

SIMPLIFYING FAITH LECTURE SERIES

By H.E. Metropolitan Bishoy

#5 Responding to the Seventh Day Adventists

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.

Protestantism

We wish to discuss the impact of Protestantism, on Christianity throughout the entire world. Martin Luther started his movement in the sixteenth century, as a kind of reform against the authority of the Catholic Church, and some of its unsound teachings and activities. Instead of heading for the eastern Orthodox Churches, he decided to annul various church doctrines, sacraments, besides the instructional authority of the church. Protestantism was a reaction against the Papal authority and the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope (which it withstands). Liberal teaching and full liberation from the church tradition (in spite of the fact that the church tradition sustained the Holy Bible) resulted in the occurrence of numerous Protestant sects or denominations. Some such examples are the Presbyterians, Apostolics, Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, and the Brethren. One feels bewildered in attempting to specify the identity of Protestants. Perhaps the number of Protestant sects in the world currently has reached about six hundred.

The danger increases when some sub-sects divert so extremely, that even the Protestants consider them Non-Christians, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Charles Russell, who founded Jehovah's Witnesses in 1876 AD, was a disciple of another innovated sect, namely: the Seventh-day Adventists, which was declared in the United States in 1831 AD. The Adventists were disciples of the Protestant: Baptists and the Methodists. Since their 'church' has no instructional authority, it is feasible for a Baptist, for example, to conduct individual study depending on his own thought which might result in a new view. This new view might form a new sect.

Jehovah's Witnesses deny the divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of the One Triune God in Three Persons. They deny that the Son and Holy Spirit are equal to the Father in glory, lordship, majesty, and that They are of the same essence with the Father. Jehovah's Witnesses adopt almost all the doctrines of the Adventists, plus others, such as denying the divinity of Christ and the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Synod's decisions

The Holy Synod of our Coptic Orthodox Church, under the auspices of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, during its session held on Saturday June 17, 1989, officially declared that the Jehovah's Witnesses and Adventist sects as Non-Christian. The synod warned against attending their meetings or allowing their entrance into our Coptic Orthodox homes, as with all heretics and innovators.

Jehovah's Witnesses have published their own interpretation of the Holy Bible called, "The New World Interpretation". We do not regard this interpretation as genuine, because it attempted to distort many sections from both the Old Testament, and the New Testament. The Holy Synod also warns against accepting this interpretation.

The Orthodox Church and Heresies

We will try to present the Adventist doctrine as an example of a consequences resulting from the Protestant doctrines and principles. We warn our congregations from adopting the Protestant belief; learning from Christ when He said, "*Therefore by their fruits you will know them*" (Matt 7:20). The Coptic Orthodox Church has survived for over nineteen hundred years without producing any heretics or innovators who were able to establish churches.

When Arius, a priest from Alexandria, declared his heresy which denied the divinity of Christ, the Church of Alexandria opposed, and later condemned him. When he appealed to Caesarea in the East, our church continued to restrict his heresy, and struggled to eradicate it completely. In 325 AD, he was finally condemned in the Nicene Ecumenical Council, and his teachings were anathematized. In opposing Arius, Pope Athanasius the Apostolic, the Pope of Alexandria, continued to struggle with all his strength, he suffered greatly throughout his enthronement, including many years of exile away from his throne. The struggle of the churches who followed the principles of Saint Athanasius continued, until Arianism was ultimately executed and condemned during the Second Ecumenical Council in 381 AD.

Our church is an alert church! One that endures pain and suffering, even to the point of martyrdom, exile, or imprisonment, in order to preserve the true Orthodox faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (see Jud 1:3). It will not allow its offsprings to spring forth as heretics or innovators who construct defective new sects that introduce innovations to the faith.

Unfortunately, the foreign missionaries that reached Egypt were able to attract some members of the Coptic Orthodox congregation to join the Protestant sects. The Protestant denominations did not branch out of Egypt or originate therein. The Adventist and Jehovah's Witnesses originated from within the Protestant sects existing in the United States.

History of the Seventh Day Adventists

The term Adventists is derived from Advent meaning the Second Coming, therefore the Adventists are those who are awaiting the Advent. Their official title is Seventh-Day Adventists. Their sect originated with the notion that our Lord Jesus Christ's Second Coming will be in the year 1843 AD. Later they changed the date to 1844 AD. When the Second Coming did not occur in either year, to disguise their embarrassment, they invented other explanations that we will discuss later in more details.

