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The
"Confession of Faith"
of
Dr. E. J. Waggoner



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A " Confession of Faith "

My DEAR BROTHER:

Ever since you were here last summer I have had it on my mind to write you a long letter, in which I could express myself as freely as though I were talking to you. I had it in mind before you came, but hesitated, not knowing how it would strike you. I did not want you to get the idea that I was in any sense "on the war path," or desirous of controversy. I didn't really believe that you would misunderstand my motive, because you had already written to me that you would like to talk over some items of denominational belief with me. But there were so many things to discuss then, and I had no idea that we should be together even so long as we were, it didn't seem opportune to introduce any leading topic.

First, I wish I could tell you how much we enjoyed your brief visit. It was really a great blessing to us. You were kind enough to express the hope that I might again be connected with "the work." I remember that both you and Brother — expressed the same wish when you called on me a few minutes on your way home from General Conference. Your brotherly kindness touched me, although neither then nor at any time since have I for a moment entertained the thought that such a thing could ever take place; nor can I say that I have wished it, under the present conditions, although I cherish the tenderest memories of my association with many former fellow-workers. But I was glad for the kind wish, and for the brotherly spirit that prompted it; and it furnished an additional reason why I should write this letter as a sort

TO THE READER

The manuscript of the following letter was the last thing written by Dr. E. J. Waggoner, and was found on his desk after his death, which took place suddenly, May 28, 1916. The letter is printed in response to the request of his friends, many of whom desire to possess a copy.

of "confession of faith," that you may know more clearly where I stand, and may see that it is not indifference that keeps me out of "the work."

It is indeed as a confession of faith, and not as an expression of disbelief of old doctrines, that I should like to have you consider this partial statement of my ground for knowing that I could not be accepted into the S. D. A. ministry, even if I were ever so willing. I want you as an old and loved friend to know, as nearly as I can make it known, where I stand. I hope that your patience will be sufficient to enable you to read my "confession" through at one sitting; and if at first you are inclined to ask, "Why does he take so much space in repeating what every Christian is supposed to know?" please remember that a confession of faith ought to be very simple, and that I want to be sure to establish common ground between us. You remember Minneapolis. I am making bold to ask you, if you come to some things that you feel inclined to dissent from, to point out to me where there is a break in the logical sequence.

In the beginning, therefore, I will say that I believe the Scriptures to be The Word of God. I know that they are "the inspiration of the Almighty," because they give me understanding. The more I read and meditate in them, the more I am impressed with their infinite depth and breadth, and at the same time with their infinite simplicity. They transcend all philosophy, because they are simple, ultimate truth. My attention was called more sharply than ever to this fact by the remark recently made to me by an educated man, not a professor of religion, that he resented Paul's writings (referring particularly to the epistle to the Romans), because his theology obscured the simple teaching of Christ. I replied that that was because he didn't understand Paul's teach-

ing. Subsequent study—for I am taking a class through the epistle to the Romans—has made me see more clearly than ever before that Paul was not a "theologian," but that he simply stated self-evident truths—truths really as self-evident as any axiom in mathematics. But the truths are packed closely together, each word often containing a distinct thought, and the hasty reader is likely to imagine that there is a maze of philosophical and theological arguments, when there is only a mass of simple, ultimate truths, each independently true, and convincing when looked at by itself; but it takes a lot of close scrutiny to distinguish the boundaries of each, and then to see them all blending into one harmonious whole.

Christ is primarily the Word of God, the expression of God's thought; and the Scriptures are the Word of God simply because they reveal Christ. It was with this belief that I began my real study of the Bible, thirty-four years ago. At that time Christ was set forth before my eyes "evidently crucified" before me. I was sitting a little apart from the body of the congregation in the large tent at a camp-meeting in Healdsburg, one gloomy Sabbath afternoon. I have no idea what was the subject of the discourse. Not a text nor a word have I ever known. All that has remained with me was what I saw. Suddenly a light shone round me, and the tent was, for me, far more brilliantly lighted than if the noon-day sun had been shining, and I saw Christ hanging on the cross, crucified for me. In that moment I had my first positive knowledge, which came like an overwhelming flood, that God loved me, and that Christ died for me. God and I were the only beings I was conscious of in the universe. I knew then, by actual sight, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; I was the whole world with all its sin. I am sure that

Paul's experience on the way to Damascus was no more real than mine.

