, will be seen as the most important point. Every other doctrine will be relegated to the back seat, effectively swept under the rug. Our religion will be completely changed, and the new organization will be up

front. *"The sabbath will be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it"* – all this just as the prophet of the Lord foresaw. (1SM 205) Those Adventists that accept the Trinity god, will find it extremely hard to counter this forceful argument, and we see this today even on a smaller scale.

Because today there apparently is no difference between Adventists and the other denominations as to the definition of the god they worship, the barriers have been broken down and Adventists are increasingly seeking to establish ecumenical ties. The question is, "why not when we have so much in common?" The trap is laid, and is working well already. This is a tragedy that words cannot express. We desperately need the distinction from the other denominations that our former fundamental beliefs provided for us. These distinctions would have made it easier to identify with the task we are here for: not to join Babylon, but to call people out of it.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

So the true keeping of the Sabbath will identify those that do not worship the same god as does the ecumenical, so-called "Christian" world.

In other words: the Sabbath signifies a deeper issue, one of worship. ***Which God you worship will be the most important issue***, and it will have consequences for how you relate to all the other doctrines.

Some people write me and say that we have now "gone off the deep end" because we are focusing on the Trinity. But is this really so?

The truth about God is an issue that deals with the characteristics and the identity of the God you worship. It deals with the question, "Which God do you worship?" Thus it deals with the most fundamental issues there are, issues which led to the great rebellion in heaven in the first place.

There is absolutely no way that the godhead question could be a second-

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SELF-DECEPTION

Howard Williams

Self-examination in the context of this article, may be defined as follows:

A careful investigation of our spiritual state, to know whether we are in the faith, to know our defects that we may become aware of the improvements that we must make.

A consideration of the following points will reveal the necessity of attending to this duty:

DECEPTION

Deception simply means, "to cause to believe what is not true."

To deceive, betray, mislead, delude, dupe or bamboozle are verbs that mean to lead into error, danger or a disadvantageous position.

While there is deception in every area of life, the deception that leads to the loss of a soul, is the most important. Men very carefully study the art of spending money wisely, and avoid investing in anything that is not safe and secure. Yet they give their souls over to men to decide their destiny for them. What is most important? Is it money that lasts only for a lifetime on earth, or eternal life that never ends?

Jesus himself cautioned us that we should not be deceived (Matt. 24:3). He said that deception will be such in the last days, that if it were possible the very elect would be deceived. (Matt.24: 24; Luke 13: 22)

People who are deceived, are truly and honestly not aware that they are deceived or they would not allow themselves to be taken by deception.

WHAT CAUSES DECEPTION?

Deception is caused by ignorance of facts and trusting to the wrong people for an understanding of those facts.

With such an increase of knowledge and the availability of information as there is today there is no excuse for ignorance on any worldly subject to which our mind may become curious. But when it comes to spiritual knowl-

edge there is only one source, God himself. How could Christians lose sight of this most important fact?

Tragically and paradoxically, the deception that needs our fullest attention is self-deception.

Can we deceive ourselves?

It is with utmost amazement that we see the people to whom God entrusted the privilege of being His sentinels, deceived with regard to their spiritual condition. How could the people through which he would give the last message of mercy to a dying world reach the place where they deceive themselves that they are, "... rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing..." while they know not that they are, "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." (Rev. 3:14)

Many are Laodiceans, living in a spiritual self-deception. They clothe themselves in the garments of their own righteousness, imagining themselves to be rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, when they need daily to learn of Jesus, His meekness and lowliness, else they find themselves bankrupt, their whole life being a lie (Letter 66, 1894). 7BC 962

Often we ask ourselves the question, "how could seemingly intelligent people freely give their allegiance to support and follow such men as, Jim Jones, David Koresh and Marshall Applewhite, to the extent that they committed suicide at the command of these men?" How could men and women alive in our day and age dedicate their lives and wealth to these Gurus and worship them as gods?

What could cause young fair women, with a desire to serve God allow a priest to sexually assault their bodies and call that an act of righteousness?

How could men believe and accept such fallacies as, confession to a man, buying indulgencies, penance and purgatory?

How could millions of Christians today

openly defy the law of God and claim that in doing so they are fulfilling God's will?

This kind of deception continues to the very end, when as the scripture declares, "many will say, Lord, Lord..." (claiming a right to his favour), "did we not prophesy...cast out devils...done many wonderful works in thy name" (showing these as the evidence that they are Gods children), but He (the Lord), will say to them, "I never knew you." (Matt.7:22,23)

How then can we know truth? How can we know the right path? How can we know what God approves?

Are we left to grope about in darkness? Are we left at the mercy of denominations? If this were so, then our hope of ever finding truth or God would be extremely shaky!

THE GREAT STANDARD

What shall we use as a standard?

Shall we trust to men's credentials, organisations and establishments? Shall we trust the most popular and recognised groups? Shall we trust to prophesying or casting out of devils or the doing of many wonderful works or even miracles.

