

RESPONSE TO BOOK 'NATURE OF CHRIST' BY ROY ADAMS

HARVEST INSPIRATION DISCOVERIES LECTURE SERIES

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Table of Contents

What is a straw-man technique?	3
The "straw-man" technique has been very widely used in recent years by those who are laboring to introduce Calvinistic doctrines into our Seventh-day Adventist faith, but never on such a grand scale as in the recent publication, <i>The Nature Of Christ</i> , by Roy Adams, associate editor of the <i>Review</i>	3
Previous Examples.....	3
The Roots Question.....	3
The theses of his book is that their roots are found in the teachings of A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner in the 1890s, were learned from them and urged upon the church by M.L. Andreason, and were foisted upon the modern church by Robert Wieland.	3
Let The Evidence Speak	4
Ellen White had been vigorously promoting the same doctrines for well over thirty years, since 1858.	4
These two evidences are,	5
Jones and Waggoner Were part of The Mainstream.....	6
A Host of Witnesses of Adventism's Leadership on the Issue.....	6
On the basis of what was published, we view the announced purpose of George Knight, whose work Adams applauds, to prove that before the 1920s our people held Calvinistic views of the gospel as utterly preposterous.	6
Simplistic Reasoning	6
The Technique	7
Adams represents himself as attempting to write with no ill will toward those whom he accuses. Was this attempt successful? Let the reader decide.	7
The Casuistry Straw Bundle-Subtle and Evasive Reasoning	8
What he does not tell his readers is that there is a much stronger similarity between Andreason's views and those of Ellen White, as well as other church leaders.....	9
Final Generation Theology.....	9
Continuing his attempt to separate Andreason from the Spirit of Prophecy, Adams alleges that on the matter of character perfection, Andreason "followed in Ballenger's footsteps."	9
Having used this sophistry to condition his reader's minds, Adams then proceeds to openly picture Andreason as dishonest. (Pages 52, 53.).....	10
He Responds to a Preponderance of Evidence with Sneers--The Sneer Straw Bundle.....	11
The Breathtaking Straw Bundle-the Two Most Astounding Propositions.....	11

In the first, he soberly assures us that the Christological problem that we have been grappling with since 1957 is actually imaginary.	11
We now wish to simply identify some of Adams' major disagreements with the Bible and with the Spirit of Prophecy.	12
Adams seems to be deeply offended by two closely related concepts in the inspired writings:	12
Here is a suggestion. Take a pen in your hand and mark with a V for victory the following verses in your New Testament	13
Standing Without a Mediator	13
But does God expect no more of us than He did of previous generations? Here is a sampling of Ellen White's several comments on that subject.....	13
Christ's Character Perfectly Reproduced	14
In the book <i>Christ's Object Lessons</i> , there are actually a total of 62 statements that focus on character perfection. Perhaps the most relevant of them is on page 331:	14
ADAM'S BOOK.....	15
On page 90 of his volume, Adams writes of Andreason's "facile admonitions to 'get rid of sin' and 'do it now, today.'" We have already noted that Ellen White issued such "facile admonitions" several thousand times. Here are some samples.....	15
On page 89, Adams faults Ron Spear for teaching that the Holy Spirit gives power to keep the repentant soul from sinning. Ellen White testifies to this truth 102 times, like this:.....	15
On page 85, Adams writes, "We are not saved by trying to duplicate (Christ's) victory."	15
On page 97, Adams assures us that victory over some sins is impossible and that God bears with them until the end. Ellen White again disagrees.....	16
How does he deal with these problems?.....	16
By a technique that has been used by virtually all of the Calvinistic writers among us. He writes of Ellen White's seemingly conflicting statements" (page 116), her "apparently conflicting statements" (page 119), and her "apparent contradictions" (page 119).....	16
"Are You Perfect?"	16
In a chapter entitled, "What Is Sin?" Adams divides sin into four categories and argues that two of the categories can be overcome but the other two cannot.	17
On page 23, Adams faults Joe Crews for affirming that emphasis was intended by the writer of Hebrews 2:14 in the words "HE—ALSO—HIMSELF—LIKEWISE" took part of the same flesh and blood that we have. [Emphasis by Crews.] Adams says that this emphasis is improper since "the apostle did not write in English" and the words are "merely a matter of English idiomatic style—now nearly 500 years old."	17
Calvinism began in the Seventh-day Adventist Church through a statement about the nature of Christ in the book <i>Questions on Doctrine</i> that was a methodological monstrosity and an historical fraud.....	18
In closing, let us permit Ellen White to ask a few questions:.....	18
And the most solemn question of them all:.....	18

What is a straw-man technique?

The "straw-man" technique has been very widely used in recent years by those who are laboring to introduce Calvinistic doctrines into our Seventh-day Adventist faith, but never on such a grand scale as in the recent publication, *The Nature Of Christ*, by Roy Adams, associate editor of the *Review*.