It was an impersonal, extra-Biblical revelation; for no text and no human being was connected with the experience. But, believing that the Bible is God's revelation to man,—a revelation of Himself,—I knew that it must have been designed for the giving of just such a revelation as I had that day. I knew, and still know, that from the Bible the Gospel teacher is to set forth by the Spirit what no ear has ever heard nor can hear, and what has never entered into the heart of man. I resolved at once that I would study the Bible in the light of that revelation, in order that I might help others to see the same truth. I have always believed that every part of the Bible must set forth, with more or less vividness, that glorious revelation; and when I did not see it, or some direct connection with it, in any portion of Scripture, I have known that I did not understand it, and have refrained from attempting to teach such portions until I could see the light shining from them.

Christ must be the beginning and end of all Scripture, as He is the Author and Perfecter of faith. It was the Spirit of Christ that testified in the ancient prophets; and so the Scriptures are the "testimony of Jesus,"—the "testimonies" to which the Psalmist so frequently refers.

We know God first of all as the Creator in Christ. In that living Word that was God in the beginning everything exists. "For in Him were all things created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; . . . and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." Therefore,

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" God saves

by His creative power. Creation is first and last and all the time. God created everything perfect. Man's disobedience "brought sin into the world, and all our woe, with loss of Eden"; and God, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning" redeems all by the continued exercise of the same power that brought all into being. God was not taken by surprise, for "He Himself knew what He would do." No new work was instituted. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world," and the everlasting word that upholds all things still continues to work effectually, as in the beginning. Whoever believes it becomes conscious that it works effectually in him. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent."

Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." He cannot change, because He is the revelation, the out-shining of the unchangeable God. His "goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Therefore the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, must be always the same, with no shadow of change. It was the same before the foundation of the world, when only angels had been created. At first it was the good news of God's power in creation, and the angels sang together and shouted for joy. Later, it was also the good news of God's power in creating anew, and again the angels sang together and shouted for joy. But no new feature has ever been introduced, because the power of God is necessarily as unchangeable as God Himself. God has not grown greater, stronger, or better as the ages have passed, because He was as great and strong and good in the beginning as He could be—always infinite in everything.

So Christ is the all-sufficient sacrifice from

before the foundation of the world. It was through Him that pardon was offered to Lucifer and his deluded host, before man was created. The offering was rejected, because Satan would acknowledge no greater than himself; and as he knew perfectly what he was doing, his probation ceased; and so Christ, in coming to earth, "took not on Him the nature of angels," but only that of sinful man.

From the simple truth that Christ is "the image of the invisible God,"—the shining forth of His glory, the manifestation of His unchangeable character,—Himself the same yesterday, and all the yesterdays, and today, and forever, we must believe and know that from the days of eternity of old until now Christ has exercised the three-fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. He was born to the throne, not merely in Bethlehem, but from His "goings forth." From the beginning He was constituted "Heir of all things." "Yet have I set [literally, anointed] my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

Prophet, Christ has certainly ever been, since as the Living Word He has spoken for God. He is the mouthpiece of Divinity. He was the Prophet of God in the beginning, when the heavens and earth were created, since it was by Him that the creative word was uttered; and He was the same Prophet when He came preaching peace to all, both near and far. God was "preaching peace by Jesus Christ" centuries before Christ appeared in Judea. Isa. 57:19.

And how about the Priesthood? A thousand years before Christ appeared in the flesh among men, David wrote by inspiration, "Jehovah said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool" (kingship); and, "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Further: It is as true of Christ as of high priests taken from among men, that He is "ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." None but a priest can offer a sacrifice acceptable to God. King Uzziah affords a sad proof of this. Therefore Christ's priesthood must necessarily have antedated His offering of Himself. Obviously, then, He was priest before His crucifixion. He "gave Himself for our sins" just as truly when He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, saying to the broken in spirit, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and giving life to the dead, as when He hung upon the cross. Isaiah declared, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," and, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." So His priesthood must date back of Isaiah's time. And since grace was abounding at the fall of man,—for where sin abounds grace much more abounds,—we must believe that Christ was Priest at least from the foundation of the earth; and that is as far back as specially concerns us. Abraham offered up his only begotten son by faith in God's ability to raise him up even from the dead, through the offering, already made, of His only-begotten Son. The works, by faith in which we do enter into rest, were finished from the foundation of the world.