We need a criterion by which we can try these and all other false standards, and that criterion is:- **THE UNERRING WORD OF GOD**. This should be the test of piety and holiness as well as of truth, the man of our counsel and the guide of our life, our only rule of faith, experience and practice, to which all our feelings and actions should be referred, and by which they should be tried. It is by this word that we shall be judged, and by it we should now judge ourselves, and prove the genuineness of our piety. If we should adopt a different standard, we might expect to fall into serious mistakes.

This word gives us the root reason for self-deception, in the most fearsome and striking passage ever recorded.

"And then shall that wicked be revealed...even him whose com-

ing is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thess. 2:8-12.

Today, something dangerous envelops the entire Christian world like a blanket, and that is DECEPTION. People are sold out on denominations, and they refuse to talk, or listen to anyone or to read anything that does not carry the approval of their “church.” And even if they do listen they must go back and ask the pastor if what has been said is correct. Of course, anything the Pastor says will become gospel.

I have heard non-Christians express the disgust they feel towards the confusion that exists in the different denominations and their confusion as to where to find truth. Even in this I can see that the Bible’s authority is neglected. A young lady asked me a question once, “There is one Bible and yet many interpretations, how would we know the correct interpretation?” I thought for a while and then I asked her, “who is the author of the Bible?” When she agreed that God was the author. I pointed out that since God is the Bible’s author and that since He is available to all who wish to find Him, then the only safe thing to do is to ask Him to show us the truth as it is in the Bible.

Too many times we fail to point others to God himself, for His leading and direction, and instead we take God’s place in trying to lead others to our way, even though it may be that we are in the right path, our efforts must be to help others to find God Himself, so they can build a relationship with him for life.

SELF-EXAMINATION

We cannot determine our state merely by looking at ourselves. We must also look at the truth. We must examine ourselves in the light of God’s word.

This duty is enforced by a divine command. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith,” is the language of inspiration. 2 Cor.13:5. See also 1Cor.11:28 ; Gal.6:4.

In self-examination we should search the truth not merely to become acquainted with it as a theory, and to be able to handle it fluently, but to apply it to our own individual cases. The truth will do us no good unless we thus apply it to ourselves. Men may speak and write ably and eloquently in defence of the truth, without knowing its sanctifying power. It is one thing to see the truth at a distance, and as it is brought to bear upon others, but it is another thing to bring the truth home, and make a practical application of it to our own hearts and lives.

As the Bible must be our standard, so our model must be the perfect example of Jesus. We are required to walk even as he walked. It is safe to follow the example of Jesus, and we can follow others only as far as they agree with this perfect example.

Self-deception cannot exist where the work of self-examination is rightly engaged in, and faithfully and perseveringly carried on. The grand remedy for self-deception, is self-examination in light of the word of God.

“The great reason why so many professed Disciples of Christ fall into grievous temptation and make work for repentance is that they are deficient in a knowledge of themselves. Here is where Peter was so thoroughly sifted by the enemy. Here is where thousands will make shipwreck of faith. You do not take your wrongs and errors to heart, and afflict your souls over them. I entreat you to purify your souls by obeying the truth. Connect yourselves with heaven. And may the Lord save you from self-deception.” 4T 246

Says Dr. Watts, “It was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans, that they should every evening, thrice run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct had been, what they had done, or what they had neglected; and they assured their pupils that by this method they would

make a noble progress in the path of virtue.” And shall we be behind these heathen philosophers in this important exercise? Dr. Watts also furnishes the following lines, which we would do well to remember:

“Nor let soft slumber close your eyes,
Before you’ve recollected thrice
The train of actions thro’ the day.
Where have my feet chose out
the way?
What have I learned where’er
I’ve been,
From all I’ve heard, from all
I’ve seen?
What know I more, that’s
worth the knowing?
What have I done that’s worth
the doing?
What have I sought that I
should shun?
What duty have I left undone,
Or into what new follies run?
These self-inquiries are the
road
That leads to virtue and to
God.”

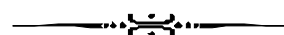
In several non-Christian religions, the members are taught the principle of meditation as a means of realizing true peace. They meditate to empty their minds so they can feel peace.

In Christianity we have greater evidence on which to rely than that of feeling and it is the evidence that comes from knowing.

*“And this is life eternal that they might **know** thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3)*

Salvation is not based upon feeling, but on the fact that something is happening in my life that I know is real. This knowledge is verified by evidences of change in my life, changes that I can see taking place. I cannot discern these changes without proper self-examination.

The scripture says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2)



WHAT DOES "MONOGENES" MEAN?

In the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the "only begotten Son of God, several times. The term, **only begotten** is translated from the Greek word, **Monogenes**. Although several modern authorities claim that the word "monogenes" should be translated as, "unique" or "one of a kind," neither the word itself nor the roots from which the word is derived lend any credence to that definition. Look at the meanings of the word, "monogenes" and the words from which it is derived and you will see what I mean. These definitions are taken from The Strongs Hebrew-Greek dictionary.

monogenes $\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$: - $\mu\omicron$ only-born, i.e. sole:—only (begotten, child).

