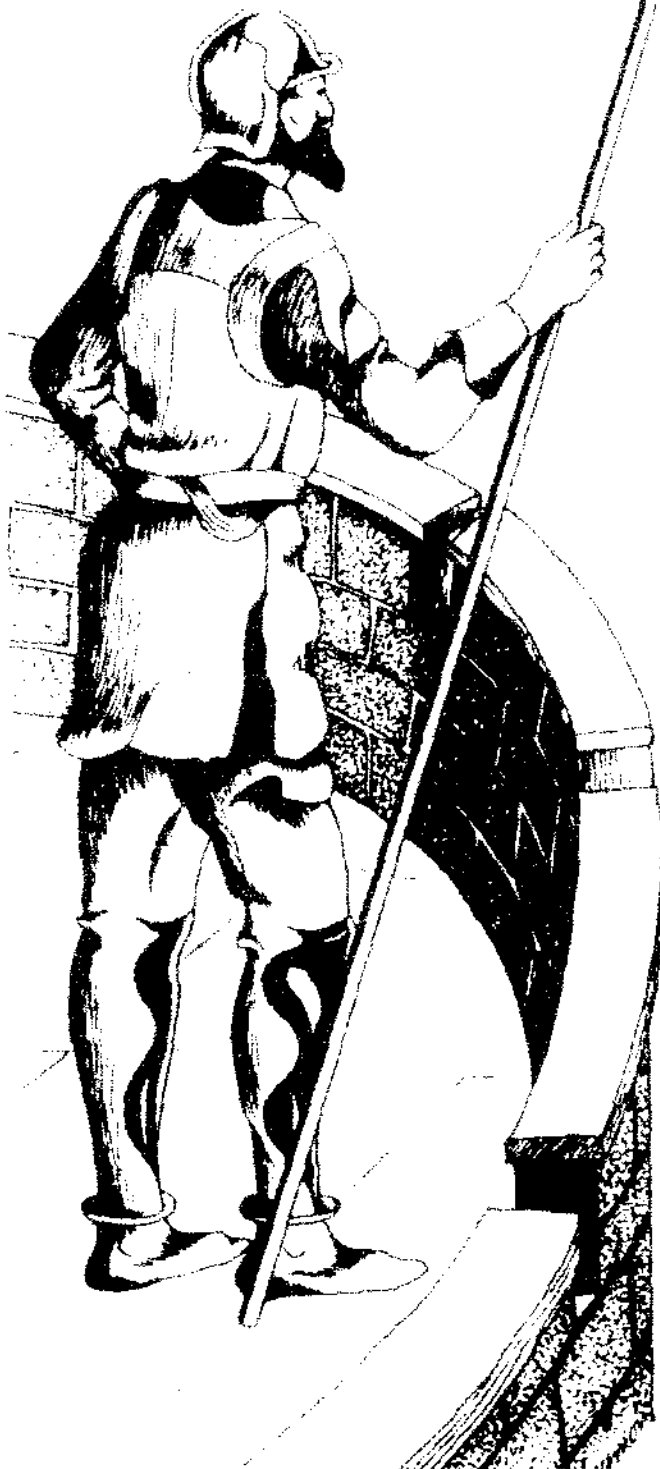


"Watchman, what of the night?"

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



"THE ORTHODOX DOCTRINE"

Editor's Preface

In this issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?" we discuss the Evangelical position on the doctrine of the Incarnation as set forth by Henry Melvill, a popular Evangelical Anglican clergyman of the 19th Century. What he taught was first adopted in the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* published in 1988 by the Ministerial Department of the General Conference. There, Melvill's position was given as a summary statement as to what Seventh-day Adventists believe in regard to the nature Christ assumed in the Incarnation. It is now being used by Dr. George R. Knight in his Annotated Edition of *Questions on Doctrine* to offset the lying involving the doctrine of the Incarnation done by the Adventist conferees to Barnhouse and Martin at the infamous conferences in 1955-1956.