These simple, vital truths do not admit of argument. They "say themselves." They have only to be believed. I am merely stating what comes to me as I read the Bible for personal help and comfort. Now these plain, fundamental truths being recognized, it necessarily follows that there can have been no change in any feature of the Gospel (call it the "Plan of Salvation" if you please) since the fall. Clearer statements of it, to meet man's increasing blindness, there have been; but the thing itself has not changed one iota. "Unto us was the Gospel

preached as well as unto them." "We believe that by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they." The unchangeable God has but one way of saving men. Any change would make either for perfection or for imperfection. No one will for a moment admit that God would or could make a change tending toward imperfection; but to claim a change toward perfection would be no less to bring a charge of imperfection against God. Believing in God, we must admit that the Gospel was the same and as complete in the beginning as it is now; for it is but the revelation of the life of God to and in men dead in sin.

Man has had but one need since the fall—salvation from sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Sin carries death in its bosom, and is essentially death; therefore the need that man suffers can be satisfied only by the gift of a perfect life—a life free from sin, a life victorious over death. So God in Christ gave His life for and to sinful men. That is the sum of the Gospel.

But sin is a condition, not an entity. It exists only in the individual, and can be removed only by a new life in the individual. It is not like grain or wood or stone, that can be removed from a place and deposited somewhere else. It is like a disease; it is, in fact, a mortal disease. It can no more be removed from a person, and carried by another person and deposited in some place at a distance from the sinner, than a fever can be taken away from a sick man by the physician, and stored away in some warehouse provided for the purpose.

I am not unmindful of the statement that Christ does "bear," or "take away" our sins. He bears the sins of the world, and by bearing them He takes them away from those who accept Him as their Saviour. But I remember this,

also, that He bears our sins in us, and not apart from us. He bears them because He "is come in the flesh," fully identified with humanity. The sins of the world are upon Him, because He bears the world. He bore the sins of the world,—of our common humanity,—in His own body on ["up to"] the tree; and by the cross the body of sin is destroyed, that a new life may begin. But let it not be forgotten, that the cross on Calvary profits us nothing unless it is erected in our own hearts, and we are crucified with Him. Paul shows in Romans 10:6-9, that we do not find Christ in heaven or in the grave, but only within, crucified and risen again in our own hearts. And when by faith we know that for a fact, our sin is taken away. Even Christ does not bear it now, because His endless life has swallowed it up. He bears the sin up to the cross, and if we allow Him to take us with Him to the cross, so that we are crucified with him, our sins cease to be, are there blotted out with the old life that there ceases to be.

Sin is not an entity, neither is it a debt, in the ordinary sense of the term, to be cancelled by the payment of something (even of a life) by and to some other person, apart from the sinner. All the illustrations of the atonement for sin, as being the payment of a man's debt by some benevolent person, give a faulty idea of the truth. A debt is something apart from the debtor, but sin is a part of the sinner; it is, indeed, his whole life. It can not be removed, or satisfaction be made for it, by the abstract gift of a life, any more than consumption, leprosy, or the plague can be cured by the payment of money, or even by the gift of a life, unless that new life be given to the sufferer himself. There have been cases in which a patient has been healed by the gift of the physician's or some other person's life blood; and this alone illustrates what Christ does for the sinner, as

demonstrated in the case of the woman with the issue of blood, who by the reception of "virtue" from Christ, was immediately "made whole." But her disease was not carried off and stored up somewhere. It ceased to exist, being "swallowed up of life."

This fountain of living waters, opened for sin and uncleanness, has always been open, always flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. Men have always been called to take of it freely. Only by taking it constantly, do even the unfallen angels retain their sinlessness. The water from the Rock in Horeb; the water and the blood uniting in one stream from the heart of Christ on the cross; and the pure river of water of life flowing from the throne of God, in the midst of which is the Lamb that was slain;—all these show that "that which was from the beginning,"—the Word of life,—has been and is constantly flowing. The gift of God's life, which, since the fall, comes only by the cross of Christ, is not an event of a day, but the great fact of eternity. No one ever had to look forward or backward, but only upward and within, to find the cross. Its arms span eternity; through all the ages it stands unchanged—the restorer of life to those who have lost life, and the preserver of life to those who have never forfeited it. It has always been the one way of salvation for the sinner, and it will remain "the science and the song" of the saved through eternity.

I know that this is open to a technical objection, on the ground that "the cross" signifies the curse, and is a symbol of shameful death, and that therefore it cannot have existed before the fall, and cannot exist after the restoration. This is easily made plain. Take the original command to the first pair: "Be fruitful and multiply." The birth of children means the gift of life. The mother gives her life to the child.

In the present state, this gift is accompanied by pain and intense anguish. The mother may anticipate the birth of a child with longing; and after it is born she rejoices; but there is no joy, but only sorrow, in the act of giving birth—the bringing of a new life into existence. But we know that if there had been no sin there would have been no sorrow in child birth. The joy of anticipation would have been intensified in the physiological act of bringing forth. Child birth is the same thing that it would have been if there had been no sin; but a change of condition makes it painful.

