

"Watchman,
what of the night?"

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

THE Holy Spirit

Page 2

More on "Corporate Calvinism"

Page 4

MIQUEL SERVETO

Page 6

Editor's Preface

The August issue last year, authored and put together by our librarian, contained an article on "Corporate Calvinism." In response to this article, we received the essay we have published in this issue on the same subject but from the perspective of a reader. While the thought may be re-emphasized and in some aspects repeated, it needs to be. We may shun as a personal doctrine the assumption, that once saved means always saved, and then turn about face, and embrace the same equally false assumption that once a group of organized people receive a commission from the Lord, that commission cannot be withdrawn. This flies in the face of salvation history as well as the history of the Christian Church since the time of Christ. My Spirit will not always strive with men is a divine dictum that has never been repealed and thus cannot be ignored. To seek to mitigate the force of this dictum in the light of fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy is to lead those, who hear what otherwise is truth, into a false sense of security.

The article on "The Holy Spirit" completes the first segment of the Eternal Verities we are summarizing from our 1997 Seminar Studies. The Holy Spirit will be fully understood only when Heaven becomes a reality. There is a reason for this "veil" which covers His reality. Even as Christ came to glorify the Father, so the Holy Spirit is come to glorify Jesus. (John 16:14) Even as Christ's self abasement hid His reality, so the Spirit's selflessness disguises His reality, except to those who desire to know truth. (John 14:17) We suggest a serious and meditative study of this article.

As a result of some previous correspondence, we received the letter which stimulated the third article on Miguel Serveto. We only briefly outlined biographical data. After writing the article, we found a more complete resume in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. We hope the one with whom we have corresponded will sense that we had our tongue in our cheek when we asked the final questions.

In any study of the Incarnation, the question of sin comes up. What is sin, is basic to the issue as to what nature Christ assumed in taking humanity upon Himself. We need to differentiate between sin and the results of sin. Christ accepted the latter, and overcame the former in that He did no sin. Read "Let's Talk It Over."



Eternal Verities - 2

The Holy Spirit

In the previous study, we noted that the Holy Spirit was involved in the birth of Jesus. This means in the simplest of terms that the Holy Spirit antedated the Incarnation. In the Scriptures He is described as "the Eternal Spirit." (Heb. 9:14) The designation, "Holy" Spirit sets Him apart from the angelic hosts who are "ministering" spirits. (Heb. 1:14) While the gospel of Luke revealed the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus at the Incarnation, the Gospel of John revealed first, the Heavenly Duo - the Logos (Word) and God (John 1:1-2) - and then recorded the ultimate relationship between the Logos made flesh, and the Holy Spirit. Of this latter relationship, Jesus Himself was the revealer. Let us observe closely what Jesus said:

I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16-17)

Two Greek words need to be noted - παρακλητος (Comforter), and αλλος (another). In his first Epistle, John declares Jesus to be a Parakletos (2:1; KJV - "advocate"). This close relationship was further emphasized by Jesus in His continuing revelation in the upper room. He said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." (John 14:18)

While this close identity is emphasized, the distinction between the Two is also clearly defined by the word, αλλος, (another). There are two words in the Greek for "another." Besides, allos, there is heteros. The contrast between these two words is seen by Paul's use in Galatians 1:6-7. He wrote:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another (heteros) gospel, which is not another (allos).

Both words indicate two distinct things or beings, but the use of heteros defines the two as different in kind, even to the extent of one being inferior to the other. John in his Gospel and Epistle indicates that the Comforter to come from the Father, and the Advocate that was "with the Father," were both of the same kind - allos - God. Even as "God is spirit" (John 4:24), likewise the Comforter is a HOLY Spirit, in contrast to the "unclean" spirit beings who are antagonistic to God.