(The word Monogenes is derived from the two greek words, *Monos* and *Genos* the meanings of which are given below.)

monos $\mu\omicron\varsigma$: - $\mu\omicron$ remaining, i.e. sole or single; by impl. mere:—alone, only, by themselves.

genos $\gamma\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$: - $\gamma\epsilon$ kin" (abstr. or concr., lit. or fig., indiv. or coll.):—born, country (-man), diversity, generation, kind (-red), nation, offspring, stock.

It is clear that the word literally signifies the only one of a certain "kindred" (family stock) or of a person's generation. The word *genos* is of the same root from which we get words such as "genes," "genealogy," "generation," etc.

Since the word *monogenes* appears in the New Testament only nine times and those nine usages are the basis upon which we must form our conclusion as to what the word really means, then we need to ask the question, does the word mean a "unique" son or child in the sense of one who is an offspring by some process other than birth? The *Grace Theological Journal* says,

"The word translated "only begotten," (monogenes) is used nine times in the New Testament. It is used in reference to a certain widow's son (Luke 7:2), to Jairus' only daughter (Luke 8:42), and to another only child (Luke 9:38). It is used five times in reference to Christ

(John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9), and once in referring back to an Old Testament character (Heb 11:17).

The Greek translations of the Old Testament (Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus) also employ the word nine times, each time translating a form of the Hebrew word 'yahid.' Each one of these occurrences refers to an only child, seven of them to an only child in the ordinary sense. But twice the term is used of Isaac the son of Abraham (Gen 22:2, Aquila; 22:12, Symmachus)

.....
The fact is that in every single usage of the word, *monogenes*, in both the Old Testament (the Septuagint Greek version) and the New Testament, the word refers to a child who was literally born of the parents. It always signified a **filial** relationship. It never referred to an adopted or designated child. Also, in almost every case it had reference to the only child of the parents. The only exception to this is where it refers to Isaac who was actually not the only child of Abraham. The theologians make much of this and use this only case as the definitive one by which they decide on the meaning of the word, "monogenes" (because it fits with their ideas). In doing this they ignore the great majority of cases. And yet, even in the case of Isaac it is not difficult to see why Isaac is referred to as Abraham's *monogenes*. He was the only legitimate one as far as both God and Abraham were concerned. God's words to Abraham when He instructed him to sacrifice Abraham were, "take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest"

Of course, we also need to remember that Isaac was the **literal** son of Abraham. In every single case in the Bible the term **monogenes** has reference to a truly begotten child.

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While Allen Stump and I (David Clayton) were in Tasmania last year we had the pleasure of spending a few days with Brother Paul Borg and his lovely family. His wife Helen is of Greek descent and is from a family where

Greek is the language naturally spoken. It was of interest to us to hear her say that she had always understood the word "monogenes" to mean "begotten" or "born of," and that this was how the word had always been understood by her people. The following excerpt from an article by Scott Jones (found on the internet) is interesting in light of this. It is interesting to note that in spite of this defense, Mr. Jones is a Trinitarian (!!)

DEFENSE OF MONOGENES

by Scott Jones

It is well-known among native Greeks that modern Greek morphology is virtually identical to Koine/Biblical morphology. That means the language has been relatively stable for the past two thousand years and thus the definitions have undergone virtually no change as well.

.... Native Greeks have been reading the scriptures in **GREEK** - their own mother tongue - for the past two thousand years. They understand their own language better than Anglo-bible scholars and modern version translators who can't speak Greek, even though these Anglo-bible scholars and modern version translators who can't speak Greek continue to darken counsel by words without knowledge in their perennial boasts of understanding a language they can't even speak.

Following their own vain imaginations down the corrupt path of their own inner delusions in their never-ending and systematic attempt to devalue the Eternal Son of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the modern Anglo-Sanhedrin states that *monogenes* means *unique*. Of course, only a non-Greek speaker or someone with a *huge* theological bent would make such an uninformed statement, as the Greek language has had a different word for *unique* for more than two thousand years.

That word is *monadikos* and it antedates Christianity, having been employed by Aristotle, Philo, and others.

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The Trinity AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE Christian Faith

by
Colin Gyles

The Trinity is held by popular professed Christianity to be the central doctrine of the Christian faith. This doctrine, though nominally embraced by most professed Christians, is widely considered to be a mystery. So mysterious is this doctrine that many of its adherents do not even venture to seek an understandable definition of the doctrine, much more to investigate or analyze its coherency or any implications that it might create for the overall perspective that is developed.

Webster's Dictionary defines the Trinity as follows: "(a) A threefold consubstantial personality existing in one divine being or substance. (b) The union of one God; of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three infinite persons." A similar definition of the Trinity is given in the Practical Catholic Dictionary by Jessie Corrigan Pegis as follows: "One and the same God in three divine persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. There are three distinct persons who are one God."