The Adventist conferees perceived what to them were contradictory statements in the Writings of Ellen G. White on the doctrine. In the compilations from the Writings, placed as Appendices to the 1957 edition of *Questions on Doctrine*, certain key references regarding the nature Christ took upon Himself in the Incarnation were omitted. Now this "orthodox doctrine" of Melvill is promoted by Knight as the position to explain "all" of the Ellen G. White statements on the subject. The documentation so as to make such an assertion, this time around, was actually prepared by the Ellen G. White Estate.

The position taken by Melvill required Divine intervention which he freely set forth, and which in turn provided an "exemption." These are the same basic factors involved in the Roman Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. By Divine intervention, Mary was preserved free from "the stain of original sin." By accepting the "orthodox doctrine," the Church has placed itself but one step removed from the Roman Dogma, and the White Estate helped forward that move toward Romanism.

"The Orthodox Position"

This title, as well as being a borrowed title, has been used previously. It was the title of the lead article of the September 1988 issue of WWN. That issue and the August issue discussed the book which had just been released by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference - *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* - "A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines." This book serving as a replacement of *Questions on Doctrine*, discussed the Statement of Beliefs as voted at Dallas, Texas in 1980. The 1957 edition of *Questions on Doctrine* claimed to be "an expansion of (the) doctrinal positions" contained in the 1931 Statement of Beliefs (p. 9), and was placed immediately following the "Introduction." Martin, after the 1980 Statement had been adopted, was given assurances that the Church still stood behind the answers given to the questions asked by him in 1957 (See *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 410). In discussing the doctrine of "God the Son" the author of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* and his advisors opted for what is called the "orthodox position;" however, it, too, is not the position taught by the Church from its beginnings until the late 1940s.

This same "orthodox position" is the position taken in the Annotated Edition as the solution to the problem created by the Adventist conferees' lying to the Evangelicals about the Church's teaching regarding the nature Christ assumed in the incarnation. In the year 1988, when *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* was published, the centennial year of the 1888 General Conference, there was one difference. A. T. Jones, who strongly emphasized that Christ "took upon Himself" the fallen humanity of Adam, had to be exhumed and "his remains" burned. The same "executioner" was chosen then as has been used now to try to destroy Andreasen. Dr. George R. Knight wrote his book, *From 1888 to Apostasy, The Case of A. T. Jones*, in 1987, to accomplish that objective.

We might ask the question as to why this "orthodox doctrine" has so much appeal as the solution to the problems raised over the doctrine of the incarnation in contemporary Adventism.

We need to keep in mind that two problems are involved: 1) The lying done by the Adventist conferees at the SDA-Evangelical Conferences, and 2) The perceived contradiction in various statements made by Ellen G. White. The latter problem involves the Ellen G. White Estate, and their introduction of the "orthodox doctrine" into the picture.

Enter the White Estate

In 1982, the White Estate released a document "assembled" by Ron Graybill, Warren H. Johns, and Tim Poirier, captioned, "Henry Melvill and Ellen G. White: A Study in Literary and Theological Relationships." Henry Melvill was one of England's most popular preachers in the mid-nineteenth century. Fifty-five of his sermons were published in one 561-page volume. A third edition of this volume was re-published in New York in 1844, a copy of which Ellen White bought in Oakland, California. These men of the White Estate and the Ministerial Department of the General Conference divided Melvill's sermons among themselves for reading, and found that of the 55 sermons, there was no borrowing from only 18, - one third of the total. Some six sermons of the 37, these men noted, "Mrs White used very extensively" (p. i).

Tim Poirier went a step further. He wrote an undated manuscript, "A Comparison of the Christology of Ellen White and Her Literary Sources," which was published in *Ministry*, December 1989, in an edited form. He cited two authors from whom Ellen White borrowed to express her Christological concepts - Octavius Winslow (*The Glory of the Redeemer*) and Henry Melvill's sermon, "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus." Of this latter source, Poirier commented: "Ellen White drew extensively from this sermon . . . for her article entitled, 'Christ Man's Example,' in the *Review & Herald* of July 5, 1887." In this sermon, Melvill digresses "to consider the question of Christ's humanity." It is from this digression that the theology on the nature of Christ was drawn in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* (pp. 47, 57), and which Dr. George Knight goes to great lengths to explain in his annotations to the republished *Questions on Doctrine* (pp. 522-524).