Jesus in his continuing conversation with the disciples on the way to Gethsemane, speaks of the Comforter as "He, the Spirit of truth," twice emphasizing the "He" (εκεινος) rather than "it" (εκεινο), which would be demanded by the neuter word "Spirit" in the Greek (John 16:13, 14). In the very designation itself, "the Spirit of truth," the closeness

of His relationship to Jesus Christ dare not be overlooked. Jesus declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) This close identification covered by αλλος παρακλητος, is described in theological works as an *alter ego* relationship. (See *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. V, p. 195 in comments on I John 5:6) From His incarnation (Luke 1:35) through to the cross (Heb. 9:14) the mysterious relationship prevailed. The "how" is enshrouded in mystery, the fact remains for our contemplation. This closeness is further emphasized in the Revelation of Jesus Christ which we will note later.

In the book of Acts, two insights of the Holy Spirit are given. One involves Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. Both had publicly committed themselves to the support of the early Church. In fulfilling this pledge, the price received for the dedicated land was more than anticipated, so they decided to retain a part of the funds received. In presenting these funds to Peter, Ananias left the impression that the total price received was being brought. Peter responded:

Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. (Acts 5:3, 4)

Here is clearly set forth two orders of Being - created (men) and uncreated (God). The Holy Spirit is not of the order of men, thus leaving only one conclusion; the Holy Spirit is as much God as the Logos, or God Himself. Further, lying is not done to an influence or a power but to a Person.

The second insight is revealed in the call of Paul and Barnabas to a special work. The record reads:

Now there was in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers: . . . As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (Acts 13:1-2)

Observe the language: The Holy Spirit stated that He called them - "the work whereunto I have called them." Further, it states that these two men were "sent forth by the Holy Spirit." (ver. 4) The Holy Spirit was in command of the activities and program of the Church. (It is interesting to observe that the Holy Spirit did not relay His directive through the leadership of the Christian Church at Jerusalem. It was given to men possessed by the gifts of the Spirit - Pneumatikoi) The question arises - Did Christ leave His Church under a "power" or "influence"? No, by "another Parakletos" the authority was exercised. He did not leave them comfortless nor guideless. He came to them in the Person of the Holy Spirit - His alter ego.

One more reference must be considered before going to the final book of the New Testament. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthian Church, writes to the believers de-

fining them as being an "epistle of Christ..., written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." (3:3) He then draws a contrast between the ministration written in stone, and the ministration of the Spirit written in the heart. While the ministration written in stone was glorious, so much so that Moses had to veil his face in speaking to Israel, Paul indicates that the veil is done away in Christ (v. 14). If the Israel of the flesh would turn to the Lord "the veil shall be taken away." (v. 16) Then Paul writes - "the Lord is that Spirit." It is this Spirit which ministers to the living "epistles" so that they are "the epistles of Christ." The close working relationship is further heightened by the fact that Paul differentiates between Him to whom the Israelite of the flesh can turn - "the Lord" - and He who changes the believer into "the same image." The change is "by the Lord, the Spirit" (απο κυριου πνευματος). [See verse 18, margin]

This close working relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit is emphasized in symbol and context in the book of Revelation. First, John extends the blessings of Heaven - grace and peace - "to the seven churches which are in Asia." These blessings come from Him, Who is, Who was, and Who is to come; and from "the seven Spirits which are before the throne," and from Jesus Christ. (1:4-5) The most apt language to describe these Three Beings is to be found in the Writings - "the Heavenly Trio." (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, #7, p. 62) There is One who is constant, unchangeable, without "variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17) The other Two, due to the entrance of sin, to accomplish the redemption of men, and to maintain the security of the Eternal Throne, have altered. What further activity is anticipated by the Heavenly Trio is only intimated in this unveiling of Jesus Christ.

The inter-relationship of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is emphasized at each progressive revelation to the Seven Churches to whom the book is addressed. Each message is prefaced with a testimony from Jesus Christ. Each is concluded with an imperative from the Holy Spirit - "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." Further, within the messages there is an intermingling of what Jesus will do, and what the Spirit will do. For example, to the victor of the Church at Thyatira, Jesus promises - "He that overcometh and keepeth my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (2:26); while to the victor of the Church at Ephesus, the Spirit promises - "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life" (2:7).

