



Reflections

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PURPOSE

Reflections is the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. It seeks to share information concerning doctrinal and theological developments among Adventists and to foster doctrinal and theological unity in the world church. Its intended audience is church administrators, church leaders, pastors, and teachers.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

THE HERMENEUTICS PROJECT

Progress has been made with volume one of our Hermeneutics Series. This volume deals with issues of biblical interpretation and is a must for all serious students of Scripture. It will be published in 2004. It consists of seventeen chapters written by different Adventist scholars. Prior to being accepted for publication the articles were presented to the Biblical Research Institute Committee (BRICOM). George Reid, the former director of BRI, is the editor of the first volume. We have also started work on the second volume of our Hermeneutic Series. The second volume will be more of a practical nature dealing with passages in Scripture which are difficult to understand. The methodology developed in volume one will be used to interpret these texts.

THE ECCLESIOLOGY PROJECT

The mission of the church is dependent on its theology. Aside from hermeneutics, ecclesiology is a crucial issue for the Adventist Church. We feel that a fresh and extensive study of the doctrine of the church must be undertaken. As the Adventist Church reaches out to more and more non-Christian communities and religions, it is important to resolve what the church is all about and which role Adventists have

to play. In other words, what is the nature and mission of the church? Too often we have modeled ourselves along the lines of other Christian denominations. What we need is a true Adventist understanding of God's church. Therefore, we have started to think about this issue, and have asked scholars to write papers on specific topics. In what form these papers are to be published has not yet been decided.

CURRENT TRENDS IN ADVENTISM: THEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES WITHIN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

In our last newsletter we began to discuss current trends in Adventism. By way of introduction we noticed different philosophies and world views which exert an influence on the Adventist Church. These are external forces that tend to shape us. But challenges do not just arise outside of the church, they also come from within the community of believers. We now turn to theological developments within the church. We will not go into details but just briefly mention the issues.

1. Divergent Adventist Theologies of a More Liberal Nature

A number of the divergent theological views rest on presuppositions of a somewhat more liberal nature. They may be proposed by authors who tend to follow at least certain aspects of the historical-critical method, and who use psychology and

sociology in the evaluation of the biblical data. When Scripture and science seem to clash, a number of these Adventists follow science rather than Scripture.

- (1) *God*. The so-called “open view of God” also called “free-will theism” or “process theology” advocates a bipolar nature of God. God’s experience of this world is open and not closed. God’s knowledge is limited to the present and the past. There is not much room for God’s foreknowledge.
- (2) *Scripture*. Some Adventists have begun to advocate different views on how to understand divine revelation and inspiration. In some of these cases the human element of Scripture is stressed to such an extent that the divine becomes secondary. Contradictions and discrepancies are seen in many places in Scripture, and it is claimed that they should not be harmonized. Some scholars strongly emphasize the so-called culture-conditioned nature of Scripture, which claims that large parts of the Bible are not directly relevant today and must therefore be reinterpreted.
- (3) *Creation*. Although the Adventist Church accepts the creation account as a literal and historical account, believes in 24-hour creation days and a short chronology, opinions of church members range from espousing outright evolution, to a literalistic understanding of Gen 1, and various other theories found between these positions.
- (4) *Salvation*. Traditionally conservative churches, including the Adventist Church, have accepted the biblical testimony that Jesus as the only sinless human being died for sinners and that his death was a substitutionary death. However, the idea of a substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is rejected by some Adventists and replaced by the so-called moral influence theory.
- (5) *Eschatology*. Several suggestions have been made to reinterpret our understanding of the end time. Some believe that God’s judgment is incompatible with his love. Others claim that our understanding of prophecy as it relates to Roman Catholicism is wrong.
- (6) *Ecclesiology*. In the present context of ecumenism the biblical remnant concept as well as our traditional interpretation of Babylon are considered by some to be detrimental to our mission. Some advocate that these teachings be changed.
- (7) *Other Doctrines*. Other doctrines which are questioned include the sanctuary doctrine, which sometimes is falsely put in opposition to justification by faith, the role of Ellen G. White, the law and the Sabbath, and stewardship and Christian lifestyle. New forms of the foot washing have been suggested

such as anointing others with oil or showing humility in ways other than washing someone’s feet. Some would like to end the Lord’s Supper with a prayer dance.