We pause to explain that in dialogue and debate, the straw-man technique is used like this:

First, you misstate and misrepresent the position of your opponent, thus setting up an artificial "straw man" of your own creating.

Second, you vigorously attack your misrepresentation, your straw man, and shoot it to pieces.

The hoped for result is that the listeners to or readers of your attack will conclude that you have demolished the position of your opponent, when in fact you have only demolished your own misrepresentation, your artificial straw man. It must be conceded that this is an effective debating technique, but its use creates troubling ethical questions in many minds.

Previous Examples

It was the straw-man technique that was being used, for example, when the anonymous writers of the huge *Issues* book, which Adams endorses, alleged that:

We Historic Adventists are attacking the church, when **we are actually attacking apostasy in the church;**

We are setting ourselves up as examples, when we are actually setting up Jesus as the example;

We are defending our personal opinions, when we are actually defending the historic faith of our church as set forth in all of its published statements of faith, and in the new SDAs Believe, etc.

But these straw men are only dwarfs of pygmies by comparison with the world-class straw man that is being set before us in the recent volume by Adams, which requires nothing less than a rearrangement of the realities of our history, a replacement of facts with fantasies.

The Roots Question

Adams directs our attention to the two major theological issues that are troubling our church today regarding the nature of Christ and character perfection. He then poses the question, Where did these problems originate?

The theses of his book is that their roots are found in the teachings of A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner in the 1890s, were learned from them and urged upon the church by M.L. Andreason, and were foisted upon the modern church by Robert Wieland.

This places a newer and richer meaning upon the phrase "simplistic reasoning."

Here are his words, as found on the first page of a chapter entitled "Examining the Roots, the Legacy of Jones and Waggoner:"

"My thesis throughout is that the theology of these three men [Jones, Waggoner, and Andreason] has provided the spawning ground for the position on righteousness by faith and perfection held by certain Adventists today....

"Without a doubt, the roots of the present agitation go all the way back to Jones and Waggoner." —page 29

And again on page 37:

"The perfectionist agitation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church today had its genesis in the post-1888 teachings of A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner. In this chapter I wish to show that the linkage of sanctification, perfection, and Christ's nature that has become dominant among certain groups is a direct legacy of M.L. Andreason's theology."

To those who know that God's chosen Messenger to the Adventist people, Ellen White, published far more material on these subjects than any or all of these men ever did, these are indeed bold and breath-taking assertions. Were the teachings of Jones and Waggoner actually the roots, the origin, of the doctrine that Christ came to earth in the human nature of fallen man and the doctrine that character perfection through God's power is possible? Had the church members no previous acquaintance with these teachings? Can evidence be produced that they held other or opposite views? The answer to all of these questions is No.

Let The Evidence Speak

Let the evidence speak. Jones and Waggoner set forth their views on these subjects primarily during the ten year period of 1891-1901.

Ellen White had been vigorously promoting the same doctrines for well over thirty years, since 1858.

By the end of the year 1898, she had gone into print regarding the nature of Christ a total of 141 times. (The publications, the dates, and the statements are all recorded in the research volume, *The Word Was Made Flesh* by Ralph Larson.)

Had all of these publishing endeavors failed of their purpose? Did they all escape the attention of the Adventist people? The journals in which she wrote were primarily the *Review* and the *Signs*, to which were added her own books. Did these journals and books have no circulation among the Adventist people? and were they unknown to Jones and Waggoner?

Not exactly. In the year 1895, when Jones made his major presentation on the subject of the nature of Christ at a General Conference session, he quoted the following lines from an as yet unpublished manuscript of Ellen White's *The Desire of Ages*. (What does his possession of this manuscript indicate about his relation to her beliefs?)

"In order to carry out the great work of redemption, the Redeemer must take the place of fallen man....

"When Adam was assailed by the tempter, he was without the taint of sin. He stood before God in the strength of perfect manhood, all the organs and faculties of his being fully developed and harmoniously balanced; and he was surrounded with things of beauty, and communed daily with holy angels. What a contrast to this perfect being did the second Adam present, as He entered the desolate wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and deterioration in moral worth; and in order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he stood. He assumed human nature, bearing the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might sympathize with man and rescue him from the degradation into which sin had plunged him....

"Christ took humanity with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man with the possibility of yielding to temptation, and He relied upon divine power to keep Him."

(There are six other places in *The Desire of Ages* where Ellen White testifies to her belief about the human nature of Christ. See pages 25, 112, 117, 174, and 311.)

The simple fact is that Jones and Waggoner, like virtually all of our church leaders, had been guided in their thinking about the two doctrines of the nature of Christ and character perfection by God's special messenger, Ellen White. This is clearly attested by two evidences that are a matter of record and can be easily verified by anyone who cares to visit the archives.

These two evidences are,

1.) Ellen White published profusely her convictions that Christ came to earth in the human nature of fallen man and that character perfection, by the power of God, is possible; and,

2.) our other church leaders accepted these doctrines as correct and responded by publishing articles and books of their own which echoed her testimonies, and not infrequently quoted from them.