In the rich symbolism of the vision which John was given of the Throne of God and the activity connected with the Throne, he sees first the One sitting on the Throne, and before Him are seven torches (Gr.) of fire, which are declared to be "the seven Spirits of God." (4:5) Not until an impasse is perceived is "a Lamb as it had been slain" revealed (5:6). This Lamb is described as "having seven horns and seven eyes" which are declared to be "the

seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." This "Lamb" who was "conceived... of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20), and "who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself," is symbolically portrayed before the Throne possessing the Spirit of God, as "seven horns and seven eyes," which is dispatched to the earth. He promised His disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." (John 14:18)

The final scenes of the Revelation of Jesus Christ center on the time when all things are made new and the call is extended to come and drink of the water of life freely. John hears "a great voice out of heaven" saying -

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. (21:3)

Here again is introduced the Heavenly Duo of the Gospel of John. The Word (Logos), who became flesh and tabernacled among men, now comes once again to ever dwell with them. And God - "He Who is, Who was, and Who is to come" - comes to dwell with men as their God. He makes a pronouncement from the Throne:

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountains of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things: I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (21:6)

In the call to this occasion, the Spirit and the bride say, "Come" (22:17). [A bride gives the invitation to her wedding] One voice comes from the "bride" - the voice of the Spirit. There is one group of earth people - the last generation - who experience this in their final testimony of victory. When delivered up, they speak, but "it is not [they] that speak, but the Holy Spirit." (Mark 13:10-11) In them "the mystery of God" will be finished. (Rev. 10:7)

Some Helps

Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to the Father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit *is Himself*, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit as the Omnipresent. (Letter 119, 1895)

The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. (*Gospel Workers*, p. 285)

Christ declared that after His ascension, He would send to His church, as His crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take His place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit, - *the soul of His life*, the efficacy of His church, the light and life of the world. (R&H, May 19, 1904)

[The true seeker after the truth] is determined to stand on the side of righteousness. Truth has found its way into the heart, and is planted there by the Holy Spirit, *who is the truth*. When truth takes hold of the heart, the man gives sure evidence of this by becoming a steward of the grace of Christ. (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 122)

Truth, eternal truth, is ever present with the true believer. The Spirit is the appointed instructor of such a soul, his guide, his continual strength and righteousness. (Ms. 29, 1899)

Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. V, p. 267)

Faithful to His promise, the Divine One, exalted in the heavenly courts, imparted of *His fullness* to His followers on earth. His enthronement at God's right hand was signaled by the outpouring of the Spirit upon His disciples. (*Education*, p. 95)

Some Further Thoughts and Warnings Regarding "Corporate Calvinism"

In the August 1997, issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?" was a very important article, "Corporate Calvinism," which exposed a grave danger and a serious deception within the Adventist Community. This bizarre belief is held not only by supporters of the regular church but also by most followers and supporters of "historic" independent ministries.

In response, I would like to give some further thoughts and warnings about some of the dangers which are connected with this heresy of Corporate Calvinism. Hopefully, they will serve to help at least a few Adventists to reassess their present relationship with the Church structure and with the professed "historic" independent ministries which accept, promote, and teach this bizarre heresy.

First, allow me to give my definition of "Corporate Calvinism." Based on what I have heard and read in the SDA community, I would define this strange belief as follows: "The Seventh-day Adventist Church, according to Adventist thinking, is God's one, true remnant church on the face of the earth. Very closely connected with this view is the belief that God has unconditionally elected and predestined the Seventh-day Adventist church - meaning the SDA institutional organizational church structure - to go through to the end and the heavenly Kingdom, no matter how apostate, corrupt, or worldly laymembers and leadership

become. Supposedly, God has a special, irrevocable covenant with the SDA church - once again, meaning the SDA institutional church structure - and He cannot break, nor will He disavow, that covenant, no matter what evil, sin, or wickedness is accepted, practised, and supported within the SDA church structure."