2. *Divergent Adventist Theologies Proposed by Conservative Adventists*

Some Adventists who do take Scripture seriously nevertheless introduce divergent views.

- (1) *God*. A number of Adventists in different parts of the world are dissatisfied with the doctrine of the trinity. Their views also affect the doctrine of the Holy Spirit who is then seen only as an impersonal power which comes forth from God.
- (2) *Salvation*. Some groups of believers also seem to have problems with the substitutionary atonement and opt for universal legal justification which means that every human being was saved when Jesus died on the cross. According to this view, we do not need to accept salvation, we can only reject it.
- (3) *Eschatology*. When it comes to the interpretation of Daniel and Revelation many strange views are proposed. Church members and pastors do not hesitate to put these opinions in print or distribute them on CDs. Some interpret the time prophecies in Daniel 12:5-13 literally and apply them to the immediate future. In Revelation we find a special interest in the trumpets, in Rev 17, and in the number 666. Frequently, the symbol of Babylon as well as Rev 8-11 are interpreted in a futuristic manner.
- (4) *Other Doctrines*. Other doctrines being questioned by some conservative Adventists include the sanctuary and lifestyle issues such as marriage and divorce.

In our upcoming newsletters we will respond to these challenges.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

ELLEN G. WHITE ENCYCLOPEDIA

The following article by Gerhard Pfandl responds to one of the challenges the church has to face in regard to Ellen G. White. A somewhat modified version of this article will appear in the upcoming Ellen G. White Encyclopedia. This tome will be dealing with the writings and the theology of Ellen G. White as well as with the historical context and important characters of her times. BRI scholars and many others have contributed to this volume. It is edited by Jerry Moon and Denis Fortin of Andrews University and published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. The goal is to have

it ready for the next General Conference session in St. Louis, Missouri in 2005.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE ELLEN G. WHITE WRITINGS

The Bible makes it clear that the true source and seat of authority is in God. (Ps 83:18). As Creator and Lord of all nature and history, God has the right to exercise authority over mankind (Isa 45:22, 23). In Old Testament times God delegated his authority to certain people called prophets (1 Sam 3:20; 9:9) with whom he communicated through visions and dreams (Num 12:6). They were God's spokespersons to the people (Ezek 24:21), just as Aaron was the spokesperson for Moses (Ex 4:16). In the New Testament, Jesus delegated his authority to his disciples and the New Testament prophets. Paul, therefore, could say in 1 Thess 2:13 "you received the Word of God which you heard from us . . . not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, as the Word of God." The prophetic word has authority because God gives it his authority. Moses knew that he was authorized to speak on God's behalf, Isaiah knew it, Paul and Peter knew it (2 Cor 10:8), and the people of God accepted them as his messengers.

I. *The Authority of Non-canonical Prophets*

In Scripture we find canonical prophets like Moses and Jeremiah, whose writings became part of the biblical canon, and non-canonical prophets like Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo (2 Chron 9:29) whose books, though inspired, did not become part of the biblical canon. Why God selected some books and not others we do not know. Obviously, he knew what mankind would need to understand the plan of salvation. However, what the non-canonical prophets said or wrote was just as authoritative and binding for the people of their time as were the books of Moses and Isaiah (2 Sam 12:7-15). The authority of a prophetic book lies in its inspiration not in the book's place in the canon. But since John the Revelator's time the canon has been closed, and no other inspired books can be added to it.

If archaeologists would find the book of Nathan today it would not be added to the canon but would remain an inspired book outside of the canon. And whatever theological statements were to be found in it would remain inspired and authoritative statements outside of the canon. The canon is simply the collection of books which under God's guidance was put together as the rule of faith and practice for God's people by which everything else has to be measured. It contains everything a person needs to know to be saved.

The apostle Paul wrote a number of inspired letters which were lost, e.g., his letter to the Laodiceans (Col 4:16), or his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 5:9). If these letters were found today, they would not become part of the canon, but would remain inspired letters outside of the canon.

