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THROUGH

LAURA SPARKS



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BY LAURA SPARKS



## The Ship That's Going Through

When the truth about the one true God is made plain, people often recall Sister White's vision of the iceberg, and proclaim: "The ship is going through! We cannot abandon it at any cost!" It's thought by many that God would have us remain with a system regardless of the error it upholds.

Was this really the message God desired to teach us through Sister White's vision? Was the ship that made it through the General Conference of today, or was it something purer? Something built with the solid timbers of the foundation of our faith?

Only paragraphs before the vision, Sister White writes:

"About the time that *Living Temple* was published, there passed before me in the night season, representations indicating that some danger was approaching, and that I must prepare for it by writing out the things God had revealed to me regarding the foundation principles of our faith." *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p. 202.3*

The iceberg which the church was facing was the heresy of pantheism introduced by Kellogg in his book *The Living Temple*. And how was God preparing His church to meet it? The prophet declared: "I must prepare for it by writing out the things God had revealed regarding the foundation principles of our faith." Holding fast to the foundational principles was the church's only hope and their only way forward.

Again, she writes:

"I am instructed to speak plainly. "Meet it," is the word spoken to me. "Meet it firmly, and without delay"... In the book *Living Temple* there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given." *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p. 200.1*

Meet it; that simple imperative in Sister White's vision was clearly aimed at the church's confrontation of the alpha of deadly heresies. That is, the pantheistic theories offered by Kellogg in *The Living Temple*. They were theories which she states, "have been looked upon by some as the grand truths that are to be brought in and made prominent at the present time." Yet they were erroneous theories, which Sister White places in utter contrast with the foundational principles of the early church.

In another vision, she writes:

"I was shown a platform, braced by solid timbers—the truths of the Word of God. Someone high in responsibility in the medical work was directing this man and that man to loosen the timbers supporting this platform. Then I heard a voice saying, "Where are the watchmen that ought to be standing on the walls of Zion? Are they asleep? This foundation was built by the Master Worker, and will stand storm and tempest. Will they permit this man to present doctrines that deny the past experience of the people of God? The time has come to take decided action." *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p. 204.1*

Have you noticed a theme arise amongst these statements? More prominent than any other, is the battle between truth and error; between the foundational principles of the historic Seventh-day Adventist church and the false teachings of Babylon.

Notice the very next paragraph from *Selected Messages*:

"The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work

for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.... Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p. 204.2*

Sister White clearly states that any deviation from the principle foundations would result in apostasy and ruin to the Seventh-day Adventist church. This point is emphasised over and over again. Why? In her own words:

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid....A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.”

“What influence is it would lead men at this stage of our history to work in an underhand, powerful way to tear down the foundation of our faith—the foundation that was laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation? Upon this foundation we have been building for the past fifty years. Do you wonder that when I see the beginning of a work that would remove some of the pillars of our faith, I have something to say? I must obey the command, “Meet it!”...” *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p. 206-207.*

Sister White and the pioneers were prepared to face the doctrinal crisis before them, for they were determined not to sway from the pillars of their faith. And so we read the vision of the iceberg:

“One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a heavy fog. Suddenly the lookout cried, “Iceberg just ahead!” There, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, “Meet it!” There was not a moment’s hesitation. It was a time for instant action. The engineer

put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice. There was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collisions, but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way.

“Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, “Meet it!” I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, “Meet it!”

“That night I was up at one o’clock, writing as fast as my hand could pass over the paper. For the next few days I worked early and late, preparing for our people the instruction given me regarding the errors that were coming in among us.

“I have been hoping that there would be a thorough reformation, and that the principles for which we fought in the early days, and which were brought out in the power of the Holy Spirit, would be maintained.” *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p. 205-206.*

In 1903, the Seventh-day Adventist church led by Sister White and the pioneers, met the alpha of deadly heresies, and while shaken by the impact, moved forward on its way. Why? Because it held fast to the foundational principles for which the early Adventists sacrificed their lives. Yes, the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1903 went through. Yet do not forget the prophet’s fearful warning: “I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people.”