All of this data requires careful consideration. In a personal letter from a life member of the White Estate, he wrote, speaking of Ellen White's borrowing: "When she used the writings of another author it was because his phraseology seemed to clearly present what she wanted to say, though she avoided errors that did not harmonize with Scripture" (Letter dated January 12, 2004). This is a valid two-point assumption: that which is "borrowed," and that which is "avoided." Applied to the Melvill sermon on "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus," Ellen White did not borrow a single concept from the digression. Even Poirier admits this. He writes:

In a digression in this sermon, Melvill considers the question of Christ's humanity. Although we have not found that Ellen White directly borrowed any material from this digression, a number of her statements that have become familiar seem to reflect the arguments that digression contains (*Ministry*, 1989, p. 7).

This is an admission and an assumption based on statements which to him merely "seem" to imply an acceptance. None, however, are cited. Since there was extensive borrowing from the sermon, the failure to find a single reference where anything from the digression was borrowed, would indicate that Melvill's conclusions in the digression were rejected by Ellen White! BUT these rejected conclusions were accepted by the author, and his counsellors, of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* as well as by Knight in his attempt to cover the lying of the Adventist conferees to Barnhouse and Martin.

Now the question remains: Why the borrowing of this so-called "orthodox doctrine" from Melvill? Keep in mind that Knight has admitted the lying done, as well as the manipulations of the Writings. This admission should turn the Evangelicals off; but no, he seeks to substitute another position that should clear everything up, so as to retain the status given by Barnhouse and Martin, that Seventh-day Adventism is not a cult. Why? Let us return to the Paper released by the White Estate in 1982. There it reads:

One does not have to delve very deeply into Melvill to understand why Mrs. White would find his views so congenial. He was an "Evangelical" Anglican, committed to defending Protestantism of the Anglican Church against

the Oxford Tractarians who were pushing the church closer of Catholicism (op. cit., p. ii).

So we adopt this position of an "Evangelical" on the doctrine of the Incarnation; they cannot condemn one of their own! We cover the lying Adventist leaders of 1955-1956 did, with the "digression" of Melvill in an Annotated edition of *Questions on Doctrine* and then call it an Adventist "Classic."

Melvill's Digression

We will quote in full the "digression" on "Christ's humanity" in Melvill's sermon "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus." While it will be lengthy, it will serve as a source reference for those unable to obtain a copy of the sermon. [Comments we will make on various positions taken by Melvill will be bracketed and in a different font.] It reads:

We should pause for a moment, in our argument, and speak on the point of the Savior's humanity. We are told that Christ's humanity was in every respect the same as our own humanity; fallen, therefore as ours is fallen. But Christ, as not being one of the natural descendents of Adam, was not included in the covenant made with, and violated by, our common father. Hence his humanity was the solitary exception, the only humanity which became not fallen humanity, as a consequence of apostasy. If man be a fallen man, he must have fallen in Adam; in other words, he must be one of those who Adam federally represented. But Christ, as being emphatically the seed of the woman, was not thus federally represented; and therefore Christ fell not, as we fell in Adam. He had not been a party to the broken covenant, and thus could not be a sharer in the guilty consequences of the infraction.

But, nevertheless, while we argue that Christ was not what is termed a fallen man, we contend that since "made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4), he was as truly "man, of the substance of his mother," as any one amongst ourselves, the weakest and most sinful. He was "made of a woman," and not a new creation, like Adam in Paradise. When we say that Christ's humanity was unfallen, we are far enough from saying that his humanity was the same as that of Adam, before Adam transgressed. He took humanity with all those innocent infirmities, but without any of those sinful propensities, which the fall entailed. There are consequences on guilt which are perfectly guiltless. Sin introduced pain, but pain is itself not sin. And therefore Christ, as being "man, of the substance of his mother," derived from her a suffering humanity; but as "conceived by the Holy Ghost" (Apostles Creed), he did not derive a sinful. Fallen humanity denotes a humanity