So with the gift of God's life, that the universe may be peopled. God had a longing for children to surround Him. He brought forth the angels—"sons of God"—by the gift of His life, and the joy of anticipation was not dimmed in the fulfillment. Man, also the son of God, was the product of the gift of God's life, and still His joy was full. But sin came, and death passed upon the whole race of God's children of earth. What shall He do, that His banished be not expelled from Him?—Do just the same as He did in the beginning—give His life freely, that His children may be born again. The mystery of the new birth is identical with that of the first birth; both are acts of creation by the gift of life. But sin causes the gift of life for the new birth to be accompanied by pain, since God must needs bear our sicknesses and take our death. It may be said, therefore, that the cross exists from eternity to eternity, and that sin causes it, during the period of sin's duration, to be connected with pain and shame; or we may say that the one thing which exists from eternity to eternity is the gift of God's life, for the creating and re-creating of men, and that sin makes the cross the only way of entrance for that gift. What words one uses to describe the thing, is a minor matter; the great truth is that

men are re-created by the exercise of the same power by which man was originally created. In both cases it is Christ who is the Mediator—the medium through whom the work is accomplished.

Seeing these simple, fundamental, Gospel truths clearly, made it evident to me fully twenty-five years ago that there could never have been any changes, or differences of dispensation, in God's work of saving men. The river of God is not subject to floods and drouths; its flow is constant and even; its banks are always full. It is, as Whittier expresses it:

“Immortal Love, for ever full,
For ever flowing free,—
For ever shared, for ever whole,
A never-ebbing sea.”

Christ crucified was as much a reality, and as available, in the days of Moses and Isaiah as in the days of Paul. The revelation of Christ as Jesus of Nazareth, from the manger to Calvary and Olivet, is but the removal, as it were, of a fold from the screen that separates the invisible world from us, so that through the opening we may get a view of what is constantly taking place. Neither at the cross, nor before or since, has there been any new feature introduced,—any change in the way for sinners to approach the Throne of Grace. Christ has from the foundation of the world been the Lamb slain; His life has always been the one perfect sacrifice for sin; and His royal priesthood has been unchangeable. He is from first to last the “one mediator between God and men.” He has borne the sins of the world from the beginning of sin; and He has “taken away” the sin from as many of the world as have been willing to have it blotted out of their lives.

Also, twenty-five years ago, these truths, coupled with the self-evident truth that sin is

not an entity but a condition that can exist only in a person, made it clear to me that it is impossible that there could be any such thing as the transferring of sins to the sanctuary in heaven, thus defiling that place; and that there could, consequently, be no such thing, either in 1844, A. D., or at any other time, as the “cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.”

“Then what took place in 1844?”

That question puzzled me for many years; for I had been so thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea of a 2300-year period ending in 1844, that it never occurred to me to doubt it. Indeed, I never did doubt it for a moment; but one day the light dawned upon me, and I saw that that period had no foundation whatever, and then of course I simply dropped it.

How did I learn this? you ask. Well, I suppose I should never have seen it if I had not been for so many years fully convinced that the thing which I, from my boyhood, had been taught took place in 1844 did not occur, then nor at any other time.

But what about the 2300 days? Are we to throw away the prophetic rule of “a day for a year”? By no means; that rule holds, but it has no application in this case, for the simple reason that the eighth chapter of Daniel makes no mention whatever of 2300 days. Not the “King James” version, nor any other version, but the Hebrew text, must settle the question, and that says, “two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings” (literally “evening-mornings”), as correctly rendered in the revised version.

“But,” it is asked, “doesn't an evening and a morning make a day?” Yes; but what reason have we for gratuitously assuming that the term is here used as a periphrasis for “day”? In that case we should have a figure of a figure! We are placed under the necessity of interpreting

a figure of speech, and then taking that interpretation as a prophetic figure. When a prophetic symbol is used, the symbol itself ought to be absolutely clear, needing no explanation. But here we are told to believe that we have for the figurative day a term that is never elsewhere used in the Bible for the word "day." Why should we assume an exception here? There is a Hebrew word that is everywhere rendered "day," and it is the only word for "day" in the Hebrew language. It occurs more than 2000 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Has it never occurred to you to wonder why an exception should be made here? It certainly rests with those who claim an exception here to show the most clear and convincing proof of the alleged fact, and to give a plain and conclusive reason therefor.