In accordance with the historical development of the Trinity doctrine and as indicated in the above definitions, the Trinity declares that there are three distinct persons who are of the same substance and constitute one being. This composite being is considered to be the God of the Christian faith. Pictorially, the Trinity has been represented as a composite head with three (3) faces or as three different heads that are joined in a single body. Another popular representation is an equilateral triangle wherein each of the three (3) equal sides represents a member of the Trinity.

The various representations attempt to depict an underlying concept of unity of substance, thus making the three personalities a single being rather than separate beings. This concept of unity of substance constitutes the primary basis on which the doctrine was formulated. The formulation of the Trinity doctrine arose out of a controversy

early in the fourth (4th) century AD between one Arius, a Presbyter in charge of the church at Baucalis in Alexandria, Egypt, and Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria.

Arius proposed that Jesus Christ, the Son, was of like substance (Greek-Homoiousion) as the Father while Alexander contended that the Son was of the same substance (Greek-Homousion) as the Father. The resolution of the dispute was done by a council of 318 bishops called at Nicaea by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 325 AD, which resolution saw the condemnation and banishment of Arius and the acceptance of the idea that the Son is of the same substance as the Father.

The concept of identity of substance was later applied also to the Holy Spirit by Athanasius and a subsequent council held at Constantinople in 381 AD enjoined equal worship of the Holy Ghost with the Father and Son. It was also declared that the Son was begotten of the Father by an Eternal Generation, a continuous process that has neither beginning nor end, hence the Son is not separate from the Father, but together they constitute one being. The Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus declare: "The Christian belief is that the Christ of History is the Son of God, eternally begotten by one ceaseless action from the Father....." (Tell Us About God.... Who Is He? p. 30, The Knights of Columbus).

An examination of the issues which gave rise to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity indicate clearly that the doctrine was formulated based on intellectual speculation and not on divine revelation. Indeed the Bible is entirely silent on such questions as the substance of the Father and the pre-incarnate Son. Further, none of the apostles or prophets have even as much as alluded to any such thing as worship of the Holy Spirit or made any suggestion as to the nature of any pro-

cess by which the Son was begotten. The Trinity is indeed a mystery, but far from being a divine mystery, it is a man-made mystery, and a mystery in the sense of being obscure and confusing.

NOT FROM THE APOSTLES

Roman Catholic officials are at least honest in admitting that the Trinity doctrine was not founded on the Scriptures, as declared: "*Our opponents (Protestants) sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly stated in Scripture..... But the Protestant churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels....*" - Life Magazine, October 30, 1950.

It is rather significant that the various pictorial representations of the so-called Christian Trinity bear marked resemblance to depictions of pagan deities that have existed centuries before the founding of the Christian church and which had no counterpart in the Jewish religious experience. The reason for this is that popular professed Christianity has been built on the foundation of imperial Christianity of the Roman empire which was developed based on a mingling of Christianity with the former pagan experience of Gentile converts. This is evident in the Trinity concept, wherein essentially correct Biblical terminology such as "One God" and "Only Begotten Son" are used to provide a veneer for false, unscriptural, pagan ideas.

That Christianity which was of the apostolic flavour, did not feature in the prominent and populous cities of the Roman Empire or in any of the famous councils of the imperial church. The reason for this is to be found in a dire hatred that Roman authorities had developed for the Jews. One may recall that all the apostles were Jewish and the founding members of the Christian Church were Jewish. The Christian

Jews constituted a sect called "Nazarenes" (The apostle Paul was referred to as a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes - Acts 24:5 on account of the fact that Jesus was a Nazarene, having been brought up in Nazareth - Matt. 2:23).

On account of the non-Christian Jews seeking to assert independence from the Roman authorities, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. The Christian Jews escaped the scourge by fleeing to a city in Syria called Pella (one of the ten cities of what is called Decapolis, in the Bible).

Pella and Antioch (the place where the disciples were first called Christians - Acts 11:26), both in Syria, became the main headquarters of apostolic Christianity after the destruction of Jerusalem. This remained so until as late as AD 370. Of these Christian Jews (Nazarenes) the Encyclopedia Britannica states: "*Nazarenes, an obscure Jewish-Christian sect, existing at the time of Epiphaneus (fl. A.D. 370) in Coele - Syria, Decapolis (Pella) and Basanitias (Cocabe). According to that authority, they dated their settlement in Pella from the time of the flight of the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, immediately before the siege in A.D. 70; he characterizes them as neither more nor less than Jews pure and simple, but adds that they recognized the new covenant as well as the old, and believed in the resurrection, and in the one God and His Son Jesus Christ....Jerome (Ep. 79 to Augustine) says that they believed in Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose again, but adds that, 'desiring to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither the one nor the other.' They used the Aramaic recension of the Gospel according to Matthew, which they called the Gospel to the Hebrews, but, while adhering as far as possible to the Mosaic economy as regarded....sabbaths, foods and the like, they did not refuse to recognize the apostolicity of Paul or the rights of (Gentile) Christians (Jer., Comn, in Isa. 9:1)". - The Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, Vol. 19*

For those who have read the Bible book of Acts, there should be very little difficulty in identifying the characteristics

of the Nazarenes as described above with the apostolic church. It is noteworthy however, that Jerome's description reflected an attitude which had, by then, developed among Gentile professed Christians which sought to dissociate Christianity from any connection with the Jews.