II. *The Writings of Ellen White*

Scripture is God's message for all time and all people. It is the measuring rod, the yard stick, against which everything else has to be measured. It is the supreme guideline for every Christian. The writings of Ellen White on the other hand are God's messages for a particular people – His remnant church, at a particular time in history – the end time. Her writings are not a new or additional standard of doctrine, but a help for the church in the time of the end. Hence her writings have a different purpose from Scripture, they are "the lesser light to lead to the greater light" (CM 125).

In 1982, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists issued a statement of affirmations and denials in regard to the Ellen G. White writings (*Ministry*, August 1982). One of the affirmations said, "We believe that Ellen White was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that her writings, the product of that inspiration, are applicable and authoritative especially to Seventh-day Adventists." The denials made clear that while the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is no different from that of Scripture, Seventh-day Adventists "do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are an addition to the canon of Sacred Scripture."

It was concluded, therefore, that "a correct understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White will avoid two extremes: (1) regarding these writings as functioning on a canonical level identical with Scripture, or (2) considering them as ordinary Christian literature."

III. *The Authority of the E. G. White Writings*

Seventh-day Adventists reject the idea that there are degrees of inspiration. They believe that Ellen White was a messenger of God and that she was inspired like the Old and New Testament prophets. Now, if Ellen White was as inspired as the Old and New Testament prophets, what authority do her writings have? The answer can only be: They have the same authority the writings of the non-canonical prophets had for their time.

Ellen White left her readers in no doubt about the source of her writings. There were only two possibilities, "God is either teaching His church, reproofing their wrongs, and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God,

or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil” (5 T 671). In a letter to the church in Battle Creek she wrote, “I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. . . . (1 SM 27).

Because the source of what she wrote was divine, her words have authority. To those who refused to accept her writings as having divine authority she said, “When I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the Spirit of prophecy [a metonym for the writings of Ellen White]” (1 SM 27).

At the same time she emphasized her submission to the Bible, which she called “the greater light” (CM 125). “We are to receive God’s word as supreme authority” (6T 402), she wrote, and “The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience” (GC vii). Therefore, she said, “the testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front. God’s Word is the unerring standard . . . Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God” (Ev 256). At a meeting held in the Battle Creek College library on the eve of the General Conference of 1901 she told the leaders, “Lay Sister White right to one side. Don’t . . . ever quote my words again as long as you live, until you can obey the Bible” (SpM 167).

Yet, for her, this did not negate the manifestation of the prophetic gift in her ministry. “The fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings” (GC vii).

IV. Acknowledgment by the Church

From the beginning, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has recognized the tremendous value and the authority of the writings of Ellen White. As early as 1855 the leadership of the Advent Movement publically stated that they regarded the writings of Ellen White as coming from God. Therefore, “we must acknowledge ourselves under obligation to abide by their teachings, and be corrected by their admonitions” (RH Dec. 4, 1855). Ever since then, General Conferences in session have from time to time issued statements expressing confidence in

the writings of Ellen White “as the teaching of the Spirit of God” (RH, Feb. 14, 1871).

In 1980, the General Conference in session in Dallas, Texas, voted the adoption of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs. Belief number 17 deals with the gift of prophecy as manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. It reads in part as follows: “As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction.” Though nearly a century has elapsed since Ellen White laid down her pen, her inspired and therefore authoritative writings continue to be a guiding and unifying factor in the rapidly growing Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Gerhard Pfandl, BRI

FOCUS ON SCRIPTURE

POSTURE DURING PRAYER

Very often church members ask about the proper posture in prayer, whether in church we should only pray kneeling down or whether sitting or standing are also correct postures. The question is provoked by the teachings of some well-intended church members who, based on their personal study, have concluded that all prayers in church should be offered on our knees. The debate demonstrates that for many church members prayer is very significant and meaningful and they want to ensure that in its practice they are following God’s instructions. We will discuss this issue not to discourage interest in this very important subject of Christian praxis, but to provide information and clarification.