They are called Seventh-Day since they adopted the notion of the Seventh Day Baptists (in the United States), believing that the Jewish Sabbath day is the day of the Lord for Christians. If we carefully

examine the doctrines of the Adventist and Jehovah's Witnesses, we find that they are very similar in thought to the Jewish Sadducees.

The Adventists and Sadducees:

The Sadducees deny the Resurrection, refusing to believe in it, and believe that the day of the Lord is Saturday since they are Jews. We find the same beliefs with Jehovah's Witnesses and the Adventists.

In the gospel according to St. Matthew, he writes, *"The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her. Jesus answered and said to them, You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven."* (Matt 22: 23–30).¹

The Sadducees wanted to trap Christ so they asked him about a woman who was married to seven brothers, 'in the resurrection whose wife will she become?' He answered saying, *"You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven."* In other words you misuse the Scripture to serve your deviated erroneous thinking. Just as the angels do not marry, those resurrected will be like the angels, not marrying. He continues: *"But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching."* (Matt 22:31–32).

The Adventists are not the only ones who refute the Christian doctrine of resurrection from the dead. Even during Christ's time the Sadducees attempted to withstand Christ, and confuse the multitude with their erroneous beliefs. The Lord Jesus Christ responded to them and rendered them speechless. He said that God proclaims, *"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."*

The Immortality of the Human Spirit and Intercession:

Christ Himself taught the perpetuity and immortality of the human spirit. The Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the human spirit dies as the body dies: when the body dies the spirit simultaneously dies. Thus they deny the intercession of saints. They ask us, "How can you intercede through the Virgin, the martyrs and the rest of the Saints?" They consider intercession as one of the effects of heathen worship. We shall quote from their writings that prove that they consider intercession as a heathen worship introduced into the doctrines of the church.

¹ Of course, it is unlawful for a person to marry his brother's wife, but according to the Mosaic Law, if the husband died without producing offspring, his brother was to take his wife, in order to raise an offspring for his dead brother. This was the only exception. (See Deut 5: 5 - 6). Of course this law was nullified by the coming of Christ.

Protestants denied the intercession of saints, Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses agreed, they further added to their error, claiming that even the spirits of those saints died with their bodies. Protestants made no such claim, but this is an example of how, when the opportunity is made available to erroneous doctrines, the deviations can develop, increase, and unravel. We need to respond to all their erroneous doctrines, otherwise people may be deceived by their teachings.

It is true we do not agree with the actions of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, yet we can not agree with the extremist reaction of the Protestants against the practices of the Catholic Church. It would have been better for them to join the Orthodox Churches who preserved the apostolic tradition and convention, and the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Summary of the Erroneous Doctrines of the Adventists:

- 1) They believe that Jesus Christ is Archangel Michael. Anyone who believes in this doctrine either believes that Christ is simply an Archangel, and not the Only-Begotten Son of the God, or else he believes that there is no such being as Archangel Michael, but that Archangel Michael is simply one of the apparitions of our Lord Christ. In either case we consider this an erroneous doctrine which the Holy Bible rejects, as we shall demonstrate.
- 2) They believe that the spirit dies at the time the body dies as we have mentioned, and that the human spirit is not eternal, but is similar to the animal spirit, or the spirit of a beast.
- 3) They do not believe in final eternal condemnation for evil persons. They believe the resurrection following the Second Coming will only be for the righteous, not for the righteous and the evil. This is contrary to what Jesus Christ said several times: *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'"* (Mat 25:31–34, 41).

So, they do not even accept the words of Christ Himself! They believe that the righteous simply return to life (body and spirit) through a special grace from God.