Meanwhile, widespread rebellion of non-Christian Jews against the Romans in AD 135 once again occasioned the Romans under emperor Hadrian to plow Jerusalem under, change its name to Aelia and forbade the Gentile Christians to have a leader of Jewish descent ~ (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, b.3, Ch. 5 p. 138, found in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers). Thus, by the time the Council of Nicaea was called, the Gentile Christians had largely distanced themselves from their Jewish brethren, allied themselves to the Roman Imperial authorities and capitulated to pagan customs, with which they were well familiar, in order to avoid being classified with the Jews. Thus, Christianity of the apostolic brand continued to exist in obscurity, being kept aloof from such philosophical bungling as the Trinity.

FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

The fundamental problem with the Trinity Doctrine in all its variations is that it denies or confuses the reality of Jesus Christ being the Son of God. This reality is the central truth that Christ commanded that His church should be built on (Matt. 16: 16-18). To remove or distort this truth and replace it with the pagan concept of a Trinity, as the central doctrine of Christianity can only undermine the true gospel of salvation and establish a false faith that does not commend itself to reason.

The gospel is a story which demonstrates the price of genuine and lasting peace. The honourable Chief Justice has reminded us that there can be no peace without justice. God could have destroyed the Devil before his rebellion and malicious lies against the Government of God are proven to be baseless, but the entire universe would cry: Foul! The seeds of distrust that were insinuated by the Devil (then called Lucifer), first in heaven among the angels and then in the hearts of our first parents (Adam and Eve) and their posterity may be rooted out only by due

process of justice which must not only be done, but be manifestly and undoubtedly seen to be done.

The cost to God of allowing due process has been immeasurable, involving even the ignominious death of His only begotten Son. Jesus Christ, as a willing and obedient Son, being the express image of His Father's person (character) demonstrated on earth the Father's virtuous character and allowed the entire universe to see the Devil's malice toward God by enduring the Devil's venom even to the point of death. God himself being the ultimate source and sustainer of all things could not have condescended in such a manner and die, otherwise the universe would collapse and cease to exist. Of the Father, the Scriptures declare: "who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see". 1 Tim. 6:15, 16. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things....." 1 Cor. 8:6.

Though the Father Himself could not die, nevertheless, through His divine power, His only begotten, beloved Son could be manifested in a form whereby He could die and did die. One cannot begin to imagine what must have occurred in the heart of God, the loving Father, who loves far greater than any other being, when he saw the agony of His Son - His only begotten Son, as Jesus, in the frailty of human flesh, cried "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27. 46. Such has been the cost of securing lasting peace for the entire universe. The argument of Calvary is profound. It shows:

1. The enormity of sin - that sin ultimately engenders the destruction of all that is good.
2. The matchless love of a Holy God, even for a race of rebels; notwithstanding the fact that the rejectors of His grace will be called to account for the death of His Son.

In explaining his mission, Jesus declared "I proceeded forth and came from the Father; neither came I of myself, but He sent me." John 8: 42. Hav-

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AN INTERESTING EXCHANGE

The following consists of a series of exchanges on an internet chat forum between brother Terry Hill of Bristol, England and a Seventh-day Adventist minister, on the subject of the godhead. Terry posted the first question which started the discussion.

You have seen a lot of emails on the trinity debate. If you are still wondering what the ‘fuss’ is all about, please read very carefully statement No. 2 of our 27 fundamentals (see below) and ask yourself this question, According to this statement, what is God?

2. THE TRINITY:

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present.

Now answer these questions as honestly as you can.

1. Does the above statement make sense to you? Is it intelligible?
2. According to this statement, is God a person?
3. If you answered ‘yes’ to the previous question, are you happy to believe that there are three persons in one person?
4. Would you say that the statement is Biblical?
5. Do you believe what the statement says?

Sometimes we need to take stock of what we really are saying when we make claims to certain beliefs. After all, we would like others to believe what we believe. Perhaps there is a need for a re-think.

Regards

Terry

Only one person on the forum answered the email and that was the mod-

erator/owner, an SDA minister. His reply I must admit did shock me. Here it is.

Terry:

Let's be careful here. There is stated to be one God composed of three persons. I am entirely comfortable with that because it is the testimony of Scripture. The only thing I don't like about that statement is its heading: "The Trinity."

1. Is it intelligible? Yes. Perhaps you wish to ask rather whether it seems to make sense to limited finite beings (three in one), with a presumed answer of no.

2. According to the statement, God is one; the three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are persons. God is not a person according to this statement.

3. Since I reject item two, three through five, apparently relating to two are not questions for me. However, if one would ask whether I find the fundamental belief statement itself biblical, I say yes, of course. And if it is asked whether I believe it, I also say yes.

The Bible says both, that God is one and that there are three persons in God. How these biblical facts can both be true can be difficult for us.