BIBLICAL INFORMATION

According to Scripture, prayers are presented to God by His people in different circumstances and physical postures. I will summarize the most important biblical information on the topic.

1. Kneeling: There are many examples of people praying to the Lord on their knees, suggesting that this was a very common practice. Daniel prayed on his knees three times a day (Dan 6:10), Stephen fell on his knees and talked to the Lord before he died as a martyr (Acts 7:60), and Peter knelt down before the corpse of Tabitha, prayed for her and she came back to life (Acts 9:40; see also Acts 20:36; Eph 3:14). Sometimes the person placed the head on the knees while praying (1 Kgs 1:13). Kneeling was a ritual expression of the willing surrender of the life of the worshiper to God. By kneeling down the worshipers went voluntarily down to the dust, from which humans were created, surrendering their lives to the Lord in prayer (cf. 2 Kgs 1:13).

2. *Standing*: Standing before the Lord in prayer was also a common practice, perhaps more common than kneeling. One of the most impressive cases is found in 2 Chronicles 20 where a corporate act of prayer is described. When Judah was about to be invaded by the combined military forces of Moab and Ammon, Jehoshaphat called the people to pray to the Lord. He stood in the assembly in the house of the Lord and prayed for liberation while the people were “standing before the Lord” (2Chr 20:5, 13). Hannah presented to the Lord her petition while standing, and the Lord answered her (1 Sam 1:26). Job also prayed standing (Job 30:20).

The Jews used to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to display their piety. Jesus condemned the pride but not the practice of praying standing (Matt 6:5). In fact, he endorsed it when he said to the disciples, “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions” (Mark 11:25). Standing in prayer emphasizes the privilege we have to approach God and address him with our needs and concerns knowing that he can grant us our petitions. Those who were allowed to have an audience with a king usually stood before him and presented to him their petitions (cf. Esther 5:2). Standing in prayer means that we acknowledge God as the king of the universe and consider it a privilege to approach him to request from him guidance, blessings and favors.

3. *Sitting Down*: The practice of praying to the Lord while sitting down is rare in the Bible but not totally absent. A good example is king David, who “went in and sat down before the Lord, and he said . . .” (2 Sam 7:18; NASB). This is the posture assumed by an individual who is seeking instructions from the Lord, through his prophet (e.g. 2 Kings 4:38; Ezek 8:1; 33:31), and who is ready to serve him.

4. *Lying Down*: We also find in the Bible cases in which people prayed during the night from their beds. While lying on the bed they remembered the Lord and meditated on him (Ps 4:4; 63:6). Sometimes the person would bow down (prostrate) on the bed and pray to the Lord (1 Kgs 1:47). Praying while lying down on a bed places the emphasis on prayer as an opportunity to meditate on the goodness of the Lord and to approach him during the night seeking his help. This is a private act of personal piety.

5. *Prostration*: When prostrating, people lay down horizontally with their faces on the ground and usually with outstretched arms. One of the knees remained bent in order to facilitate rising up from the ground. Rarely is prostration clearly associated with prayer in the Bible. (e.g. 1 Kgs 1:47; Mark 14:35). It is fundamentally an expression of homage and submission before a superior.

The person seeking the help of the king prostrated before him in dependence and submission (2 Sam 14:4). It was also practiced to greet a superior (2 Sam 14:22), or as an act of homage (1 Sam 28:14). In religious contexts, this is the posture of worship (cf. 2 Chr 20:18). It intensified the conviction that God was the very source of human life and the one who could preserve it (e.g. Num 16:45; Josh 7:6; 2 Sam 7:16). Sometimes worshipers came before the Lord, prostrated before him as an act of homage and then assumed the posture of kneeling probably to pray to him (Ps 95:6). Prostration before the gods was very common throughout the ancient Near East as an expression of homage, submissiveness, worship, and dependence. Prostration did not become an indispensable aspect of worship in the Christian church probably because God no longer manifested himself or dwelt permanently in a particular place on earth, but was accessible through his Son (cf. John 4:21-24).