- 4) They even consider Christ's glorious resurrection to have been through a special grace from God, and they minimize its significance. This distorts their understanding of Christ's resurrection, thus their belief in His work of salvation becomes confused.
- 5) They believe that Jesus Christ inherited the natural inclination towards sin, and the liability to submit to sin was within Him, yet He resisted it and did not fall. He fought this inclination and weakness for sin which He inherited through the human nature, He took from the Virgin Mary. We of course believe, based on the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, that our Lord Jesus Christ took the human nature and resembled us in everything, **except sin**. The embryo which was created in the virginal womb of Saint Mary was through the Holy Spirit, as the angel

proclaimed, "...*For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit*" (Matt 1: 20). No being conceived of the Holy Spirit could contain sin, or the inclination toward sin. It is impossible for God the Word, Who united with this humanity, or human nature which He took from Virgin Mary, to unite with a nature that has an inclination toward sin. If there was a liability or possibility for submitting to sin, then salvation would be in danger. If the savior could choose to sin or not sin, this means that salvation could or could not have been fulfilled. It would have been a critical situation, and a complete destruction of the Christian doctrine of salvation. Their claim is blasphemous against our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 6) They consider the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath (Saturday), the Lord's day. They believe that the devil's sin was in not keeping the commandment of the Sabbath. They consider breaking the Sabbath the greatest sin, as it should be the day of the Lord, the day of worship, and the day of rest. This is a kind of return to Judaism in Christianity: an inclination toward the Jewish doctrine.
- 7) They believe that Christ moved from the Holy, to the Holy of Holies in heaven; by doing so He purified the Sanctuary. This issue pertains to the dates they predetermined. We will reply to this claim and examine its events.
- 8) They consider the intercession to saints an idolatrous doctrine, and that the liturgical offering is an idolatrous sacrifice, which they violently attack.
- 9) They believe Ellen White to be a Prophetess, to whom were revealed heavenly declarations and that she received inspiration and revelation from the Holy Spirit. They also consider her an apostle to be counted with the twelve apostles. They elevate all she envisioned, prophesied, and wrote to the level of the holy books and divine scriptures. They call her "Prophet of the End"², or of the last days; we will examine whether she deserved this title.

The Origin of the Adventist Movement:

The person who initiated the Adventist movement was William Miller, who was born in Massachusetts, Connecticut, USA, on April 15, 1782. Coming from a Baptist family (a Protestant sect), he devoted two years to the study of the Holy Bible without guidance from anyone to supervise his studies. From 1816 to 1818 he reached the conclusion that the end of the world will be in 1843 AD. In his studies he relied on two sections in the Book of Daniel the prophet. One such verse is chapter eight verse fourteen which says, "*And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.*" The other section is found in chapter nine, starting at verse twenty-four, and it reads:

"Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, That from the

² The title of the book about her written by Vance Farrell. Unfortunately, this book has also been published in Arabic. At the end of this book is a list of all the books which Ellen White wrote that were translated into Arabic, some of which are: "The Great Controversy", "The Desire of Ages", "The Ministry of Healing", "Living the life of the Life-giver", "Patriarchs and Prophets", and "Acts of the Apostles". To procure these books, or for more information, they advise to write to "The Church of the Seventh Day Adventists" in Cairo, Egypt, listing the P O Box and address.

going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.” (Dan 9:24–27)

Some commentators consider these weeks to be weeks of years, such that a week is seven years instead of seven days, so, from the going forth of the command to renew Jerusalem (the year 457 BC) to the above mentioned events are 490 years.

Miller added 490 years to 457 BC, resulting with the year 33 AD; the year Christ was crucified. From chapter eight he calculated the 2300 days as 2300 years. From the 2300, he subtracted 490, which left him with 1810, then he added the 33 years (the age of Christ at crucifixion), which left him with the year 1843 AD. He calculated this as the year in which Christ will come again.

He was convinced of this theory, and discussed it with those around him, until one of his friends convinced him to publicize and announce this teaching. He did publicize it in 1831, and this was considered the founding date of the Adventists. At that time, they had not yet adopted the doctrine of the Sabbath or the seventh day. When he preached this new teaching, many people wanted to hear his viewpoint, so he devoted himself to preaching, became a full time Baptist preacher in the United States, and began roaming the US. Between the years 1840 – 1842 he went to Portland, Oregon, and there the family of Robert Gould Harmon, the father of Ellen White, first heard him speak. They accepted his teachings and separated from the Methodist Church³ to join the Adventist movement.

Thus Ellen White, at the age of twelve, adopted the Adventist movement, which William Miller preached. Ellen White (whose maiden name was Ellen Gould Harmon), was born on November 26, 1827 in Gorham, Maine (about 12 miles from Portland, in the Northeastern corner of the United States), with a twin sister named Elizabeth.