However, Mrs. White says that if everything about God could be figured out by finite man, He wouldn't be God (my words. For hers, see SC 108-109). We must be careful that we do not, as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, or others do, try to stretch the facts of Scripture until they can be explained in our finity. Sometimes two concepts converge within our sphere of understanding, sometimes they don't. Scripture testifies of two truths. It is enough.

This does not change the facts, and I think they are established facts, that several of our pioneers did indeed hold viewpoints different than the current belief statement. They

were no less Adventist than we though, and I don't think we are any less Adventist than they for holding this belief. Historically, Adventism has embraced both viewpoints and I can call another holding either viewpoint Seventh-day Adventist.

That does not mean I reject their concerns or that I find their teaching biblically compelling, or that I don't think their view of the atonement may be found untenable if they hold to some form of arianism.

The most biblical position I can presently find to sustain our current teaching but reject the label "trinity," for it carries so much needless baggage that it has a part in spawning debates such as this one. I appreciate the study that's been done on this topic, both here on the forum and elsewhere.

Signed XXXX

For reasons of Christian ethics, I will not reveal his name but I really was surprised that someone, particularly an SDA minister would come out and say that God was not a person. As you can imagine, I did challenge him on this point and sent him this simple email:

Dear XXXXX

Where does it say in the Bible that God is composed of three persons? You gave no Biblical reference. You also say that God is one, but you do not say one what? Could you explain please.

Terry

To this he gave this totally evasive reply and did not answer my question

Terry:

The Bible makes evident that there are three PERSONS. Example texts include Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14. The Bible says that God is ONE in texts such as Deuteronomy 6:4. We both know that you know of these texts. What is God "one" of? We all have the same information on that in the

Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, so I'm not sure what I can add.

As you can see, his answer was not an answer at all. I did tell him that to which he replied

Terry:

I'm not quite sure what was confusing about the answer I gave. God the Father is a person. Is that what you want me to say? I thought I said it. But that does not demand that every reference to "God" in the Scriptures is to the Father. You may know that God is commonly referred to throughout the Bible with a plural.

Signed XXXXX

Well, that was the last thing that he said. We have passed many more emails on the post on this subject but he has not since joined in the discussion. I am waiting at the moment for him to call a halt to the discussions because it has been going on a long time.

I have a little 'group' of local email friends (including our local minister) who I send bit and pieces of interesting things to, so out of interest I sent them my little questionnaire about that statement in the 27 fundamentals. Only one person answered. That was the wife of the elder of my church. It was probably his opinion as well. They said exactly the same as the minister on the forum, that being that God was actually a collection of beings.

Last year (every day for a month), I helped run a local radio station here in Bristol inasmuch as I participated in a two hour discussion every morning on certain Biblical topics. On the last day we discussed the Second Coming. As it was left to me each day to lay out the discussion, I chose to do it through showing that Jesus came the first time in accordance to Bible prophecy. To cut the story short, I first established that the Messiah to come was human (Abraham's seed) and then established

that He was divine (Psalm 2:7 etc). I then made the remark that it was wonderful that God sent His Son into the world to die etc. To my remark (and remember that this is 'on air'), the minister said that the term 'Son' was "only an expression that we used and that He was only called the Son because of what happened at Bethlehem. I came back at him 'on air' to say that the Bible said that He was the pre-existent Son of God. That was the end of that conversation.

I am, more and more each day, getting a clearer picture of the problem and how to deal with it. I was told by our ex elder recently that we cannot understand so we should not delve into it etc.

I find that the majority of people are not really interested. They do not seem to place any importance on what I have said. Their attitude seems to be "what difference does it make?" That I find is the most difficult thing to get over.

I have produced a *Microsoft Word.doc* that I make available to everyone with over 200 quotes from EGW on the Godhead but the number of people who request it is quite small really. I recently advertised it on the forum and now have about 12 people who are asking for the documents with my findings.



The Trinity and the Christian Faith

Continued from page 7

ing fulfilled the will of His Father, Jesus Christ has been even more endeared to His Father. Jesus said: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because 1 lay down my life, that I might take it again." John 10:17. Accordingly, God has not only raised him from the dead (Acts 5:30, 31) and has "highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2: 9), but has "committed all judgement unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." John 5:22, 23.

The gospel is intended to open to the world the irrefutable evidence of divine love, patience, selflessness and justice. However, through such distortions as the Trinity doctrine the Devil seeks to obscure the truth. Nevertheless, we are assured that "this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24: 14. But first, the gospel will be cleared of all distortions so that it will shine with unshadowed brilliance and clarity, showing that sin is without excuse, thus preventing any recurrence of evil, once an end has been put to it.



PHILADELPHIA FELLOWSHIP & NEW RADIO PROGRAM

For the next 12 weeks brother Colin Gyles will host a half an hour radio programme every Sunday morning at 6:00 A.M. on KLAS 89. His co-host for some of these programs will be brother Joseph Smikle. The title of the programme is, "Behold Your God." You are encouraged to tune in to this programme each Sunday morning and your prayers on behalf of this venture will be greatly appreciated.