This review of postures during prayer in the Bible indicates that there was not one particular posture that was always required from worshipers when addressing the Lord with their requests. Postures are important in the sense that they are the external expression of reverence, inner feelings, and commitments to the Lord, but one of them was not large enough to encompass all of those experiences. Hence, we find in Scripture a diversity of options and possibilities. Any attempt to select one as superior and indispensable over the others lacks biblical support.

THE WRITINGS OF E. G. WHITE

Ellen G. White emphasizes praying on our knees and encourages us to do it. She wrote: “Both in public and private worship, it is our privilege to bow on our knees before the Lord when we offer our petitions to Him” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 178). We should never consider kneeling down a burden but a privilege. Again she comments that, “both in public and private worship it is our duty to bow down upon our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. This act shows our dependence upon God” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 312).

Statements like those should not be used to teach that the only proper position for prayer in public worship is kneeling. She makes it clear that it is not always necessary to kneel down in prayer (*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 510-511). While participating in public worship, E. G. White herself at times asked the congregation to stand for a prayer of consecration (*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 268, 269), or to remain seated (ibid., pp. 267-268), or to kneel down (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 148-149). One must conclude that according to her, kneeling down was not the exclusive posture of prayer in church.

In her private life she even prayed sitting in bed (*Review & Herald*, December 13, 1906).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

By way of summary we can conclude that according to the Bible and E. G. White there are different postures for prayer and the importance of one of them does not exclude any of the others. During worship the Adventist church allows for praying sitting down, standing up or kneeling down. Since worship should be characterized by order, it is important that when the community of believers comes together to seek the Lord we all follow the common liturgical elements accepted in our worship services. Those who in church kneel down to pray when the rest of the community is praying standing up may be unintentionally displaying piety in a questionable way.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez, BRI

SCRIPTURE APPLIED

GOD'S LOVE AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

I. God's Claim

The Bible claims that God is love, that he loves his children and the entire world, and that his love is incomprehensible and eternal - 1John 4: 7-10; Mal 1: 2; Rev 1:5.

II. Evidence

1. *God's Reaction after the Fall*

God told the parents of the human race that transgression of his law would result in their death. But as soon as Adam and Eve sinned he did not just execute them but met with them and explained to them his plan of salvation. This plan connects God's justice and his love and is made possible through the substitutionary death of an innocent person - Gen 2:16,17; 3:6,9,15.

2. *Salvation*

God loves his enemies. He loves the fallen world. Therefore, he gave the best and most valuable gift he had to give, namely his own Son. In giving his Son he gave himself. Jesus died for us and in our place. Now humanity has another chance to be saved and have everlasting life - John 3:16; Rom 5:8.

3. *The New Earth and Eternal Life*

God gives to rebels such as us eternal life, if we accept it. He will create for us a new earth which is unimaginable and free from all evil and all traces of sin and suffering - John 3:36; Rev 21:1, 3-5.

III. Examples Illustrating God's Love

- (1) Luke 15:11-32 - The parable of the lost sons

- (2) Matt 18,21-27 - The parable of the unforgiving servant

IV. God and Suffering

Again and again the question is raised: "Why, God, do you allow suffering and evil?" or "Why do you not interfere?" These questions are difficult to answer and allows for preliminary responses only. Here are some suggestions:

- (1) With such a question we accuse God and make him the defendant. However, we are the defendants and must answer to the accusations brought against us. God may ask us why we lied, committed adultery in our thoughts, were not merciful, etc. "Whenever a native of an island in the Pacific becomes confused about his wooden god, it does not prove that there is no God. Rather it tells him that God is not made out of wood. Whenever today a Christian becomes confused about God's love as he understands it, it does not prove that there is no God; it only proves that God is not as he imagines him to be. A god who would do whatever we wish would be a fairy tale god, who has never existed and will never exist. Suffering is not opposed to faith in God. Rather it confirms God's warnings against disobedience and self-centeredness. God does not always protect us in order that we may recognize the seriousness of human guilt and long for a savior. In suffering God can prepare his children to meet him." (W. Schulz in *Er ist unsere Hoffnung* [Berlin: Union Verlag, 1966], 227 [translated].)
- (2) Suffering is the consequence of sin. But this is what we have caused, not God. He is not responsible for our problem and cannot be forced to take care of it, although he voluntarily addresses it.
- (3) God negates suffering:
 - He has sent Jesus to deliver us from suffering and death (see Jesus' miracles and John 10:10).
 - He creates a new earth without suffering, pain, and death and gives everlasting life.
 - He is close to us and helps us in times of pain and suffering and "causes all things to work together for good" (Rom 8:28). He uses suffering as a means of education turning evil into something that in the end is good for us (Heb 12:6). Because of our limited perspective we understand neither God nor suffering completely.