By the end of the year 1898, other church leaders had published their own views on the nature of Christ, not different from hers, a total of 76 times. (See *The Word Was Made Flesh* by Ralph Larson.) This number does not include statements from Jones and Waggoner. It does include statements from such other church leaders as James White, Uriah Smith, Stephen Haskell, W.W. Prescott, J.H. Waggoner, M.C. Wilcox, R.A. Underwood, Alton Farnsworth, Elgin Farnsworth, W.H. Glenn, J.E. Evans, William Covert, J.H. Durland, G.C. Tenney, G.E. Fifield, and others. These writers did not mute their messages. The total includes nine editorials and five *front page* editorials.

Are we to believe that all of these writers, some of whom published before Jones and Waggoner, found the roots of their beliefs in the teachings of Jones and Waggoner? And what of Ellen White? Were their teachings the roots of her beliefs? Or was it actually the other way around, that they all, including Jones and Waggoner, drew their inspiration from the writings of God's messenger?

And let us not overlook the fact that while Jones and Waggoner were co-editors of the *Signs of the Times* (1885-1891), they published in that journal three statements by Ellen White that Christ had come to earth in the human nature of fallen man. In the years 1890-91, Waggoner, as sole editor of the *Review* (1887-91), published eleven such statements in that journal.

Jones and Waggoner Were part of The Mainstream

Jones and Waggoner, far from being innovators or teachers of new doctrines, were actually standing firmly in the mainstream of Seventh-day Adventists theology regarding the nature of Christ and character perfection. Their teachings were emphatically not the root of those doctrines; they were rather the fruit.

In the years following 1901, other church leaders united with Ellen White in propaganda these doctrines with ever increasing emphasis and clarity. In *The Word Was Made Flesh* by Ralph Larson, he documents 1200 statements on the nature of Christ that were published by our church leaders between the years 1852 and 1952, 400 of them by Ellen White. During that same period, until her death in 1915, Ellen White published 4500 statements regarding character perfection. (See *Tell of His Power* by Ralph Larson.)

A Host of Witnesses of Adventism's Leadership on the Issue

This leads us directly to the other proposition in the structure of straw erected by Adams. Was M.L. Andreason a person who accepted strange and new doctrines from Jones and Waggoner and urged them upon the church, or was he only one among a host of witnesses to generally accepted truths? The number of names presented in the previous paragraph should answer that question. We would only add enough names to the previously supplied list to demonstrate that those whose voices joined with the voice of Andreason were among Adventism's first line of leadership.

In regard to the nature of Christ, we have documented statements by General Conference presidents Daniells, Watson, Branson, and McElhany; vice-presidents Underwood, Farnsworth, Slade, and Turner; local conference presidents Farnsworth and Evans; *Signs* and *Review* editors and associate editors M.C. Wilcox, G.C. Tenney, W.H. Glenn, Uriah Smith, F.D. Nicholl, Oscar Tait, Alonzo Baker, C.M. Snow, and F.M. Wilcox; the first president of our theological seminary M.E. Kern; seminary teacher L.E. Froom; college president W.E. Howell; other teachers and leaders including T.M. French, Merlin Neff, L.C. Wilcox, Meade Macguire, C.L. Bond, and J.E. Fulton; and many, many others. Statements in regard to the generally accepted truth of character perfection are simply too numerous to collate or count.

To view the question from its other side, in the massive research project that Ralph Larson engaged in and reported on in his book *The Word Was Made Flesh*, he did not find a single evidence that any of our leaders or believers held a different view from the mainstream on either the nature of Christ or character perfection until the mid 1900s—*not one*.

On the basis of what was published, we view the announced purpose of George Knight, whose work Adams applauds, to prove that before the 1920s our people held Calvinistic views of the gospel as utterly preposterous.

Simplistic Reasoning

So in the construction of his world-class straw man, Adams has apparently arbitrarily selected two persons, Jones and Waggoner, from among a large group of Adventist thought leaders, including Ellen White, and assigned to them the responsibility for creating doctrinal attitudes that were actually shared by them all and had been witnessed to by some of them before Jones and Waggoner came along. In similar fashion he selected M.L. Andreason from among an even larger group and assigned to him the responsibility for propagating views that were, in fact, shared and earnestly taught by them all. To cap the strange structure, he has then looked at the Historical Adventists of our time and selected from among them an individual minister named Robert Wieland who holds to certain views about corporate personality and corporate repentance that very few among the Historic Adventists share with him, and has set him forth as the type of and spokesman for us all.

The Technique

This is the traditional first step in the use of the straw-man technique, the use of misstatement and misrepresentation in order to set up an artificial straw man which is alleged to be the position of your opponents. The second step is to vigorously attack the straw man of your own creating in the hope that observers will believe that you have demolished the position of your opponents, whereas you have actually only demolished you own artificial straw man.