Ellen White’s Story

At the age of nine, after attending three years of schooling, as she was returning home from school, an older schoolmate hit her with a rock that landed on the left side of her face. Her nose was broken, her face was deformed, and she was in a coma for three weeks. The result was damage to her Central Nervous System (CNS), besides complexes which prevented her from completing her schooling. She also developed a type of epilepsy as a result of the damage to her CNS. At this time, she faced mortality several times due to her frequent illnesses resulting from the damage that nearly killed her.

Toward the end of December 1844 Ellen proclaimed that she saw a heavenly vision while attending a prayer meeting with some of the followers of the Adventist movement. From that time, until her death, the Adventists began to consider her inspired by God, an apostle, and a prophetess. They believed that she received heavenly missions and instructions for the entire church; this is a very critical and dangerous issue.

³ A very popular church throughout the world, especially English speaking countries.

Testimonials of Ellen White's Visions:

In the book, *Prophet of the End*, which the Adventists published, they describe her state during the visions where she was mostly standing on her feet. They write that Mrs. **Martha Amadon**, who attended these visions on several occasions says, “As one who has frequently observed her in vision, knowing the company of people usually present, all deeply observant and believers in her exercises, I have often wondered why a more vivid description of the scenes which have transpired had not been given. In vision her eyes were open. There was no breath, but there were graceful movements of the shoulders, arms and hands expressive of what she saw. It was impossible for anyone else to move her hands or arms. She often uttered words singly, and sometimes sentences which expressed to those about her the nature of the view she was having, either of heaven or of earth.”⁴

Another follower of this sect, **George Butler**, an eyewitness on several occasions in 1874 says, “For nearly thirty years past these visions have been given with greater or less frequency, and have been witnessed by many, oftentimes by unbelievers as well as those believing them. They generally, but not always, occur in the midst of earnest seasons of religious interest while the spirit of God is specially present..”⁵

In his description he also said, “The time Mrs. White is in this condition has varied from fifteen minutes to one hundred and eighty (three hours). During this time the heart and pulse continue to beat, the eyes are always wide open, and seem to be gazing at some far-distant object, and are never fixed on any person or thing in the room. They are always directed upward... The brightest light may be suddenly brought near her eyes, or feints made as if to thrust something into the eye, and there is never the slightest wink or change in expression on that account... While she is in vision her breathing entirely ceases. No breath ever escapes her nostrils or lips when in this condition.”⁶

He further says, “Often she loses her strength temporarily and reclines or sits; but at other times she stands up. She moves her arms gracefully”⁷.

Her husband James White comments on her visions saying, “On coming out of vision, whether in the daytime or a well-lighted room at night, all is total darkness [for her]. Her power to distinguish even the most brilliant objects, held within a few inches of the eyes, returns but gradually... She has probably had, during the past twenty-three years, between one and two hundred visions. These have been given under almost every variety of circumstances, yet maintaining a wonderful similarity.”- James White, *Life Incidents*, page 272, 1868.⁸

Dr. Bordeaux wanted to confirm the authenticity of these visions, so he visited Ellen White when she claimed to have been in a state of observing a vision; this took place in Buck's Bridge, New York 1857. He says, “June 28, 1857, I saw sister Ellen G. White in vision for the first time. I was an unbeliever in the visions; but one circumstance among others that I might mention convinced me that her visions were of God. To satisfy my mind as to whether she breathed or not [while in vision]. I first put my hand on her chest sufficiently long to know that there was no more heavings of the lungs than

⁴ Harvestime Books, *Prophet of the End*, Altamont, USA, 1988, p. 36

⁵ *ibid.* p. 38

⁶ *ibid.* p. 38

⁷ *ibid.* p. 39

⁸ *ibid.* p. 41-42

there would have been had she been a corpse. I then took my hand and placed it over her mouth, pinching her nostrils between my thumb and forefinger, so that it was impossible for her to exhale or inhale air, even if she had desired to do so. I held her thus with my hand about ten minutes, long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances; she was not in the least affected by this ordeal. Since witnessing this wonderful phenomenon, I have not once been inclined to doubt the divine origin of her visions". –Statement by D.T. Bourdeaux, Battle Creek, Michigan, dated February 4, 1891⁹.