V. Texts Illustrating God's Love

- (1) John 16:27 - God loves us.
- (2) Jer 31:3 - God draws us.
- (3) 1 John 3:1, 2 - He calls us his children.
- (4) John 17:23 - God loves us as he loves his Son and

- (5) Zech 2:8 - as the apple of his eye.
 (6) Psalm 23; - He takes care of us,
 (7) Luke 12:7 - knows even our hairs.
 (8) Rom 8:31-3; - He keeps us from being
 John 10:27-29 - separated from him.

VI. Implication

“Lord, thank you for your love. I want to love you too.”

- Psalm 18: - David’s confession
 John 21:15-17 - Peter’s confession

BOOK NOTES

Clifford Goldstein. *Graffiti in the Holy of Holies: An Impassioned Response to Recent Attacks on the Sanctuary and Ellen White*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2003, 176 pp. \$12.99.

This new volume by Clifford Goldstein deals with two important aspects of Adventist belief and practice, specifically the sanctuary and the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White. He uses the attacks launched by Dale Ratzlaff’s book *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* against the church to demonstrate the solidity of the Adventist position. Dale Ratzlaff is a former Adventist worker who left the church in 1981 and founded Life Assurance Ministries with the intention of providing support to former Adventists.

In dealing with Ratzlaff’s arguments, Goldstein uses the results of his own personal study of the sanctuary in Daniel and the resources produced by the Biblical Research Institute. He demonstrates that Ratzlaff is not bringing anything fundamentally new to the discussion but is simply rehashing old arguments. Goldstein suggests that Ratzlaff’s unwillingness to deal with the answers given by Adventist theologians to questions raised by Desmond Ford and others reveals poor scholarship on his part.

In the process of debunking the charges raised by Ratzlaff, Goldstein deals with questions related to the little horn in Daniel 8 and Antiochus Epiphanes, the judgment in Daniel 7 and 8, the beginning and ending of the 2300 days, the nature of the cleansing mentioned in Daniel 8:14, the sanctuary mentioned there as the heavenly sanctuary, the phrase “within the veil” in Hebrew 6:19, the year-day principle in the Bible, and the pre-Advent judgment and the gospel. The tone of the arguments is irenic but perceptive and penetrating. It becomes obvious that Ratzlaff was not properly informed concerning the Adventist views on most of those issues.

The last chapter of the book addresses charges raised against E. G. White’s prophetic gift. Goldstein does not

deal with all of them because they have already been answered by others. Ratzlaff did not seem to be aware of those answers or chose to ignore them. In that section Goldstein gives a powerful personal testimony on the influence of E. G. White in his life and unapologetically acknowledges her prophetic gift. He deals with issues like the closed door, deception in E. G. White and particularly the accusation that she is anti-gospel. Goldstein pulls together historical data, biblical materials, and common sense thinking to demonstrate, first, that Ratzlaff was attacking a distortion of the ministry and role of E. G. White in the church and, second, that in some cases Ratzlaff did not pay careful attention to the evidence available.

The book will be useful to pastors, church administrators, and church members who want to understand or review the biblical foundation of the Adventist understanding of the sanctuary in Daniel and the prophetic ministry of E. G. White.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez, BRI

Questions on Doctrine. Annotated Edition. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2003. 597 pp. \$29.99.

The original edition of the book *Questions on Doctrine*, published in 1957, became the most divisive book in Adventist history. A number of independent ministries in the church today consider it the beginning of the Adventist Church’s theological apostasy.