which has descended from a state of moral purity to one of moral impurity. And so long as there has not been this descent, humanity may remain unfallen, and yet pass from physical strength to physical weakness. This is exactly what we hold on the humanity of the Son of God. We do not assert that Christ's humanity was the Adamic humanity; the humanity, that is, of Adam whilst still loyal to Jehovah. Had this humanity been reproduced, there must have been an act of creation; whereas beyond controversy, Christ was "made of a woman," and not created, like Adam, by an act of omnipotence. And allowing that Christ's humanity was not the Adamic, of course we allow that there were consequences of the fall of which it partook. We divide, therefore, these consequences into innocent infirmities, and sinful propensities. From both was Adam's humanity free before, and with both was it endowed after, transgression. Hence it is enough to have either, and the humanity is broadly distinguished from the Adamic. Now Christ took humanity with the innocent infirmities. He derived humanity from his mother. Bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, like her he could hunger, and thirst, and weep, and mourn, and writhe, and die.

[The concept as expressed in this sentence - bone of bone and flesh of flesh - is the closest of anything to be found in the Writings which would reflect a concept found in the digression. In 1900, Ellen White wrote - "He (God) gave His Son to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh" (Sons and Daughters of God, p. 11). The wording that she used reflects exactly the wording used by Octavius Winslow in his book, *The Glory of the Redeemer*, and which he in turn quoted from some unidentified source (See *Ministry*, December 1989, p. 8). This still leaves us with the question as to what kind of flesh Jesus could receive from Mary. Melvill evidently sensed this question, and immediately addresses this point.]

But whilst he took humanity with the innocent infirmities, he did not take it with the sinful propensities. Here Deity interposed. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the Virgin, and, allowing weaknesses to be derived from her, forbade wickedness; and so caused that there should be generated a sorrowing and a suffering humanity, but nevertheless an undefiled and a spotless; a humanity with tears, but not with stains; accessible to anguish, but not prone to offend; allied most closely with the produced misery, but infinitely removed from the producing cause.

[Melvill's answer to the question is simply "Divine Intervention." The term he used to convey what was "forbade" was, "wickedness" which word conveys the results of sinning, but Jesus Christ "did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22); yet He was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" so that He might condemn "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Roman Catholicism also teaches "Divine Intervention," in the dogma of the Immaculate

Conception, but that of Mary so she could not transmit to her Son, "sin in the flesh."]

So we hold - and we give it you as what we believe the orthodox doctrine (to be) - *that Christ's humanity was not the Adamic humanity, that is the humanity of Adam before the fall; nor fallen humanity, that is, in every respect the humanity of Adam after the fall. It was not the Adamic, because it had the innocent infirmities of the fallen. It was not the fallen, because it never descended into immoral impurity. It was, therefore, most literally our humanity, but without sin.* "Made of a woman," Christ derived all from his mother that we derive, except sinfulness. And this he derived not, because Deity, in the person of the Holy Ghost, interposed between the child and the pollution of the parent.

The italicized part of the above paragraph is made the summary statement for subsection "b," Christ "was the second Adam" of section #5 on "The extent of His identification with human nature," in the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* (p. 47), and footnoted as "the orthodox doctrine" (p. 57).

Knight's Conclusion

Knight in his Annotated Edition of *Questions on Doctrine* declares that this position of Melvill "is the only one that can explain *all* of Ellen White's statements on the human nature of Christ" (p. 523; emphasis his). But his conclusion needs further consideration. After diagramming Melvill's position, Knight wrote:

In other words, Melvill held that the incarnate Christ was neither just like Adam before the Fall nor just like fallen humanity since the entrance of sin. That appears to be the position Ellen White held. In fact, Melvill's explanation fits quite nicely her statement that caused A. T. Jones so much trouble at the 1895 General Conference session: Christ "is a brother in our infirmities {Melvill's 'innocent infirmities'}, but not in possessing like passions {Melvill's 'sinful propensities'}" (Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 202). Melvill's model is the only one that can explain all of Ellen White's statements on the human nature of Christ (op. cit.).