I must frankly state that I find it quite contradictory and strange for the Church and most of the "historic" independent ministries, to reject the Calvinistic concept of unconditional election and predestination (also known as "once saved, always saved"), as applied to the individual Christian, but then turn around and apply the "once saved, always saved" concept to the institutional SDA church. It is absurd and ridiculous for SDA's to contend that, while an individual Christian may fall from God's grace and eventually be lost without true repentance, a church structure can never fall from God's favour and grace, no matter what is corporately allowed.

At this point, let's examine several serious dangers connected with this deceptive heresy of Corporate Calvinism:

1. Corporate Calvinism causes Adventists to lean on the arm of man, instead of the arm of Jesus. Jeremiah 17:5 gives a blunt warning about this danger: "Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm..." Instead of following Jesus, Who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), the average institutional Adventist follows the directives and teachings of the Church's hierarchy, despite many of those directives and teachings being out of harmony with the Bible and/or the writings of Ellen White.

Over the last 40 years, more than a few SDA church leaders, and theologians have introduced and promoted in the church, doctrinal pluralism, as well as heretical concepts, on such subjects as righteousness by faith, prophecy, the heavenly sanctuary, and the incarnation. Many of these same influential men have also introduced into Adventist thinking, through various channels, unscriptural and worldly philosophies like ecumenism, humanism, liberalism, modernism, and forms of mind control, like NLP or imaging and meditation exercises.

In light of such a questionable track record over the past four decades, spiritually-discerning Adventists should seriously question the ability of such men to lead the SDA church successfully and triumphantly through to the end and into the Heavenly Kingdom. Even more importantly, Adventists need to question the safety of looking to and leaning upon such men for spiritual direction and guidance.

2. Corporate Calvinism inflicts a grievous case of spiritual blindness upon those Adventists who accept it. One of the most astounding illustrations of this spiritual blindness is the unconcern by the vast majority of Adventists - both institutional and "historic" - over what occurred at one of the 1990 General Conference sessions. According to the church report, a Roman Catholic priest, T.J. Murphy, who was representing the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, was allowed to address and "bless" the session with a prayer from Catholic liturgy. (1990 *GC Bulletin*, #7, p. 8)

If the SDA General Conference session is supposed to be "the highest authority of God on the face of the earth when in session," and SDA church leaders link ecumenical hands with the Vatican through one of its representatives during such a session, then this "chummy" SDA-Roman Catholic fellowship should wake up every Adventist who claims to believe the Bible

and the writings of Ellen White, to the fact that the institutional Church and its leaders have fallen away from - and even rejected - prophetic truth, including the Third Angel's Message, which warns against the beast, his image, and his mark. Instead, largely because of the blighting and blinding influence of Corporate Calvinism, most institutional Adventists and many professed "historic" independent ministries with their "leaders," either ignored this event or attempted to give justifications or rationalisations for it. These Adventists would do well to remove the prophetic and spiritual cataracts from their eyes by re-reading *The Great Controversy* as soon as possible.

If another denomination, such as the Lutheran Church, the Assemblies of God or the Southern Baptists, allowed a Roman Catholic priest to address and "bless" one of their world-wide conferences or sessions, Adventists would announce that event from their pulpits and in their presses. Yet when such an ecumenical event occurs within the institutional SDA world at its highest level, most SDA's - and this includes most professed "historic" SDA's - express little or no concern about it, one reason being because of the blighting and dangerous influence of Corporate Calvinism.

3. Corporate Calvinism also causes an attitude of spiritual presumptuousness among many SDA's. This attitude claims God's blessings and promises to the SDA church structure are unconditional and unqualified, when in reality those blessings and promises are conditional upon the church and its leaders upholding standards of holiness, righteousness, and truth. Furthermore, this dangerous attitude declares and insists that God's blessings and promises will always be with the SDA church organisation even if the church's hierarchy allows corruption, evil, and compromise within the church's structure.