Adams faithfully follows the formula and devotes many pages to arguing against the ideas of Jones, Waggoner, Andreason, and Wieland. But what does this have to do with us? Really, nothing. Our faith is not fastened to the thinking of any of these men. Our faith is firmly anchored in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy, and we may rest secure in the confidence that these bulwarks will never be overthrown.

Earlier, we drew attention to the astonishing distortion of Seventh-day Adventist history that is being attempted in the recent publication, The Nature of Christ, by Roy Adams, associate editor of the *Review*. In his book, we who are trying to cling to the historic faith of our church in regard to the human nature of Christ and in regard to the doctrine of sanctification are charged with many faults.

It is represented that we are neither following the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy nor yet the mainstream of historic Adventist theological opinion. It is alleged that we are rather following the individual and erroneous thinking of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, as amplified and promoted by M. L. Andreason.

Adams represents himself as attempting to write with no ill will toward those whom he accuses. Was this attempt successful? Let the reader decide.

He applies the following terms to us, either directly or indirectly:

Sour, festering, self-appointed, infected with the virus of judgmentalism and suspicion, disease, martyr complex, seasoned controversialists, spirit of accusation, outraged, aghast, scandalized, pathetic, self-confessed expert, misguided, wrong-headed, steeped in their cherish position, impenetrable to any theological logic, irresponsible, almost dishonest, deluded self-appointed prophets, turn-coats, charlatans, and scoundrels.

He applies the following descriptive terms to our reasoning:

Mumblings, innuendoes, broken faith with the church, specious theology, perfectionistic agitation, petty, picayune, disgusting, speciousness, repetitive, exasperating, subtle spin, overblown, vacuousness, subtle legalism, anger, irritation, anger to new heights, radical articulation, fuss, ingenious theological gymnastics, willfulness, mischief, dishonesty, far-fetched explanations, artificial and contrived, totally fabricated, thoughtlessly, narrow, shallow, facile admonitions, simplistic pietism, shrill, provincial, manipulate, like Jim Jones and David Koresh, dogmatism, trap of perfectionistic legalism, frustration, heated, quoted piously, specious reasoning, vehement, inordinate insistence, maliciously accusing, sharpened tongues, navel-gazing, and self-flagellation.

Can you feel the warm Christian love in this language? For some reason, I cannot. But should this surprise us? By no means. We have been forewarned:

"Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbath-keepers are brought before courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them." *The Great Controversy*, 608.

We are not yet seeing the entire fulfillment of this prediction, but it is certainly coming into view, both in Adam's book and in the tragic *Issues* book, which he applauds. **This is a foretaste of what we must be prepared to endure in the last days.**

We are reminded of Christ's warning against reviling others, in Matthew 5:22, and of His own example in refusing to bring a railing accusation against Satan himself (Jude 9). We remember also that Adams repeatedly refers to Andreason and the Historic Adventists of our time as persons who are *intensely angry*. We ask, where in our writings can there be found language that can be remotely compared to the venom of Adams' irritation?

And why? What is our crime? Simply that we wish to cling to the purity of our historic faith. For this we must needs be buried under an avalanche of personal abuse and false accusation, which reaches its climax on page 106 of Adams' book:

"Human society cannot move forward unless people are prepared to leave the past behind. Wherever a people or a society finds this impossible, there is bloodshed and backwardness. Look at the Middle East today. Look at Northern Ireland. Look at Yugoslavia. Look at Sudan. Yet this is what people like Wieland and Short wish on us."

The sheer enormity of this viciously false accusation makes comment unnecessary, but it may be taken as a sampling of what we can expect from false brethren in the future. We note, in passing, the great difference between Adams' thinking about the past and the thinking of Ellen White when she wrote:

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 162.

The Casuistry Straw Bundle-Subtle and Evasive Reasoning

The word *casuistry* (sophistry) may be simply defined as subtle and evasive reasoning, deception by degrees. It is a technique that is used to avoid the resistance that might be aroused by more bold and direct deception. In his attempt to make it appear that M. L. Andreason was a disciple of Jones and Waggoner, Adams encounters a problem. The writings of Andreason do not support such a theory. Adams inadvertently reveals this in the following ingenious statement:

"Why M. L. Andreason did not more openly flaunt his connection with these two luminaries is not quite clear to me." (Translation: Adams found no support for his theory in Andreason's writings.)

But the lack of evidence did not deter him. He continued to enlarge on his theory by alleging that there is a fundamental theological similarity between the position of Jones and Waggoner regarding sanctification and the position of Andreason.

What he does not tell his readers is that there is a much stronger similarity between Andreason's views and those of Ellen White, as well as other church leaders.