Some factual historical data needs to be considered. *Testimony for the Church*, "Number Seventeen" was published in February 1869 (EGW, Vol. 2, p. 275). In the first article of this Testimony, "The Sufferings of Christ" is to be found the statement quoted by Knight and is now found in Vol. 2, pp. 201-202. In the

document assembled by Graybill, Johns, and Poirier for the White Estate dated 1982, it states that shortly after the White's arrived in Texas in 1878, Ellen White made a request to their home in Oakland, California, for books and writing supplies, noting especially, the one on "Sermons" (p. i), which she had purchased there. They first arrived in California in 1872 (EGW, op. cit., p. 356), which was three years after the publication of Testimony #17. It is not until 1887 that she wrote the article for the *Review and Herald* in which she "drew extensively from" the sermon of Melvill, which contained the digression that Knight assumes explains her statement written prior to 1869. That is a twenty year gap. Further, Poirier admits that those who have researched the article written by Ellen G. White, and Melvill's sermon, "have not found that Ellen White directly borrowed any material from the digression" (*Ministry*, December 1989, p. 7). Yet, Knight proclaims that Melvill's digression explains Ellen G. White's position on the nature Christ's assumed in humanity. She knew nothing about Melvill when she wrote Testimony #17. Why didn't Ellen White quote from the digression if it echoed her understanding of the nature that Christ assumed in the incarnation? She ignored it, meaning simply that she rejected it. How deceptive can one be in trying to cover a previous deception?

There is another factor that needs consideration. In a letter written at the time of the "alpha of deadly heresies" Ellen White stated:

The testimonies themselves [not Melvill] will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture (Letter 73, 1903; SM, bk. 1, p. 42).

Ellen G. White's Position

What did Ellen White teach that reflects on the nature Christ took upon Himself in the Incarnation? First, consider her statements on His pre-existence as to why it is important that we begin from that point of reference. In 1906, she wrote:

There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it

resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in a light, unapproachable and incomprehensible.

After noting several Scriptural references (see below), she continued:

That God should thus be manifest in the flesh is indeed a mystery; and without the help of the Holy Spirit we cannot hope to comprehend this subject. The most humbling lesson that man has to learn is the nothingness of human wisdom, and the folly of trying, by his own unaided efforts, to find out God" (R&H, April 5, 1906).

We might digress at this point to consider what "this truth infinitely mysterious in itself" explains in regard to the difference between "the Son of man" and the sons of men. A question was raised in regard to a sentence in the April issue of WWN. It read - "We are born fallen; Christ was not" (p. 3). Every human being "born of a woman" receives a distinctive non pre-existent identity, except Jesus Christ, who pre-existed as one with God "before the foundation of the world was laid." The Word who came to be flesh was the very embodiment of holiness, "full of grace and truth." He came unfallen into a fallen world to "tabernacle" with men who had come into the world fallen (John 1:14). How a God, who was from "everlasting to everlasting" could so divest Himself to become a fetus in the womb of Mary remains "unapproachable and incomprehensible." Not only is His divestiture incomprehensible, but what He "took upon Himself" - the fallen form of man (Phil. 2:7) - and in that form did no sin, is as equally amazing. This One of a kind God, a God-man, became the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He, the unfallen rescued the fallen in the very form of the fallen. Our problem arises when we fail to distinguish between the Word (Logos) as God, and what that Logos as a man had taken upon Himself in becoming flesh. In the whole redemptive experience, He could challenge, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin? (John 8:46).

Returning to the pre-existent Christ, we find that in the same article (April 5, 1906, first written in 1899), Ellen White wrote:

But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with his Father. . . . "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God.

The world was made by Him, "and without him was not anything made that was made." If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of angels was received by him as his right. This is no robbery of God.

[The next paragraph quotes Proverbs 8:22-27, followed by the paragraph noted above which begins with "There is light and glory in the truth...etc." This paragraph, in turn, is followed by Psalm 90:2 and Matthew 4:16 with the comment - "Here the pre-existence of Christ and the purpose of his manifestation to our world are presented as living beams of light from the eternal throne;" Micah 5:1-2; and I Cor. 1:23-24.]