Let's give two examples of this problem:

(a) It is spiritually presumptuous to claim that the SDA church structure is the "remnant church which keeps the commandments of God" when its leaders from the pulpit, its teachers in the classroom, and its writers in books and magazines proclaim that a person cannot keep the commandments of God, even with the power of the Holy Spirit, and that trying to keep the commandments is legalism. No commandment breakers, whether individuals or corporate church structures, are "unconditionally elected" to go through to the Heavenly Kingdom.

(b) It is spiritually presumptuous - and even intellectually dishonest - for Adventists to claim that while evils and wrongs like ecumenism, higher criticism, and liberalism, which exist in other churches, make those churches "fallen churches," these same evils and wrongs when accepted and practised by the Institutional SDA Church will not stop it from being "unconditionally elected" to go through to the end. This is spiritual blindness and presumptuousness of the highest order.

May God open the eyes of concerned Adventists to the dangers of spiritual presumptuousness, inherent in Corporate Calvinism.

4. Corporate Calvinism even causes Bible prophecy to be denied, ignored or rejected by both institutional and "historic" Adventists. If none of the above dangers of Corporate Calvinism cause Adventists concern, this danger certainly should.

Jesus clearly warned in Luke 21:24 that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Just over 30 years ago, in June 1967 during the Six

Day War, Israeli military forces took old Jerusalem, thus restoring Jewish control to the entire city for the first time since A.D. 70. In 1980, the entire Jewish government was moved to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. With this final sign, the times of the nations had come to an end, and were given over to Satan to work his will with them. The event also revealed that the corporate SDA church had been weighed in the balances in the Heavenly Sanctuary and found wanting.

This prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:24 about Jerusalem and the times of the Gentiles is every bit as important as the other prophecies of Jesus regarding other endtime signs. And yet, while both the institutional SDA church and the "historic" independent ministries focus on other endtime prophecies of Jesus, like the one found in Matthew 24:29 about the Dark Day in November 1780, and the falling of the stars from heaven in November 1833, they simply ignore the prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:24. It is almost as if there were a great conspiracy of silence in the Adventist community about this prophetic warning of Jesus.

Why this wall of silence regarding Luke 21:24 among Adventists? Could one cause be the fear of a loss of authority, control, and power by Church leadership and even "historic" Adventist "voices" over the "sheep"? Might another cause of this silence be a fear by both institutional and independent leadership, that to focus on this prophecy might produce a "cash flow problem" to the church structure and to the "historic" independent ministries which do not preach the *whole* truth? Could yet another cause of silence about this prophecy be a fear on the part of institutional church leaders and "historic" ministry leaders of the loss of man's applause and approval if they forthrightly defend and preach what Jesus predicted, and which has come to pass?

Whatever the reasons for Luke 21:24 being ignored in the Adventist community, those reasons will not serve to reduce the guilt before God of those who ignore or reject this prophecy, and neither will it change the status of the corporate SDA church in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

5. There is one final point about Corporate Calvinism which merits serious consideration. Those ministries like Amazing Facts, The 1888 Message Study Committee, Hope International, and Light Bearers, which are promoting Corporate Calvinism, have yet to explain how the institutional SDA church will survive the final crisis over enforced Sunday observance, and what those Adventists who are presently clinging to and depending upon the church structure should do in the event that the structure either collapses, falls under the judgements of the Lord, or is taken over by the government. I have noticed that whenever this point is raised, it is either ignored or met with double talk and evasions. Concerned SDA's should stand up and demand some straight answers on this point.