Final Generation Theology

Adams next endeavors to show that Andreason got his concept of the "final generation" who will stand without a Mediator in the last days, not from Ellen White, who originated the idea, but from some unidentified persons who, after World War I, were speculating about the nearness of Christ's return. The result is a classic demonstration of sophistry, making it appear that evidence exists where in fact it does not exist. Notice the carefully leading and manipulative statement on page 39:

- (Andreason) "did not participate in these deceptions"
- "He despised the fantastic speculations"
- "Their manifest failure must have impressed him"
- "leading him to articulate a theological reason for their delay"
- "Andreason's theology developed against the background of those controversies and *was shaped by them.*" [All emphasis supplied.]

This is an insult to the reader's intelligence. It could be argued with equal logic that Adams' theology was shaped by the thinking of Wieland and Short. Adams would undoubtedly pronounce that kind of reasoning utterly nonsensical—and so do we.

And are we to suppose that Andreason had never read Ellen White's description of that "final generation" in her well known

- *The Great Controversy*, 613–634;
- in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 195–203;
- and in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, 467–476?

This would be rather peculiar in view of Adams' own characterization of Andreason as a "self-confessed expert" on the writings of Ellen White.

Continuing his attempt to separate Andreason from the Spirit of Prophecy, Adams alleges that on the matter of character perfection, Andreason "followed in Ballenger's footsteps."

He thus attempts to discredit Andreason by linking him with a man who later apostatized. Those who knew Andreason would consider it preposterous to describe him as following in any man's footsteps. But in any case, Ellen White's views on this point, written and published at least 4500 times, were essentially the same as Ballenger's before his apostasy, as well as Andreason's and the other leaders of the church. Then to paint us with the same brush, Adams adds that the views of the Historical Adventists of our time on this subject are "virtually identical to that held by Andreason and Ballenger." This has all the logical strength of an argument that because Ballenger believed in God and in the Second Coming of Christ, we who now believe those doctrines are followers of Ballenger.

Having used this sophistry to condition his reader's minds, Adams then proceeds to openly picture Andreason as dishonest. (Pages 52, 53.)

Adams' "evidence." It consists of nothing more than Andreason's understanding of Ellen White's use of the word *passions*, and is presented as if she only used the word in one way.

The evidence makes it clear that Ellen White did not always use these terms in the same sense or with the same identical meaning. Consider:

- "He had all the strength of passion of humanity." *In Heavenly Places*, 155.
- ". . . not possessing the passions of our human, fallen nature." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 509.

This is in accordance with her own recognition that:

"Different meanings are expressed by the same word. There is not one word for each distinct idea." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 20.

I regard Adams' accusation against Andreason as grossly unfair, far beyond the boundaries of responsible scholarship, and altogether unchristian. I find it mind-boggling that Adams, who professes to have suffered great personal distress over Andreason's alleged dishonesty, applauds the *Issues* book with its manifold misrepresentations.

Continuing in this unpraiseworthy work, Adams paints Andreason as a "self-confessed expert" on Ellen White's writings (page 52) and tells us that Andreason "claims to be an authority on her writings." (Page 67.) Such braggadocio would be impossible to harmonize with the modest and unpretentious character of Andreason, as many knew him. We therefore, sought for the basis of these accusations and were amazed to find that it was nothing more than this line from a letter Andreason had written to Elder Figuhr:

"In my more than sixty years of official connection with the denomination, one of my chief aims has been to inspire confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. The last two hours I have spoken on the subject 204 times." (Page 52.)

What kind of a mentality would construe this earnest and innocent statement to be boastful self-exaltation? And what kind of a mentality would refer to Andreason's legitimate concerns about the discussions between Walter Martin and some of our leaders like this:

"Almost certainly one reason for Andreason's reaction was that he had not been consulted." Page 45.

To complete his hatchet job on the character of a great and good man, Adams purports to have found a deathbed confession of wrongdoing by Andreason. The document, however, is undated and unsigned. No committee of scholars and no court of law would tolerate it as evidence for a single moment. But it was apparently good enough for Adams' work of character assassination.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness." Isaiah 5:20.

He Responds to a Preponderance of Evidence with Sneers--The Sneer Straw Bundle

Ralph Larson found and recorded 1200 statements published by our church leaders during the one hundred years 1852–1952 that Christ came to this earth in the human nature of fallen man. Four hundred of them were from the inspired pen of Ellen White. This is manifestly the evidence that Adams has to overthrow in order to maintain his position. But instead of addressing this material as a scholar should, he by-passed it and selected a modest thirty page tract by Joe Crews as his target.

How does he deal with the mass of evidence presented in *The Word Was Made Flesh by Ralph Larson*? Only by sneers. Here are the nine sneers that he directs at carefully documented research:

- "... startling allegation . . . patently unfounded." Page 20.
- "... claims on its title page . . ." page 21
- "... counters again and again. . ." page 22
- "... assumption. . ." page 26
- "... ingenious theological gymnastics. . ." page 53
- "... labored, forced, and unconvincing. . ." page 69
- "... gone to great lengths. . ." page 72
- "... far-fetched . . . ingenious . . . totally fabricated. . ." page 72

Not a shred of evidence is offered in support of any of these sneers. May we respectfully suggest that it will take more than sneers to overthrow the 1200 statements that are brought together in Ralph Larson's research report?