We would digress again momentarily to note that these definitive paragraphs from the pen of Ellen White were written seven years after E. J. Waggoner wrote that "Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father, but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to the finite comprehension it is practically without beginning" (*Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 21-22). There is no way that one can reconcile Waggoner's position and Ellen White's. Her position was that Jesus Christ "existed from eternity, a distinct Person" not One who "proceeded forth and came from God." Yet, instead of walking in the advancing light of truth, the voices coming from Smyrna Gospel Ministries have concreted themselves into a past position which had begun with Christ as a created being.

Returning again to what Ellen White taught regarding the nature which Christ took upon Himself in the Incarnation, we can read in

language which leaves no doubt as to where she stood. In the same article, printed first in *The Signs of the Times*, April 26, 1899, she wrote:

Christ did not make believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same." He was the son of Mary; He was of the seed of David according to human descent.

Left unexplained by Knight in his zeal to press Melvill's position is how the law of inheritance (*Desire of Ages*, p. 48) was abridged so as to escape the effects of being of "the seed of David." Melvill said, "'Made of a woman,' Christ derived all from his mother that we derive except sinfulness. And this he derived not, because Deity, in the person of the Holy Ghost, interposed between the child and the pollution of the parent" (Sermon IV, p. 47). But this was in the "digression" from which Ellen White did not quote. One year after her definitive article in *The Signs*, in 1899, she would write in the *Youth's Instructor*, Dec. 20, 1900:

Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. He took our sorrows, bearing our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united Himself with the temple. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," because by so doing He could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam (4BC:1147).

In Summary

In the teachings on the doctrine of the Incarnation, there is a key component which pervades each which deny that Christ took upon Himself the nature of fallen man. It surfaces as "divine intervention," which encompasses the word used in *Questions on Doctrine*, "exempt" (p. 383). Every child of Adam "born of a woman" receives the fallen nature. There is no exception to this law or heredity, unless there is an exemption by divine intervention.

The Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is an attempt to exempt Christ from taking upon Himself the fallen nature of man. James Cardinal Gibbons explains the Dogma stating:

Unlike the rest of the children of Adam, the soul of Mary was never subject to sin, even in the first moment of its infusion into the body. She alone was exempt from the original taint (*The Faith of Our Fathers*, 88th Edition, p. 171).

The Dogma, while not stating exactly how, indicates a divine intervention by declaring it to be by "the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God" (*ibid.*).

In formulating what he calls the "orthodox doctrine," Melvill unhesitatingly declared the birth of Jesus to be a divine intervention which preserved Him free from the fallen nature of man. He stated:

Here Deity interposed. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the Virgin, and, allowing weakness to be derived from her, forbade wickedness. ...

"Made of a woman," Christ derived all from His mother that we derive, except sinfulness. And this He derived not, because Deity, in the person of the Holy Ghost, interposed between the child and the pollution of the parent.

The Roman Dogma used the expression, "stain of original sin;" Melvill used the words, "wickedness" and "pollution," which give the state resultant from sinning. But the expression "fallen nature" simply covers the flesh with the potential to sin, which is the inheritance of everyone "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

This so-called "Orthodox Doctrine" was the final summation of the section on "The Second Adam" in the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* (p. 47). It is the position which is promoted in the Annotated Edition of *Questions on Doctrine* by George Knight. But it is not the belief which was held by the Church from its beginning to the 1940s. It stands as evidence of the apostasy which enveloped the Church as a result of the 1955-1956 SDA-Evangelical Conferences.

This time around there is an interesting difference. When *Questions on Doctrine* was published, the Writings were manipulated to lend support to the lying of the Adventist conferees. This time, the White Estate produced the

"documentation" used by Knight to cover the lying first committed in 1955-1956.

There is yet to be discussed Knight's allegation that "since the 1890s there has been two quite distinct Adventist understandings on the human nature of Christ in Adventism" (Annotated Edition, p. 519). This assertion prefaced his discussion leading to the conclusion that Melvill's "orthodox doctrine" is "the only one that can explain *all* of Ellen White's statements on the human nature of Christ" (p. 523). It is true that a counter position to the one held by the Church from its organization in 1863 through the 1890s was introduced as the 19th century closed. The Holy Flesh Movement interjected a different position, but this Knight did not address.

(To Be Continued)

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