The acquisition of the time slot for this broadcast followed quickly on the heels of the recent efforts of the Kingston (Jamaica) believers to engage in more efficient organization of their fellowship. Among the recent steps taken by these believers is the decision to refer to themselves as the PHILADELPHIA FELLOWSHIP. They have also moved from their former meeting place at Hope Gardens and are now in a more stable and comfortable setting at the Priory School (on Hope Road just in front of Andrews Memorial Hospital). Please join them in worship any Sabbath you are in the vicinity.

MORE ON PHILADELPHIA VS LAODICEA

Our article entitled “Philadelphia or Laodicea” (*February 2002 Open Face*) has stirred up quite a bit of interest with some of the comments being negative and some positive. The following letter was written by a dear friend in Australia. We have reprinted most of it with some slight editing. We appreciate the comments and for the most part are in agreement with them. However, this perspective presents some questions and we have asked these questions at the end of the article. We are aware of the fact that in the area of prophetic interpretation and in so many other areas, we have much more to learn and much to unlearn.

Dear David,

First of all, I want to say that your article is excellent as always, and I am 100 percent with you relating to the belief that the SDA Church believes itself to be Laodicea. Twenty years ago, this was a big subject in Australia, and there was even a group of Adventists, separate from the church, who called themselves ‘Philadelphians’.

In an article I wrote on the subject, I spoke of the Church’s position as a TITLE, rather than a CONDITION, and quite obviously the Scripture teaches it to be a condition. Once in Sabbath School, a Pentecostal visitor listened for some time to people referring to themselves as the Laodicean Church, until finally she said, ‘If you know you are Laodiceans, why don’t you repent?’ Of course, it fell on deaf ears, as the majority believed it to be a title, not a condition.

So in this aspect, there is complete harmony with you David.

The only part where I would say I differ from you is that I believe it will be the Lord who will designate who is a

Philadelphian at the final sealing and latter rain. Perhaps you also believe this, but it did not seem to come across in your article.

If we claim to be Philadelphians now, there is no rebuke for us. I believe we still need rebuke. We need to realise that we are still afflicted with the disease of Laodicea. It is subtle. After all, we have had it a long time. Our hearts must be rebuked, for God wants us to cry out continually that we are poor, miserable, blind and naked, and that we know the disease of being rich and increased with goods, is still lurking somewhere in our hearts. If we understand our true condition, we will keep seeing Christ’s wonderful wares of faith, love, righteousness and the Spirit of God, as something we desire with all our hearts. They are not only once sought, but to be requested more and more, until finally Christ will pronounce us healed of the disease. If this is not how we see ourselves, are we not then truly blind and stricken with the *fullness* of the disease? My concern is that if I claim to be a Philadelphian now, my true condition will never be seen, and as you know, unless we come to realise our terrible state, we can never be healed.

In 1893 Brother A.T. Jones presented the following to the delegates at the General Conference:

“When Jesus tells you and me we are blind, the thing for us to do is to say, “Lord, we are blind.” He told those folks they were blind and they were blind, but they said it was not so. It was so. If they had confessed their blindness they would have seen God in that man’s healing from his blindness. Well, then, brethren, the thing for us to do is to come square up to that Laodicean message and say

that every word He says is so. When He says you and I are wretched, tell Him, “It is so, I am wretched; miserable; it is so, I am miserable; poor; it is so; I am poor; a perfect beggar, I shall never be anything else in the world; blind, I am blind, and shall never be anything else; naked, that is so; and I do not know it; that is so, too. I do not know it at all, as I ought to know it.” And then I will say to him every day and every hour, “Lord, that is all so. But, oh, instead of my wretchedness, give me thine own satisfaction. Instead of my misery, give me thine own comfort. Instead of my poverty, supply all thine own riches. Instead of my blindness, be thou my sight. Instead of my nakedness, oh, do thou clothe me with thine own righteousness. And what I know not, Lord, teach thou me.” [Congregation: “Amen.”]” General Conference Bulletin. 1893 p167.

If we say we are not Laodiceans, then the following text applies,

“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now you say, We see. Therefore your sin remaineth.” John 9:41.

Brother Jones also refers to this text. He continues,

“The difficulty about our not being able to repent is that we have not confessed that what the Lord has told us is the truth. When I know that I am wretched then I know that I need something that will satisfy me. And I know that nothing but the Lord can give that, and I depend upon nothing but Him to give it. And if I have not Him, why it is only wretchedness. Any moment that I have not Him it is only wretchedness, and any moment that I have not His

comfort it is only misery. Any moment that I have not absolute dependence upon His unsearchable riches — the unsearchable riches of Christ—I am utterly poor, a complete beggar. And every moment that I do not see and confess that I am blind and have Him as my sight, I am in sin. He says so. Therefore your sin remaineth. And every moment that I do not see my nakedness and depend only and absolutely upon Him and His righteousness to clothe me, why so certainly I am ruined, utterly ruined, and every moment that I begin to say, “Now I know so much,” no, I do not know that at all. Well, then, the thing that I am to do is to say, “Lord, I do not know it. I depend upon thee to teach me everything, even to teach me that I am wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked and that I need all these things. And when I tell Him all that He will give all I need. He will do it. That is our situation.” Ibid p167.