The book was the result of a series of meetings in 1955/6 between Seventh-day Adventist church leaders and Walter R. Martin, a staff member of the evangelical magazine *Eternity*, who was writing a book about Seventh-day Adventists. He later gained fame as author of *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Because of its adherence to such teachings as the Sabbath, the non-immortality of the soul, the investigative judgment, and the prophetic gift in the life and work of Ellen G. White, the Adventist Church, since its origin, has often been viewed as a “cult” by other Christians.

The series of meetings between Adventist Church leaders (primarily LeRoy E. Froom, W.E. Read, and R.A. Anderson) and Walter Martin, George Cannon (professor of theology at Nyack Missionary College), and Donald G. Barnhouse (editor of *Eternity*) led to a growing acceptance of Adventists as fellow Christians by many evangelicals. Walter Martin submitted a list of questions to which the Adventist leaders provided answers. The result of those discussions was published in two books. The church in 1957 brought out the book *Questions on Doctrine*, and Walter Martin in 1960 published his book *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*.

Questions on Doctrine contained the questions Martin asked and the answers provided by the church's representatives who counseled with Bible teachers, editors, and church administrators before submitting their written responses. The introduction in the original volume states that "the writers, counselors, and editors who produced the answers to these questions have labored conscientiously to state accurately the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists." However, because the text of the book was never voted by a General Conference in session it has never been considered as an official statement of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

The annotated edition of *Questions on Doctrine* with a lengthy historical and theological introduction by George R. Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University, is one of the first two volumes in the Adventist Classic Library series. The layout of the book is very well done, the page numbers of the 1957 edition are found in the text in bold enclosed by paragraph signs, e.g., §123§, and all page references are to the original 1957 edition. All additional material as well as all the new footnotes found in the annotated edition have been shaded in gray. In contrast to the original edition that used stars and crosses, the new footnotes are numbered with Arabic numerals. This helps the reader to quickly recognize the material that has been added in the annotated edition.

Most of the shorter footnotes provide references to more recent literature such as the 2000 edition of the *Church Manual* or the seven volumes of the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series. Longer footnotes (1-4 pages) that contain a sizeable amount of new material can be found in the sections on the Trinity (pp 44-46), the Sabbath (pp.145-146), the atonement (pp. 277-280), and on the topic of conditional immortality (pp 469-473). The bibliographic list of Adventist doctrinal literature has almost been doubled and appendix B on "Christ's Nature During the Incarnation" has an extensive footnote over several pages that explains why the book has probably done more to create theological division within the Adventist Church than any other document in its history.

According to the Adventist News Service, three years before his death in 1986, Walter Martin, in an interview, cautioned Adventist leaders that QOD should return to the shelves: "If the Seventh-day Adventist [Church] will not back up its answers with actions and put *Questions on Doctrine* back in print ... then they're in real trouble that I can't help them out of; and nobody else can either," he told *Adventist Currents*, a now-defunct magazine published by church members. [Mark A. Kellner/ANN/ Nov 18, 2003].

Nearly 20 years later *Questions on Doctrine* is back on the shelves. Republication of the book in this annotated form supplies the historical and theological context of its original appearance in 1957. Every church administrator and pastor as well as all interested church members should have a copy of this volume. Not only is it a valuable work theologically, but it is a part of recent Adventist history which still impacts the church in many areas of the world.

Gerhard Pfandl, BRI

Norman R. Gulley. *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003. 810 pp. \$ 49.99.

We Adventists are known for our intensive work in biblical studies, from which we have secured a strong grasp of the Bible's teachings, giving special attention to eschatology. This emphasis means our doctrinal understandings tend to be colored by an end-time anticipation of Jesus' return. We have not distinguished ourselves, however, in systematic theology, that enterprise which seeks to integrate biblical truths into a single overall comprehensive system.

This gap Norman Gulley, longtime professor of theology at Southern Adventist University, begins to fill by producing the first true systematic theology to come from an Adventist hand. In developing any serious systematic theology, the task must grow as a lifetime work of a single mind. Therefore, with this initial volume Gulley embarks on a formidable undertaking set to run to multi-volume dimensions that certainly will impact Adventist theology as well as create a wake in the larger Christian theological community.