If the translators of the 1611 version had translated the Hebrew words *ereb boker* (evenings mornings), instead of substituting "day" for the proper rendering, I doubt if even the maintaining of a theory would have led anyone to light upon so far-fetched an interpretation. I ask again, what reason can be given for the introduction by inspiration of a new, absolutely unknown, and clumsy expression, instead of the simple and well-known word for "day," if the reader were intended to understand "day"? I say "clumsy expression," meaning only, of course, as a circumlocution for "day." In reality there is nothing clumsy about it when taken in its obvious sense. It seems so obvious as to need no argument, that the term "evening-mornings," when used in connection with the sanctuary, must refer only to evening and morning sacrifices.

Incidentally there comes in here, of course, a consideration of the application of the "little horn." Consistency demands that the horn of a goat should be of the nature of a goat—a process, a continuation of the animal in question. But

this would preclude the application of a Grecian horn to Rome, since Greece and Rome were two distinct, independent powers. Why is there any more ground for saying that Rome came out of Greece, than there is for saying that Greece came out of Medo-Persia, or that Medo-Persia came out of Babylon? It is true that a victory over a Macedonian king gave Rome great prestige, but not so great as the victory over Darius gave Alexander, or the conquest of Babylon gave Cyrus. Rome, like its predecessors in universal dominion, originated in territory to the westward of the kingdom immediately preceding it, and had an origin as distinct from Greece as Greece had from Medo-Persia, or Medo-Persia from Babylon. The facts do not fit the interpretation which Seventh-day Adventists have given the prophecy. Strangely enough, the chart that has always been used by the denomination, and the supposed picture of the goat, which still appears in all the books and articles devoted to this prophecy, plainly show the inconsistency of the interpretation. Look it up, if you do not have the picture in mind, and you will see that the "little horn," marked "Rome," is represented as coming from behind the goat, and that the goat horn marked "Syria" is represented as uniting with that previously-existing little horn, instead of the latter coming out of the Syrian horn. The awkward picture contradicts the words of the prophecy; but if it had been made true to nature and to the text, the little horn could not have been labeled "Rome."

I had thought to devote a little space to a positive consideration of the application of the little horn, but I will not cumber the argument with it. I did not really need to refer to the horn at all, it being sufficient for my purpose, in dealing with the atonement, to show that the eighth chapter of Daniel does not contain any long prophetic period, at the end of which sins

are to be blotted out. My only burden in this writing is that sin is not an entity, a commodity, that can be taken away from a person and deposited intact somewhere else, awaiting its final destruction. Since no earthly sinners have ever been in the sanctuary in heaven, their sins can never have defiled that place, necessitating its cleansing. But the sanctuary at Jerusalem in Judea, which alone was the subject of Daniel's anxiety, had been most horribly defiled by Antiochus, and did need cleansing.

"But what about the Investigative Judgment?" Yes, indeed, what about it? In truth, there is no responsibility resting on me to say anything about it, because in the entire Bible, from Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21, inclusive, there is never once any mention of such a thing. A long time ago I found that the only way to avoid misunderstandings in Bible discussions was to keep clear of theological terms not found in Scripture, and hence not susceptible of Bible explanation. A brief consideration of the Judgment in general will show that there is no place for an "investigative" Judgment before the coming of Christ. You will pardon me for quoting several passages of Scripture in full, instead of merely giving the references. I want the truth that they contain to stand out so boldly that it will be apparent what a libel upon God it is to assume that He is under the necessity of investigating the record of men's lives and characters, in order to ascertain whether or not He can take them to Heaven.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

"Can any hide himself in secret, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."

"The word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even

to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and laid open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

"O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether."

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."

"Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man."

"Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him."

In the face of this truth so often repeated, how can any thoughtful believer of the Bible teach that it is necessary for God to spend years in searching records, to find out who are true followers of Him, and who are not? We are expected to teach as a fundamental article of faith, that it has already taken God, assisted by hosts of angels, almost seventy-two years to go over the records (several times longer, by the way, than it was supposed would be required), and still the work is not done. It brings God down to the level of man.

But is there not to be a Judgment? Most certainly; for the Scriptures teach that "when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," then He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and the dead, small

at right

and great, of all nations, shall stand before Him to be judged; but they nowhere say anything about any Judgment before Christ's coming.