Errors in Ellen White's Teachings

Of course in their viewpoint, this is enough to prove that it is a divine vision, but from our viewpoint, as the Holy Bible says, "*And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*" (2 Cor 11: 14). Therefore, it is very possible for events to occur which are unordinary, yet are not from God but from other sources. Based on this, Christ said "*Beware of false prophets*" (Matt 7:15) who try to deceive you. Further, He said, "*Therefore by their fruits you will know them*" (Matt 7:20).

If her fruits were good and acceptable, then we could consider her to be a saint who can see dreams and visions, yet we still would never consider her one of the Apostles. We could accept that her dreams have divine guidance for a specific reason. If one person needs to be warned of a specific event, another could see a dream to warn him. However, it is unacceptable to receive a new apostolic teaching in the church through a woman. Saint Paul the apostle teaches, "*And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man,*" (1 Tim 2:12). If a teaching introduces a new faith it becomes a critical situation.

We will examine a sample of her erred teachings. For example, she wrote in a book called, "**Spiritual Gifts**" that the main reason for the destruction of the world by the flood is amalgamation (interbreeding) between humans and animals. Further, she said that the intermingled species that resulted from this reproduction were not the creation of God, and thus were not taken into Noah's Ark: because they are hybrids of humans and animals. It is obvious that this thought is unacceptable, neither spiritually nor scientifically. Contemporary scientists proved the impossibility of breeding offsprings as a result of human and animal mating. In other words humans and animals cannot intermarry and reproduce. This is a well known fact!

Ellen White's erroneous instructions caused many problems for the Adventists. Can we consider such a person a prophetess? **Wallace Slattery**, who disjoined the Adventists, asked this question in a book he published in 1941 entitled, "*Seventh Day Adventists; False Prophets?*"¹⁰ Of course he mentioned Ellen White's words regarding the intermingling of humans and animals starting on page twenty-six, as proof that much of her teachings are flawed and unacceptable.

William Miller and the Second Coming:

William Miller's followers waited all throughout the year 1843 for the Second Coming of Christ, but He never came, so Miller reneged his statement and claimed that the mathematical calculation should

⁹ibid. p.44

¹⁰ The copy we obtained was published in 1990.

start from March of 1843 to March of 1844; to be specific March 21st (assuming Christ was crucified on this day).

The people waited patiently until March 21, 1844, but Christ never came, so one of his followers, Samuel Snow, interceded in August of the same year, to rescue the situation. He claimed that the calculation was incorrect, but using more precise calculations, Christ will come on the great Day of Atonement during the seventh Jewish month in the year 1844; he calculated the day to be October 22, 1844. The people again revived their hope that his calculations would be fulfilled. They dressed in white, sold all their belongings, resigned from their positions, and gathered into groups in various countries or went to the mountain regions to receive Christ in His coming. They waited all day, until the day had fully passed, and no Christ had come, so they called it the Great Disappointment Day. From this point many turned back from continuing in the membership of William Miller's sect.

Ellen White Stirs:

At this time, Ellen Harmon, still unmarried, as she was only seventeen years old, in January of 1845, claimed that God showed her in a dream that the Christ will come in the near future.

When her dream did not manifest, Hirman Edson, one of the leaders of the Adventist movement claimed that on October 22, 1844 Christ moved from the heavenly Holy to the Holy of Holies, (as a form of His coming), and in doing so began the eternal atonement for the sinners. Many believed this explanation to exonerate their great embarrassment when Christ did not come as they had predicted.

Those persons who are always attracted to new innovations continued following this movement. What mostly attracted them were the epileptic seizures of Ellen White, which they considered heavenly visions.

I would like to remind the readers that in all the events, eye witnesses who were present during her claimed visions, described her condition saying that: her eyes were wide open, glaring in a daze, yet she saw nothing to the point where if they brought anything near her eyes as if to poke out her eye, she did not even blink. As George Butler described, "...*the eyes are always wide open, and seem to be gazing at some far-distant object, and are never fixed on any person or thing in the room. They are always directed upward...*". Therefore, she was in a condition of complete stupor.

The Lord Jesus Christ warned us to, "*Beware of false prophets...*" (Matt 7:15). The apostles instructed us, "*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*" (1Jn 4:1). Christ also said, "*Therefore by their fruits you will know them*" (Matt 7:20).