The current volume, subtitled *Prolegomena*, the Greek term for "first things", assembles an encyclopedic review of virtually all the factors at play in today's theology. This tracing of roots culminates, however, in an intensely contemporary analysis quite at home in today's world. To achieve this, Gulley assembles a panoramic review of ideas, people, events, places, philosophies, and trends, many dealt with in brief cameo style that extracts the essential elements without the burden of long treatises. Of course such an approach invites the evergreen threat of distortion by brevity, but with a sweeping grasp of all these factors this writer demonstrates his understanding of the complexities at hand.

This first volume offers an introduction to a wide array of important elements, making it a treasury of information. The reader will find effective guidance in the 10-page table of contents. Furthermore, the data is fairly treated in a manner that will attract non-Adventist readers. Since the major work is yet to come, one may

ask what is to be gained with such a ponderous first volume. The answer is forthright: here is a review of the elements that will largely control what follows as Gulley explores the great truths of biblical teaching. Systematic Theology is the area where the modes of human thinking interface with divine revelation. Hence it stands at the intersection between biblical truth and the philosophical and cultural baggage every reader brings to the text itself. Anyone seriously concerned with the study of the Bible will find this volume useful.

Norman Gulley has a long and distinguished career in the Adventist ministry. His preparation includes a Ph D., earned at Scotland's prestigious University of Edinburgh, and widespread service both in mission appointments outside North America as well as in the United States.

Outside Adventist circles he has come to be known within the burgeoning Evangelical community. These leaders represent the vigorous, growing core of recent theological development in America. The author's standing is evidenced in a Foreword by Millard J Erickson, of Baylor University, immediate past president of the Evangelical Theological Society. This volume appears to be characterized by its orientation toward the Evangelical community, evidenced in both language and issues considered.

For many years the most vigorous critics of the Adventist movement, Evangelicals compose a group drawn from many conservatively-oriented denominations just now coming to see Adventists not as a sectarian cult, but as serious students of the Word of God. Coincidentally, in recent times several prominent Evangelical theologians are challenging certain traditional doctrines such as the immortality of the soul and eternally-burning hellfire, clearly influenced by Adventist studies of these subjects. Some Adventist readers will find themselves ill at ease with such an approach in this volume, perhaps out of concern about biblical inerrancy. However, the purpose of this first volume is introductory, with Gulley's full exposition of doctrinal subjects yet to come, so we should watch for how he deals with such topics in his work to come. The usefulness of this volume is readily apparent.

Readers will find excellent nutshell discussions of a huge range of interesting, vital topics selected because they impact on Christian understanding. The extended discussion of world views and the character of contemporary postmodernism will be especially valuable, bringing to the Adventist Church its best single source on these subjects. Although it could never be described as light reading, its language makes it accessible to most people with an interest in Bible study and theology. Every theological student, pastor, and informed layman should take steps to gain access to this volume.

George W. Reid, BRI

Donald Ernest Mansell. *Open Secrets of the Antichrist: Has the Beast of Bible Prophecy Identified Itself?* Nampa: Pacific Press, 2002. 94 pp. \$ 8.99.

The author's thesis and starting point is that the papal system identifies itself as the antichrist. Basically this short book is an exposition of Daniel 7-9 focusing especially on the little horns. It deals with the characteristics of the little horns, discusses the time spans involved and the year-day-principle, explains the sanctuary and the judgment, and rejects preterist and futurist interpretations of these prophecies. It includes sections dealing with church history, Adventist history, and the interpretation of passages of the Book of Revelation. In order to support his main thesis the author predominantly uses older sources, although he also employs a more recent book by Malachi Martin.

The book consists of seven chapters and an appendix. The appendix contains the text of Daniel 7-9 in its entirety. The author uses footnotes as well as endnotes at the end of each chapter. The footnotes contain short explanations, whereas the endnotes list the sources which the author has used. He seems to be familiar with the literature on this topic.

"Open Secrets of the Antichrist" supports the traditional Adventist understanding of endtime prophecy and ends with a reassuring note. It strengthens Adventist identity without falling into the trap of triumphalism.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

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