The object of the Judgment is not that God may learn all about men, but men may learn the truth about God. They will not learn it through the preaching of his Word, so they must see everything for themselves, just as it was in relation to every other thing, so that every knee, even Satan's, shall involuntarily bow, and every tongue confess to God, acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone that is cut off must acknowledge that his punishment is just; and even the righteous, who have trusted God and believed in His goodness and justice, without understanding all things, must have all things set before them so clearly that there will be no possibility for any doubt or question ever to arise.

Seventh-day Adventist teaching concerning the sanctuary, with its "Investigative Judgment" to precede the blotting out of sins, is virtually a denial of the atonement. True, much is made of the "antitypical day of atonement" beginning in 1844; but that very thing minimizes, if it does not nullify, the value of the blood of Christ, in that it teaches that a man may receive the blood—the life—and not receive the atonement. The Gospel has been turned into ceremonialism. The eyes of many have so long been fixed upon "the shadows" that it is almost impossible for them to see the light. I am not bringing any charge against their lives, but only against their teaching—making the word of God of none effect that they may maintain their tradition. Look over the literature from the beginning, and it will be apparent that they have transferred the Jewish sanctuary and its ceremonies into Heaven, and have made the atonement itself only ceremony. Everything must be made to "fit the type," as though the shadow

of a thing were of more importance than the thing itself. You do not depend upon photographs to give you exact information as to your wife's features and characteristics. I dare say there was a time, before your marriage, when you paid a good deal of attention to her picture, and you no doubt have some of those pictures still; but I don't believe that you have spent much time studying them in the last thirty-five or forty years. You don't care for her picture, as long as you have her. And I am sure that you don't insist that she can't be your wife if she does not in all respects correspond to those pictures. Why, then, should we spend time studying shadows, when we have the reality? For we have "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling."

The ancient sanctuary with its ceremonies was essentially a type by contrast. It was built because the children of Israel would not have God to dwell in them. But for their unbelief they might have come direct to the sanctuary which God's hands had established, and might have talked with God face to face, as Moses did. The promise was, if they kept God's covenant, as Abraham did, that they should be a kingdom of priests; instead, the priesthood was confined to one tribe, and to one family of that tribe, and was utterly useless so far as freeing from sin was concerned. Instead of having the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, the Living Stone, from which they could drink righteousness, they had the law on lifeless stone, a "ministration of death." The "tabernacle of witness" was continual witness against them. **ADVENTISTS** they

were not shut up to those weak and unprofitable things, for whoever turned to the Lord in truth had the veil taken away, and could, like Moses, behold the glory of God. What I wish to emphasize is that we are not to spend precious time studying the minutest details of a system that was only the product of unbelief, when with Abraham and Isaiah and Paul we may by faith have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in referring to the tabernacle and its instruments said, "of which we cannot now speak particularly"; and it seems to me that we would do well to follow his example.

Let me note, by the way, an inconsistency on the part of those who insist that everything must "fit the type." In the type, the atonement day was just one day out of 360 days—the last day of the year. According to S. D. A. teaching, Christ was in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary from his ascension till 1844, or 1816 years, which time corresponded to the yearly service in the tabernacle, leading up to the day of atonement. The 1810 years corresponded to the 359 days in the type. Now 359 days is to one day as 1810 years is to five years and fifteen days. Therefore if the type were to be followed exactly, the "antitypical day of atonement" ought to have ended some time in 1849. Why insist on following the "type" so closely in other respects, and ignore it in the important matter of time?

But to come to the really serious indictment, I have said that the teaching that atonement for sins was deferred until 1844, and that no sins were blotted out till then, the sins of the living not being blotted out even yet, minimizes or even nullifies the value of the blood of Christ. It makes a distinction between things that do not differ, and teaches that the blood—the life—of Christ received by a person exercises only a

portion of its virtue at the time of its reception,—that it is divided in its action. Seventh-day Adventists do believe in the forgiveness of sins. At least it is taught in the denomination, and is believed by many. But forgiveness is obtained only by the reception, consciously, of the life of Christ, which is given freely on the cross for all men. We are "justified [made righteous] freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." This forgiveness is reconciliation to God, for it was our "wicked works" that constituted our enmity to God, and Christ has reconciled us in the body of His flesh, through death. Col. 1: 21, 22. Justified by His blood is the same as reconciled by His death (Rom. 5: 9, 10), and this is the atonement. By Christ "we have now received the atonement." I know that there is an attempt to evade this truth, by using the word "reconciliation," which is given in the margin; but the fact remains that reconciliation and atonement are identical. Reconciliation implies previous enmity. In this case the enmity was all on our side; we were enemies of God, who is the Friend of sinners. It is we who are reconciled to God, by the destruction of the enmity that was in us. Once we hated His ways; now we love and yield to them, and are at one with Him. We have received the atonement, namely, the life of God in Christ.