How much better it would be for all Adventists to make Jesus the foundation of their spiritual hope, instead of the Church structure. How much better it would be for all Adventists to make Jesus their refuge and sanctuary, instead of a church organization. How much better it would be for all Adventists to cast aside once and for all the dangerous and deceptive heresy of Corporate Calvinism, and instead look only to Jesus, Who is the Author and Finisher of their faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Patrick Hogan

Miguel Serveto

(Michael Servetus)

Following the identification of certain current teachings in the community of Adventism on the Godhead as neo-Gnosticism, a friend on the West Coast wrote and in a postscript asked - "Did Michael Servetus have tritheist notions?" I recalled the name from Church History, but the recall of biographical data eluded me. I took first from our library shelves, the Church History book by Qualben which had been used in my college class at Union College. The index read simply - "Servetus, burned." Turning to the referenced page, I read the brief account and comment in a chapter on Calvinism:

There was no thought of religious toleration. Servetus, a famous Spanish physician, was condemned and burned on October 27, 1553, because of his anti-Trinitarian doctrines. This is the darkest blot in the history of Protestantism. (A History of the Christian Church, p. 261)

It should be noted in passing that the City State established under John Calvin had as its goals and agenda an objective not too different from the Religious Right of the present. One did not only have to conform to the lifestyle dictated by a religious Consistorial Court whose regulations the City Council of Geneva put into civil law, but his beliefs had to be in line with Calvin's. This latter aspect is what brought Servetus to the stake.

Qualben did not enlarge further, so I turned to another church history text by Walker. It gave more biographical detail, and the convictions of Servetus. He was a Spaniard by birth about the same age as Calvin. "In 1531 he published his *De Trinitatis Erroribus*. Compelled to conceal his identity, he studied medicine under the name of Villeneuve, being the real discoverer of the pulmonary circulation of blood. He settled in Vienne in France, where he developed a large practice. He was working secretly on his *Restitution of Christianity*, which he published early in 1553. To his thinking, the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, the Chalcedonian Christology, and infant baptism were the chief sources of the corruption of the church." (p. 399)

Servetus' real identity was unmasked to the Roman ecclesiastical authorities in Lyons by a friend of Calvin's, who a little later supplied further proof obtained from Calvin himself. He was condemned to be burned, but before the sentence could be executed, escaped from prison in Vienne, and for reasons hard to understand made his way to Geneva, miscalculating the strength and enmity of Calvin. There he was finally burned.

Still unable to determine just what did Servetus believe and teach, I turned to another old book in our library - *A Manual of Church History* - by Albert Henry Newman. Having only Vol. 2 of the two volume set, I wondered if it

would cover the period under study. It did. It contained a detailed biographical sketch of his life. Born in Spain of well-to-do parents, he was educated at the University of Saragossa, becoming "skilled in classical languages, scholastic philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and geography." He "trained in law at the University of Toulouse, where he devoted considerable time to theology and especially Biblical studies." Upon completion of his studies, Servetus "entered the court of Charles V, as secretary of Quintana, the emperor's confessor." In this capacity he travelled widely, not only getting an inside view of the ecclesiastical corruption, but also becoming acquainted with many of the leading lights of the Reformation. His first published work, noted above, in 1531 "is remarkable for learning and argumentative power. It was sharply criticized by the leading theologians (Luther, Bucer, Melancthon), and its author was generally regarded as a dangerous heretic. Yet Melancthon and Capito were free to confess that the doctrine of the Trinity involved grave difficulties." (pp. 191-192)

In 1532, Servetus entered the University of Paris under an assumed name where he studied mathematics, physics, and medicine, obtaining in 1536 degrees of M.A. and M.D. After leaving Paris, he finally settled in Vienne, where he enjoyed the protection of the archbishop, a former fellow-student. In 1541, he produced "an annotated edition of Pagnini's Latin Bible, in which he made constant use of the Hebrew language and showed himself a biblical critic of no mean order." (p. 193)

Newman in his history, suggests that since "it was Servetus' teachings regarding the Godhead and his Christology that furnished the chief ground for his condemnation as a heretic, it seems important that this aspect of his teaching be somewhat carefully set forth." This he did, noting:

It may be premised that his reverence for the Scriptures was unbounded. .. it is evident that it was far from his intention to dishonor and degrade Jesus, whom he recognized as in the fullest sense Lord and Saviour. That the divine Logos was in the beginning, was with God, and was God, he believed with all his heart; and that the Logos became flesh in the Person of Christ and wrought atonement for sinful man, was the ground of his hope and trust. He differed from the orthodox theologians of the Nicene and following ages, in denying emphatically that the preincarnate Logos was Son of God. Sonship began when Jesus was begotten of Mary by the Holy Spirit. (p. 194)

In replying to my friend's question, I wrote - "In regard to the Logos, God, and the concept of Sonship, I can only concur. Will you now join Calvin in my execution? At the stake?"