In 1994, the *Adventist Review* published the following statement:

“Adventist beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of

‘present truth’. Most startling is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord... the Trinitarian understanding of God, now part of our fundamental beliefs, was not generally held by the early Adventists.” *Adventist Review, Jan 6, 1994. p.10.*

The Adventist church today upholds the doctrine of the pagan trinity. A doctrine which they themselves admit, was not believed by the founders of the Advent movement. And yet they call this doctrine ‘present truth’.

What does Inspiration have to say about present truth? From the *Signs of the Times*, we read:

“that which was truth in the beginning is the truth still. The increased light of the present day does not contradict or make of none effect the dimmer light of the past.” *E.G. White, Signs of the Times, June 3, 1886.*

And we have just seen “how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid.” In fact, Sister White saw in that foundation, “a line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God”. And thus she declared: “Do you wonder that when I see the beginning of a work that would remove some of the pillars of our faith, I have something to say?”

The SDA church itself acknowledges that it has not clung to the principles of the early church; rather that it has removed the old landmarks. Nevertheless, the harrowing words do not end there. One year earlier, in *Ministry* magazine, lies the daring statement:

“Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the trinity.” *Ministry, October 1993, p. 10.*

They use the word ‘most’, but in all actuality, not one of the founders of



the Adventism was a trinitarian. Remember what Inspiration said. “Our religion would be changed” and the new “foundation would be built upon sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure”. And this would take place when “the fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error.”

Today, the SDA church admits that their belief in the trinity was not held by the early Adventists and that these early Adventists (Sister White included) would not be able to join the church today. Sadly, faith in Jesus as the only begotten Son of the Father, and in the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son has been accounted as error.

Certainly, our religion has been changed. The Seventh-day Adventist conference church has pleaded guilty to abandoning its fundamental principles and have henceforth abandoned God’s ship altogether. This new organisation can no longer be called the true and faithful church of God.

Indeed, it was right for Sister White to tremble at the thought of the church’s battle with the omega of deadly heresies. For although warnings were given, the church did not give them heed. Once the pioneers had passed away, new fundamentals were introduced. Sister White died in 1915. In 1981, we find the following statement from the Adventist Review:

“While no single Scripture passage states the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact... only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity.” *Adventist Review, March 5, 1981, p. 3.*

The church acknowledges that the trinity has no biblical foundation. In spite of this, the term ‘trinity’ was introduced into the fundamental beliefs in 1930, and more strongly again in 1981 using terms never recorded in Scripture: “god the Son, and god the Holy Spirit. Together with the Father, they were called: “a unity of three co-eternal persons”.

Even Adventist leaders have noted the vast contrast between the original principles and those held by the church today. In his book *The Trinity*, Jerry Moon states:

“That most of the leading SDA pioneers were non-Trinitarian in their theology has become accepted Adventist history. As one line of reasoning goes, either the pioneers were wrong and the present church is right, or the pioneers were right and the present Seventh-day Adventist Church has apostatized from biblical truth.” *Jerry Moon, The Trinity, p. 190.*

For the pioneers of the SDA Church - Bates, Andrews, Loughborough, Matteson, Smith, and James and Ellen White - that “old Trinitarian absurdity” was the invention of paganism, perpetuated by Rome. That’s how far removed the current SDA church is from its founding principles. As Cottrell wrote in the Review and Herald in 1869:

“To hold to the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much an evidence of evil intention as of intoxication from that wine of which all nations have drunk. The fact that it was one of the leading doctrines, if not the very chief, upon which the bishop of Rome was exalted to the popedom, does not say much in its favor.” *R.F. Cottrell, Review and Herald, July 6, 1869.*

Washburn made a similar argument when he said:

“If we should go back to the immortality of the soul, purgatory, eternal torment and the Sunday Sabbath, would that be anything less than apostasy? If, however, we leap over all these minor, secondary doctrines and accept and teach the very central root, doctrine of Romanism, the Trinity, and teach that the son of God did not die, even though our words seem to be spiritual, is this anything else or anything less than apostasy, and the very Omega of apostasy?” *J. S. Washburn 1939 Letter: The Trinity*

Surely, the ship that’s going through is not the one which upholds the immortality of the soul, eternal hell-fire, or Sunday sacredness. And yet, Washburn rightly states that the central root of all these Catholic teachings is the Trinity. When met with the omega of heresies, the Adventist

church did not hold to its foundational principles, and so it fell into the sea of Roman apostasy. For as Washburn said: “The doctrine of the Trinity is regarded as the supreme test of orthodoxy by the Roman Catholic Church”.

In 1905, Sister White declared:

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.”  
*E.G. White, Manuscript Release No.760, 1905, p. 9.*

Does the trinity doctrine remove the pillars of our faith regarding the personality of God or Christ? In 1855, J.N Andrews made the following statement:

“The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, A.D. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” *J.N. Andrews, Review and Herald, March 6, 1855, p. 185.*

Sister White herself stated:

“He who denies the personality of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, is denying God and Christ.” *E.G. White, Review and Herald, March 8, 1906, p. 9.*

And James White declared:

“Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away [with] the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ,” *James White, Review and Herald, December 11, 1855, p. 85.*

Moreover, Sister White received special light concerning the non-trinitarian periodicals published by the pioneers at that time, such as the two excerpts we've just read.

“He has said that the dead are to speak. How? -- Their works shall follow them. We are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who knew what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, and who labored to lay the foundation of our work. They moved forward step by step under the influence of the Spirit of God. One by one these pioneers are passing away. The word me is, Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced.”

*E.G. White, Review and Herald, May 25, 1905, 'The work for this time', address at the 1905 General Conference, May 16.*

Brothers and sisters, the Spirit of Prophecy implores us:

“As a people, we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time has not lessened their value. It is the constant effort of the enemy to remove these truths from their setting, and to put in their place spurious theories.” *E.G. White, Selected Messages Book 1, p.201.2.*

So what becomes of a church which God has raised, that no longer clings to the pillars of truth upon which it was founded? Unfortunately, we are not without a precedent. From the pen of Inspiration we read:

“When the Jewish people rejected Christ, the Prince of life, He took from them the kingdom of God and gave it unto the Gentiles. God will continue to work on this principle with every branch of His work. When a church proves unfaithful to the word of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities.” *E.G. White, Upward Look, p131.*

God's true church which stands firm through every storm and tempest is the one built upon the founding principles of our faith, established by the Master Worker himself. And it is deviation from these principles of faith that brings apostasy and ruin. Today, the Adventist church freely acknowledges that it has changed its fundamental belief in who God is, and proudly claims that our founding pioneers would not be able to join the church today because of its belief in the trinity.

The reformation which our prophet feared has taken place: one which would "consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith". Indeed, the SDA church today has clearly removed the most important pillar of our faith: the personality of God and Christ. They freely admit that they have changed our religion, not realising that this is exactly what the prophet said would happen. They have created a new organisation. One whose "foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure." Remember, only the church that maintains the principle truths, laid from the beginning, will be the church victorious.

Each church member has two choices. To stand on the platform of truth with the very ones God blessed at the beginning of the work, or be part of a new organisation which proudly boasts to have changed our religion.

Never forget, that throughout the history of this world, God's church has always been the faithful souls who stand for truth though the heavens might fall. It is these faithful few which comprise the ship that meets with every wind of doctrine, and yet, never compromises one iota of truth. This is the ship built with the solid timbers of the foundation of our faith. This is the ship that is going through. Do not abandon it at any cost.

*For more information:*  
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WHAT IS THE MEANING  
BEHIND SISTER WHITE'S  
VISION OF THE ICEBERG?



EARTHEN VESSELS

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