RESPONDING TO SOME OF THEIR ERRONEOUS DOCTRINES

Archangel Michael

In disputing their belief that Christ is Archangel Michael, we find that St. Jude the apostle writes, "*Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared*

not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9). How could our Lord Jesus Christ be the One speaking here and it is written that He said to the devil, "*The Lord rebuke you*"? He is the One Who rebukes the devil. He is the Lord, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He rebukes the devil!

Several times we find Him rebuking the devils as He casts them out. In the Gospel of the Vespers Prayer we recite, "*And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ*" (Lk 4:41). He rebuked them! How could Christ, the Lord of Glory say to the devil, "*The Lord rebuke you*"?

It is feasible for Archangel Michael to say this statement, but the Lord would never say it. This is a simple example to clarify the difference between Archangel Michael and our Lord Jesus Christ, which further shows the contaminated doctrine of the Adventists regarding this issue.

Furthermore, it is written that he, "*dared not bring against him a reviling accusation*", is it possible to say that Christ "*dared not*"? No one could ever utter this statement in a contention between Christ and the devil. If Christ wants to judge him, He will judge him. Never could it be written that Christ "*dared not*". This phrase could not possibly apply to or be said about our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Human Spirit and the Animal Spirit

They misuse a verse written in the Book of Ecclesiastes that reads, "*For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity*" (Ecc 3:19), to support their claim that the human spirit is the same as the animal spirit (or soul). Of course the writer of Ecclesiastes did not at all mean that the human spirit is the same as the animal spirit. In the previous verse it is written, "*I said in my heart, Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals*" (Ecc 3:18). Here God is testing man to consider whether man will believe in eternal life or disbelieve, after seeing the same end intended for both their dead bodies. This is a test from God, and not a doctrine. There is a difference between a test and a doctrine, in a test God wants to see who will pass and who will fail, who will think correctly, and who incorrectly.

In the last chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes, regarding the death of man it is written, "*Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.*" (Ecc 12:7). In chapter three, it is written, "*Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?*", (Ecc 3:21). The words "*who knows*" proves that God is testing. In speaking plainly without testing it is written, "*the spirit will return to God who gave it.*" Here there is no confusion, yet the Adventists prefer to dip their feet in mirky water and twist the meaning of the verses.

Unfortunately, at the entrance to the zoo in Frankfurt, Germany, a sign is displayed which reads, "*Man has no advantage over animals*", which is an excerpt from the above mentioned verse (Ecc 3:19). It would have been more fitting if they took a verse like, "*God created man in His own image*" or a verse that confirms that humans are superior to animals like the verse that says, "*A man who is in honor, yet does not understand, Is like the beasts that perish.*" (Ps 49:20). This verse means that when a person acts foolishly, he resembles beasts; but of course a wise person cannot be compared with a beast.

The Bible mentioned many verses that indicate that the human soul is of value to God. For example, Zechariah writes that the Lord said that He “*forms the spirit of man within him,*” (Zec 12:1), also in Job it is written, “*But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.*” (Job 32:8). Again in Job it says, “*The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*” (Job 33:4). In the Book of Isaiah it is written: “*Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it*” (Isa 42: 5).

The Sabbath

Now regarding keeping the Sabbath St. Paul writes, “*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ*” (Col 2:16 –17). So, Saint Paul does not agree that anyone should judge the issue of the Sabbath. Why? Because in the Old Testament the day of the Lord was Saturday, in remembrance of the Lord’s rest. But when did the Lord rest? He rested after rising from the dead, when He renewed the human creation.

In the Book of Acts we notice that the church assembled on Sunday, the first day of the week, “*Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*” (Acts 20:7). Saint Paul also spoke regarding the insistence on the Sabbath, he wrote in his epistle to the Galatians, “*You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.*” (Gal 4:10–11).

Regarding collecting tithes in the church he writes, “*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.*” (1 Cor 16:1–2). So, the breaking of bread and the collecting of tithes are on the first day of the week. All these events occur during the worship in the church, so how could all this happen on the first day of the week if the church was still worshipping on the Sabbath (Saturday)? Since the Apostolic time the church began to worship on Sunday, because this is the Memorial Day of the Lord’s resurrection from the dead. In this day we rejoice and say, “*This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.*” (Ps 118: 24).

Glory be to God forever, Amen.