Let's Talk It Over

In any discussion of the Incarnation, the question of what is sin enters the picture. The stock answer for the traditional Adventist is that "sin is the transgression of the law," unmindful that the full text reads "whosoever comitteth sin transgresseth *also* the law" (I John 3:4). Those who advocate that the incarnate Word took the unfallen nature of Adam, perceive the "fallen nature" as equivalent to sin. Thus if Jesus took our fallen nature, He could not be our Saviour, and would Himself be in need of a saviour. These and other concepts are describing the results of sin, and not sin itself.

For a few moments, let us picture ourselves in Eden. There we see the father of the race and Eve his helpmeet, standing as created, in the perfection of humanity. There are no Ten Commandments. How could they have understood the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? There was no one with whom to commit adultery. There were only two relationships built in love - love to God, and pure love for each other. Jesus was later to declare, on "these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:40)

[For those who may think this heretical thinking, may I suggest you note the series of quotations from the Writings as given in *The Book of Hebrews* by M. L. Andreasen, pp. 314-315. The gist is that the Ten Commandments "were expressed to meet man in his fallen condition." (Emphasis supplied)]

Actually, there was only one command imposed upon them. Of every tree of the garden, they could freely eat, but God commanded - "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). The designation of the tree as a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was a post appellation. Eve knew the tree only as the one "in the midst of the garden" (Gen.3:3). The tree was not poisonous in itself, for all that God made was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). The experience involved in eating from the tree reveals the real definition of what sin is. God said - "thou shalt surely die." The suggestion was made - "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). In taking of the fruit, they chose to disbelieve God's word, and thus rejected His authority. The "serpent" held out to them alluring possibilities - "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (v. 5). God's goodness through restriction and delay were brought into question. Our first parents chose to transgress the commandment of God. In carrying out their choice they acted out their sin. It was the corruption of thought that led to sin. It effected the whole nature and forced God to separate them from His presence. Our first parents did not want to leave Eden. God "drove out the man," and Eve followed (v. 24). But, and this should never be forgotten, the Incarnation is God coming out to where we are both in space and nature. Jesus was "God with us."

What sin really is, is embodied in the following quotation:

There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not in yielding to appetite. It was the distrust of God's goodness, disbe-

lief of His word, and the rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. (Education, p. 25; emphasis supplied)

Observe carefully what is stated - "The sin was *not* in yielding to appetite." It had not been perverted. They had every other tree of which to eat. It was an act based in self exaltation - to be gods - as well as fear of self deprivation - to lose Eve. The way back to God and Eden restored is clearly outlined: 1) Trust His goodness; 2) Believe His word; and 3) Accept His authority. To learn the first, makes the other two much easier. To accept the fact that God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold anything from those who choose to serve Him, what else could one do but to believe His word and accept His authority?

As Jesus contemplated how John the Baptist had been received in the light of who he really was - the messenger sent by God to prepare His way - the "Elijah which was for to come" - and the rejection of His own message in the light of the works which He had performed, He "began to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not." Then He paused, and prayed -

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight. (Matt. 11:25-26)

In Him, there was no sin; He trusted in the goodness of God!

whg

++++

"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozona, AR 72854, USA.

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

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

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

Editor

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

Any portion of this Thought Paper may be reproduced without further permission by adding the credit line - "Reprinted from WFN, Ozona, Arkansas, USA."

First copy is free upon request; duplicate copies - 50c.

++++

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