The Breathtaking Straw Bundle-the Two Most Astounding Propositions

We come now to the two most astounding propositions that Adams puts forth in his rewriting our history. They are so bold and brazen as to be utterly breath taking.

In the first, he soberly assures us that the Christological problem that we have been grappling with since 1957 is actually imaginary.

Here are his words:

"I don't run into many Adventists defending a pre-lapsarian position.

"And in all the samplings I've done in preparation for this book, I've not seen a single instance in which one of our concerned or *disaffected* brethren has managed to produce a direct pre-lapsarian statement from a contemporary Adventist author." Page 27.

May we respectfully recommend the following sources:

- **Ministry, September, 1956**
- **Questions on Doctrine, page 650**
- **Movement of Destiny, L. E. Froom, page 497**
- **Christ Our Substitute, Norman Gulley**

- ***The Man Who is God, Edward Heppenstall***
- ***Perfect in Christ, Helmut Ott***

Et. Al.

We find it difficult to understand why Adams, with his position of advantage at the heart of our work, would have trouble laying his hand on any of these sources, not to mention materials published in the *Review*. But if that proposition is astonishing, the next is stunning:

"We believe—and have always believed—that Christ did take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen human beings." Page 27.

- **When you have recovered your breath, you may have some questions.**
- **Why, then, was Andreason so bitterly denounced and so ruthlessly dealt with?**
- **Why was the opposite view affirmed in *Questions on Doctrine*?**
- **Why is this not being taught at our seminary and in our colleges?**
- **Why is it so difficult to find a pastor who believes it?**
- **And why does Adams' own book vilify those who believe it?**

Here is a suggestion. Show that statement to your pastor, your conference president, or your college Bible teacher. Watch his reaction, and draw your own conclusions. Someone is wildly out of touch with reality. Let us remember the words of James Russell Lowell:

"Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong;
Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong;
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

To point out all of the errors and distortions of truth in the book, *The Nature of Christ*, by Roy Adams, past associate editor of the *Review*, would require a volume at least as large as the original. This would surpass both our time and our interest. We trust that the samplings of grievous errors that have been provided will satisfy those who have a concern for accuracy and truth.

We now wish to simply identify some of Adams' major disagreements with the Bible and with the Spirit of Prophecy.

We believe this evidence will make it clear that Adams is not really fighting Jones, Waggoner, and Andreason. His real enemy is the inspired writings, especially the Spirit of Prophecy.

Adams seems to be deeply offended by two closely related concepts in the inspired writings:

1. That victory over sin by God's power is possible in this life; and
2. That there will be some persons who will stand before God without a mediator in the last days.

As we have seen, he endeavors to make us believe that the first concept regarding victory (sanctification) has not come to us from the inspired writings but from Jones and Waggoner through Andreason.

Here is a suggestion. Take a pen in your hand and mark with a V for victory the following verses in your New Testament:

- Matthew 5:48;
- Romans 1:16; 5:21; 6:18, 22; 8:4; 12:2;
- 1 Corinthians 10:13;
- 2 Corinthians 5:17; 7:1; 10:5;
- Galatians 2:20;
- Ephesians 1:4; 3:20; 4:22–24; 5:26, 27;
- Philippians 2:5, 15; 4:13;
- Colossians 1:22;
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:1, 7; 5:23;
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13;
- 1 Timothy 6:14;
- 2 Timothy 2:19, 22; 3:17;
- Titus 2:3, 12–14;
- Hebrews 6:1; 13:20, 21;
- James 1:4, 21; 4:7, 8;
- 1 Peter 1:15, 16, 22; 2:11, 12; 5:10;
- 2 Peter 3:11;
- 1 John 2:6, 29; 3:3, 7, 22; 4:4; 5:3, 4;
- Jude 24, 25;
- Revelation 3:21; 14:12; 22:14.

Then ask yourself the question, **Is the victory doctrine biblical or not? Next, borrow or purchase a copy of Tell of His Power by Ralph Larson, and examine the 2,500 victory statements and references there which were gleaned from a total of more than 4,500 such statements in Ellen White's writings. Then ask yourself the question, Is the victory doctrine supported by God's chosen messenger, Ellen White, or is it not?**

Standing Without a Mediator

In his bitter opposition to the concept that there will be a group who will stand without a mediator, Adams argues that the idea originated with Andreason and that it is a false concept because it would require God to deal with the final generation in a different manner than He has dealt with previous generations.

But does God expect no more of us than He did of previous generations? Here is a sampling of Ellen White's several comments on that subject:

"Our responsibility is greater than was that of our ancestors. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are accountable also for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the Word of God." *The Great Controversy*, 164.