There is no problem identifying the members of the church as being Laodiceans; the problem lies in seeing ourselves as such. But praise God, His messengers of 1888 had the truth. Let us learn the lesson, for it is this message we must give to the world.

It is quite paradoxical, because if I say I am not a Laodicean, the words may give me away, because in actual fact I am saying, ‘I am rich and increased with goods.’ The real Laodicean does not know his condition, so obviously he will say he isn’t sick. But if I recognise my wretched condition, it is clear that I am being healed of my illness and receiving Christ’s wonderful gifts. It doesn’t mean I am fully healed, nor does it mean I am as bad as those who deny they have the deadly disease, and yet we are all as miserable, poor, blind, and naked as each other!

What is a Christian who is being healed of the Laodicean illness? According to

Revelation 3:21, the one who will sit with Christ in His throne is an “overcomer”, one who overcame as Christ overcame. It seems to me that the remnant will simply be overcomers needing Christ’s faith, love, righteousness and Spirit. These are precious gifts, aren’t they?

“The Laodicean message has been sounding. Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever Providence opens the way. Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ are the themes to be presented to a perishing world” Letter 24, 1892. BC Vol 7. p964.

When giving the message of the loud cry, we won’t be seen as a people who need no rebuke ourselves, but humbly acknowledging our great need. It may well be at that time that Jesus will regard us as Philadelphians, but our own cry will be, ‘Lord – your gold, raiment and eye salve, for I am undone’.

David, I hope this is a blessing to you, and if you share it, that it will be for your readers as well.

God’s blessing upon you.

SOME QUESTIONS

SUGGESTED BY THIS LETTER:

Jesus’ counsel to Laodiceans is to repent and buy of Him gold tried in the fire, eyesalve and white raiment.

- 1 What is repentance and how long does it take to repent?
- 2 As long as Laodiceans are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked they cannot have repented. Why then don’t we, (as the Pentecostal lady suggested) simply repent?
- 3 If Laodiceans heed the counsel of Christ and “buy” of Him white raiment, eyesalve and gold tried in the fire will they still be wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked?
- 4 If Laodiceans repent, will they still **think** that they are wretched, mis-

erable, poor, blind and naked?

- 5 If we repent, may we then say that we are no longer in the Laodicean condition? Can a Christian know that he has repented?
- 6 If Laodiceans come to see their true condition, can they still be said to be “blind” (one of the identifying marks of Laodiceans)?
- 7 If I put my whole trust in Christ instead of self, can I then still honestly say that I am in the Laodicean condition?

I believe a genuine Christian will always recognize his inherent worthlessness and unworthiness, but isn’t it also true that a true child of God will know the true state of his relationship with Christ? The great problem with Laodicea is that she does not know this.

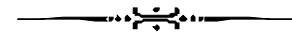
THE SABBATH AND THE TRINITY

Continued from page 2

ary issue, with the Sabbath issue being the more fundamental one. In fact these issues cannot be separated. They both deal with worship, but in two different ways.

The truth about God deals with the identity of God. The Sabbath deals with the practical and spiritual reality that results from your worship of the true God, signifying a living relationship with God. The first issue is the starting point of it all, the cause, the very source of life. The second issue is the result, the symptom, the sign of life operating.

May God guide and help us as we seek to find and worship Him alone, and may His Spirit inspire our hearts in willing service to Him Who is all in all, is my prayer for all of us!!



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MONOGENES

Continued from page 5

The Greek word *monadikos* means *unique* or *one of a kind* and nothing else, as native Greeks know. Its morphology hasn't changed in over two thousand years. *Monadikos* is the word that Greek speakers have been using for *unique* for more than two thousand years, and it is the word native Greeks still use today when they want to say *unique* or *one of a kind*.

Neither has the morphology of *monogenes* changed in over two thousand years, and *monogenes* has always meant *only begotten* or its equivalent.

Just as *only begotten* is not equivalent to *unique*, so *monogenes* is not equivalent to *monadikos*. The Greek word *monogenes* does *not* mean *unique*, nor has it ever. The Greek word *monadikos* means *unique*. It has *always* meant *unique*.

Had the writers of the New Testament wanted to say *unique*, they would have used the Greek word which means *unique* – *monadikos*.

The reason the writers of the New Testament didn't employ *monadikos* when they penned the New Testament is simple – because the writers of the

New Testament didn't mean *unique*. The writers of the New Testament meant *only begotten* or its equivalent. That's why they used the word *monogenes* instead of *monadikos*.

According to both history and native Greeks themselves, the Greek word *monogenes* means *only begotten* or its equivalent, and it has always been so, notwithstanding the delusions of Anglo-bible scholars and modern version translators who can't speak Greek.



Open Face

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