And this is the blotting out of sins. How can it be otherwise, when the enmity is destroyed, "slain," and the enmity is the body of sin? "It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul," and this blood—life—is not divided. I am sure that you still sing with as much fervor as when we used to sing it together twenty-eight years ago,

"Amazing Grace! 'tis heaven below
To feel the blood applied;"

and I hope that sometimes even yet Adventist congregations join in singing from the old hymn book,

“My sin, O the bliss of the glorious thought!
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!”

and also from “Christ in Song,”

“Christ has for sin atonement made;
What a wonderful Saviour!
I am redeemed, the price is paid;
What a wonderful Saviour!”

I know that hymns do not establish doctrine; but my joy in singing these lines comes from the knowledge that they are Scriptural. “We have received the atonement.” We should not dare come into the presence of God as law-breakers knowing that our sins were charged up against us; but we can come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, when we have this gracious assurance and invitation: “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.”

I think there is no disagreement as to the fact that the blotting out of sins is the atonement. What I object to is the denominational teaching that this is only a book transaction. That makes the atonement not a personal matter at all, but something which can take place without in the least affecting the individual concerned. It is like blotting out extreme hot or cold weather by breaking the thermometer. What possible difference can it make to a man what is done with a record of his sins, written in a book, when he himself has had them re-

moved from him “as far as the east is from the west”? A sick man is taken to a hospital and treated. When he enters his condition is noted, and every day that he is there a careful record of his case is made. Every rise of temperature is set down, together with every unfavorable symptom. By and by he is discharged, cured. That record of the course of his disease will remain on file in the hospital as long as the hospital stands; but the man knows nothing and cares nothing about it. He is freed from the disease, and that is all that he cares about. Just as little can the man who is forgiven and cleansed from sin care for or be affected by any record of his former sins. In saying this I am not implying that there will be retained for ever the record of men's sins. What I do mean is that the blotting out of sins is a vital thing in the sinner himself, and not a mere matter of bookkeeping.

I have often gone into a Roman Catholic church during the celebration of the mass, and it seemed to me that it was an exact picture of the S. D. A. idea of Christ's work as priest. The people were all down in the body of the church, and the priest stood at the altar, far away from them, and with his back to them, going through forms and saying words of which they understood nothing. The priest's mummery had no manner of connection with the people for whom he was supposed to be ministering. Even so the denominational teaching separates the work of Christ from the people—making the atonement consist of forms and not of fact. I believe you will agree with me, that the following lines by Van Dyke are Scriptural:

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not within thy heart, thy soul shall dwell forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain,
Unless within thyself it be set up again."

The idea of making a man's salvation depend to any degree whatever upon his belief, or the fact, of whether or not Christ stood for a certain number of years upon one side or the other of a partition wall would be childish, if the matter were not so serious. Will nothing ever emancipate the denomination from the bondage of the observance of "days, and months, and times, and years"? Will they forever encumber and smother the glorious message of the everlasting Gospel with endless details of ceremonialism? Must the whole Levitical system be transferred to heaven till the end of time, and it be continually taught that God regards even His own followers as mere ticket-of-leave men?

What do I mean by this? I have reference to the teaching that no matter how humbly and contritely a man may confess his sins to God, how heartily he accepts Christ as his sacrifice and Saviour, his sins are only provisionally forgiven; that they are held against him to see how he will "hold out." What is this but to make him a ticket-of-leave man? It is at best but suspended sentence. You don't forgive your children that way. No real man forgives an offender in such a manner, but whole-heartedly, letting the evil of the past be as though it had not been. Why should Christians charge God with doing that which in them would be un-Christian? Why not be content with the teaching that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness? and that "as far as the east is from the west, 'so far hath he removed our transgressions from us'"?

The whole theory of a postponed blotting out of sin seems to be based upon the superficial reading of Acts 3:19. You know, of course, that

the proper reading of that text is found in the Revised Version: "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that so seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." There is no intimation that the blotting out of sins is to be delayed indefinitely after the repentance and conversion, for such a thing is an impossibility. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, when we repent, and then we have "fellowship" with the Father and the Son. We are at one with them. Where are the sins after we have been cleansed from them? Where was the leprosy after Christ touched the leper, and cleansed him from it? Where was Peter's wife's mother's fever after Jesus touched her hand, and it left her? Where did it go? and where was it kept stored up? Where is the pain after the healing balm has been administered? Where is the hunger after the nourishing food has been eaten? Where is the thirst after the refreshing draught? Where was the man's blindness after his eyes were opened? Where was the man's lameness after his feet and ankle bones received strength, and he leaped and walked? Where is the sin, after a man becomes a new creature?