We have, beyond question, the greatest spiritual light that any generation has ever had. For God to hold us responsible for the light that He has graciously given to us is nothing new in the plan of salvation. It has always been true. Adams states that the people he admires most are "those who never dwell on the subject of perfection or sinlessness." *The Nature of Christ*, 120. When we remember how frequently Ellen White did dwell

upon these subjects, going into print more than 4,500 times, often in entire articles, we recognize that Ellen White could have no place on the list of persons whom Adams admires most.

Christ's Character Perfectly Reproduced

One of her most inspiring statements is found in *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69:

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then he will come to claim them as His own."

Adams devotes three and a half pages to arguing that this statement does not mean what it says, and even dares to rewrite it: Here are his words: ". . . we may now rephrase the first statement as follows: When the spirit of unselfish love and labor for others will have fully ripened in the character of His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." *The Nature of Christ*, 123.

"No focus here on sinless perfection," writes Adams. Indeed? In the second paragraph before her inspiring statement, Ellen White had written:

"The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 68.

And in the third paragraph before this she had written:

"Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing—the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others." *Ibid.*, 67.

If this is not a focus on character perfection, pray tell, what is it? And how can Adams be justified in applying the principle of fruit bearing only to concern for others when she applied it to the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer?

In the book *Christ's Object Lessons*, there are actually a total of 62 statements that focus on character perfection. Perhaps the most relevant of them is on page 331:

"Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."

As for the colossal effrontery of daring to rewrite the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen White has spoken on that subject also.

"My Instructor said to me, Tell these men that God has not committed to them the work of measuring, classifying, and defining the character of the testimonies.

Those who attempt this are sure to err in their conclusions." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 49.

We may well pause to consider the seriousness of this man's condition. He not only presumed to rewrite the testimonies but the rewriting itself is hideously incorrect and consists of gross misrepresentation. I do not recall that I have ever borne against any work such a strong testimony as I am now bearing against this man's work, but I feel that I have no choice. As I complete my analysis of the Adams book and note its appalling distortions of the Scriptures, distortions of the Spirit of Prophecy, and even distortions of the history of our church, I am filled with dismay. When I consider that it was written by a past associate editor of the Review, printed by the Review and Herald Publishing Company, and carries on its back cover recommendations from officers at the highest level of Adventist officialdom, I am driven nearly to despair.

But God has promised that He will preserve His people in a purified church, so we must persevere, regardless of how dark are the prospects before us. We need to remember that most of the apostasies in Israel were initiated by church leaders. Why should we expect it to be different in our time?

ADAM'S BOOK.

But the report of my analysis is not finished.

On page 90 of his volume, Adams writes of Andreason's "facile admonitions to 'get rid of sin' and 'do it now, today.'" We have already noted that Ellen White issued such "facile admonitions" several thousand times. Here are some samples:

"We can overcome, fully, entirely." *Signs of the Times*, November 18, 1886.

"There is no reason why we should not be overcomers." *Signs of the Times*, March 9, 1888.

"It is our privilege to be overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony." *Review and Herald*, April 8, 1909.

And thousands more. But we must go on.

On page 89, Adams faults Ron Spear for teaching that the Holy Spirit gives power to keep the repentant soul from sinning. Ellen White testifies to this truth 102 times, like this:

"When the people of God yield themselves to be controlled entirely by the Holy Spirit, in them will appear that Christlikeness which is in accordance with the richness and grandeur of the truth." *Signs of the Times*, May 8, 1893.

"The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul." *Ministry of Healing*, 94.

On page 85, Adams writes, "We are not saved by trying to duplicate (Christ's) victory."

Ellen White testifies 41 times like this:

"We can, we can reveal the likeness of our divine Lord." *Review and Herald*, April 4, 1912.

"Christians must be like Christ. They should have the same spirit, exert the same influence, and have the same moral excellence that He possessed." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 249.

On page 97, Adams assures us that victory over some sins is impossible and that God bears with them until the end. Ellen White again disagrees.

She not only assures us that we can fully overcome (see above), she also warns that a failure to do this will disqualify us for heaven.

"We must conquer in the name of Jesus, or be conquered." *Signs of the Times*, June 10, 1903.

"We shall either overcome our evil traits of character, and become like Christ, or we shall cherish our defects, and fail of the divine standard." *Review and Herald*, March 17, 1891.

Many more such disagreements with Ellen White are found in Adams' book, but we cannot detail them all here.

How does he deal with these problems?

By a technique that has been used by virtually all of the Calvinistic writers among us. He writes of Ellen White's seemingly conflicting statements" (page 116), her "apparently conflicting statements" (page 119), and her "apparent contradictions" (page 119).

We affirm in response that Ellen White is not disagreeing with herself; she is disagreeing with her Calvinistic interpreters and "rephrasers", as she should.

"Are You Perfect?"

Adams does not even shrink from proposing that his readers challenge us with the lunatic question, "Are you perfect?" Although other Calvinists have done this, I still find it so incredibly inane that I marvel when I see it. To ask this question is to betray an enormous incompetence in the Scriptures, in the Spirit of Prophecy, and even in common sense. In the oldest book in the Bible, Job testified, "Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul." Job 9:21. Ellen White offers similar testimony 25 times:

"Those who are really seeking to perfect Christian character will never indulge in the thought that they are sinless." *Review and Herald*, January 18, 1881.

"Those whom Heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness." *Youth's Instructor*, June 5, 1902.

As for common sense, how would you estimate your own humility? Shall I say to people, "You know folks, one thing I like about me is that I am so humble? I am probably the most humble person you have ever met. If you want to see a man who is really humble, just take a look at me!" What kind of sense

would that make? Yet Calvinists continue to think that they have confounded us when they ask this senseless question. Is not their condition desperate?

In a chapter entitled, "What Is Sin?" Adams divides sin into four categories and argues that two of the categories can be overcome but the other two cannot.

Over against this we have the testimony of Ellen White

- that we may attain to the *full stature* of men and women in Christ (36 statements),
- that we can *reflect His likeness* (41 statements),
- that we can *live lives of holiness* (70 statements),
- that we can *reach moral perfection* (135 statements), and
- that we can *reflect the moral image of God* (135 statements).
- She then warns us in 48 statements that *there will be no change of character when Christ comes.*

How did Adams miss all of this?

On page 23, Adams faults Joe Crews for affirming that emphasis was intended by the writer of Hebrews 2:14 in the words "HE—ALSO—HIMSELF—LIKEWISE" took part of the same flesh and blood that we have. [Emphasis by Crews.] Adams says that this emphasis is improper since "the apostle did not write in English" and the words are "merely a matter of English idiomatic style—now nearly 500 years old."

But the words are all there in the Greek.

Observe:

- *Kai—autos—paraplesios*
- Also—He himself—likewise, in like manner
- The Greek lexicons define *autos* like this:
- "Self, *intensive*, setting the word it modifies off from everything else, *emphasizing* and *contrasting*." *Gingrich* [Italics mine]
- "Self, as used to distinguish a person or thing from or contrast it with another." *Thayer*
- "Of oneself, by oneself, alone." *Liddell and Scott*
- "Of oneself, of one's own motion, alone." *Greenfield*

Did Adams suppose that we had all lost our Greek New Testaments? This is a 2,000 year-old Greek idiom, not a 500 year old English idiom.

We could go on, but we cannot afford to spend overmuch time chasing the devil's rabbits. We trust that enough evidence has been presented to demonstrate the character of Dr. Adams' book, *The Nature of Christ*. And we must sadly admit that it is not essentially different from the other Calvinistic writings that have preceded it.

Calvinism began in the Seventh-day Adventist Church through a statement about the nature of Christ in the book *Questions on Doctrine* that was a methodological monstrosity and an historical fraud.

Calvinism has been maintained and promoted in our church by writings that have not departed from that pattern of distortion and misrepresentation, as we now see in the Adams book.

It is with an enormous sense of relief and refreshment that we turn from this to the pure waters of life in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Let others find their satisfaction in the contaminations of Calvinism if they so desire. We have something better. We have no need to drink from broken cisterns. We have a cause that will carry us through to the kingdom of God and will plant our feet upon the sea of glass. We have a truth that shines more brightly from every conflict with error and will emerge totally victorious in the end. It is a truth that is more precious than life itself. Let us hold it fast!

"The time has come when things must be called by their right names. The truth is to triumph gloriously, and those who have long been halting between two opinions must take their stand decidedly for or against the law of God. *Some will take up with theories that misinterpret the Word of God, and undermine the foundation of the truth that has been firmly established, point by point, and sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit.* The old truths are to be revived, in order that the false theories that have been brought in by the enemy may be intelligently met. There can be no unity between truth and error." *Upward Look*, 88. {Emphasis mine.}

In closing, let us permit Ellen White to ask a few questions:

"Why should we not perfect a Christlike character?" *Youth's Instructor*, February 20, 1896.

"Shall we not give up our sins, and let them go?" *Review and Herald*, May 5, 1904.

"Shall we now, at once, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?" *Review and Herald*, January 31, 1893.

"Why should we not walk with God, as did Enoch? Why should we not have the transforming grace of Christ daily?" *Review and Herald*, January 31, 1893.

And the most solemn question of them all:

"And you that have not sanctified your souls by obeying the truth, do you expect that Christ at His appearing will make you ready? *There will then be no atoning blood to wash away the stains of sins.*" *Review and Herald*, August 17, 1869. [Emphasis mine.]

We are forced to recognize that there is hopeless disagreement between Adams and Ellen White, a problem that Adams seeks to solve by rewriting her messages and changing her words to make them agree with his Calvinistic errors. Shall we imperil our souls by following Adams and others like him, or shall we put our confidence in the words of God's chosen messenger?

What would you recommend?