Just the other day I picked up an old volume of "Thoughts on Daniel" and read that the work of Christ since 1844 "consists in the remission of the sins of those who should be found worthy to have them remitted." I pass by the teaching that the remission of sins depends on a man's worthiness. That is too baldly unevangelical to need threshing out again. But we are taught in the Bible that remission of sins is something that is received by whosoever believeth in Jesus. Acts 10:43. Christ, in imparting the Spirit to the apostles, said: "Whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted." There is no teaching of a future remission. The remission of sins is as real a thing as the healing of disease, and cannot take place apart from the individual.

The objection is raised, that to teach that Christ made atonement for sins on the cross is to teach the doctrine of indulgence, the forgiveness of sins before they are committed. That objection does not hold, so far as I am concerned, and does not lie against Scripture teaching. Christ **does make** atonement for sins on the cross; for, as I have set forth, the cross is an ever-present reality. How else could Paul say, "I am crucified with Christ"? or how could he reproach the Galatians for their defection, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth, evidently crucified among you"? Do not Seventh-day Adventist preachers ever appeal to sinners to "come to the cross"? Where else but at the cross can the bonds be loosed, and the burden of sin be removed?

Well, I might as well stop here, although the temptation is strong to go on with many other lines branching out of this. All that I wanted was to let you know where I stand, and the reason for it. I couldn't stand otherwise, and believe the Gospel. Yet I know that you believe the Gospel and at the same time hold, nominally, at least, to the denominational teaching on the sanctuary. I know that you are very busy; but I wish that for the sake of old times you would point out to me where I am wrong.

How could I honestly hold my place as a preacher and teacher in the denomination so long as I did, if I feel that my views would keep me out of the denominational ministry now?

For one thing, my views were not so sharply defined as they are now, since they were a gradual growth. Moreover, the lines are drawn much more closely now than they were then. You know that men have been retired from the ministry for differing on so uncertain a matter as the interpretation of Daniel 11. What, then, would be the fate of a man in the ministry who should

announce his dissent from the denominational teaching on the "Sanctuary Question," which is considered to be the keystone of the whole arch? Besides, I was never a belligerent, and as I always held, and do still, what I deemed to be the really essential truths of the message, I contented myself with teaching them, and holding my peace concerning things that I knew were not Biblical. Of course, I was often accused of "not preaching the message"; but things would be tolerated in one already long in the work, that would not be in one just entering it, or re-entering it after long absence. You know that in spite of my non-militant attitude, I was in hot water a good deal of the time.

Still further, I was possessed of the spirit of Whittier's lines, which at that time I did not know:

"A bending reed I would not break,
A feeble faith I would not shake,
Nor even rashly pluck away
The error which some truth may stay,
Whose loss might leave the soul without
A shield against the shafts of doubt."

I have seen so many ill-balanced persons throw away all truth, even the Bible itself, simply because they suddenly, and perhaps rudely, were awakened to the consciousness that there was chaff mingled with the wheat that they had received. I have always believed that the best way to uproot error is to sow very thickly the seeds of truth. For that reason I have never undertaken, and never shall undertake, any propaganda against the denomination. This letter is only a private expression of my views on one line, and I have no intention whatever of making it public; although I do hope to be given the time and opportunity to publish the clear,

simple truths of the atonement, without calling special attention to any denomination.

The Sabbath, the sign of God's power, the token of man's rest in the creative word, and thus the sign of the Gospel, is from Eden to Eden. Everything in the world shows the impending end, and that the fulfillment of Christ's promise to come again is the only hope of salvation from utter destruction. The nature of man makes the resurrection of the dead a requisite to the life everlasting; and the earth restored offers a tangible hope for the future, as the taste of its power gives strength for the present. Why cannot the denomination be satisfied to teach these things, without a load of ceremonialism and tradition and speculation? I hoped for it once, but I have learned that denominations never reform. That is left to individuals. I acknowledge the zeal of the S. D. A. denomination, which is not diminished, but perhaps increased, by the fact that it is not altogether according to knowledge. In saying this I do not question, but freely acknowledge, the superior goodness of the brethren in the denomination.

I should be recreant to God if I did not recognize the light that He has given me; I could never understand why it was given to me, except on the ground that His gifts are bestowed, not according to deserts, but according to need.