

ness in the believer is rooted in Tridentine theology?

Does Paxton really believe that Luther and Calvin needed no correction in their soteriology, that Wesley, or even Ellen White, have nothing to teach us?

Has Paxton really read the Annual Council Appeals of 1973 and 1974? If so, would he conclude that such clear, dynamic statements are hangovers from the adolescent days of

immature Adventism? These Appeals are perhaps the clearest presentations regarding the Adventist denomination's present relationship to the 1888 syndrome that have appeared anywhere for decades. The two Appeals touch so many of the concerns that Paxton raises that it seems they should have been represented by more than a passing comment (33) in a book that covers almost all the rest of the waterfront.

III. The Truth of Paxton's Thesis

by Desmond Ford

In *The Shaking of Adventism*, Anglican clergyman Geoffrey J. Paxton sets forth the thesis that Seventh-day Adventism's claim to complete the Reformation (by proclamation of its doctrinal heart in an improved framework) falls miserably short of the facts. He argues that, apart from Ellen White, Adventism had almost nothing to say on the gospel of grace prior to 1888 and that from 1888 until the present "acceptance in the final judgment" has been said to be "on the basis of the inward grace of sanctification," that justification has been considered as significant chiefly for the initial pardon of the believer, and that "righteousness by faith has meant *both* justification and sanctification, but mainly sanctification."¹ Paxton also argues that, while in the 1960s the perfectionism of Robert Brinsmead roused the opposition of many anti-perfectionism writers in the *Review and Herald* and elsewhere, in the 1970s, when Brinsmead has reversed his theological emphasis, a spate of perfectionistic articles have been appearing, especially in the *Review*.² Finally, Paxton says that, despite their claim to base their doctrines on the Bible only, Adventists often form their conclusions on the basis of the writings of Ellen G. White interpreted according to prevailing prejudices.³

Here is a distinctively new approach by a critic of Adventism. There is no contention about the scapegoat, the investigative judgment, the seventh-day sabbath or the nature of man. Instead, our traditional opposition to Rome is construed as claiming fidelity to the chief doctrinal motif of the Reformation and we are examined accordingly. In his debate with Cardinal Sadoletto, John Calvin affirmed that justification alone constituted the righteousness of faith, and that it should ever be distinguished but never separated from sanctification.⁴ Paxton charges Adventists again and again with having lost the Gospel as taught by the Reformers and asserts that precisely our inclusion of sanctification within the article of righteousness by faith demonstrates this loss.

Do we have here the lopsided work of one who because he does not dwell among us cannot represent us aright? Or is it a case of the onlooker seeing most of the game? Let us consider some of the objections critics put forth against the book.

Probably the chief one is the suspicion that it is a thinly disguised apologetic for Robert Brinsmead, that troubler of Adventism in the sixties; he is certainly the most prominent figure of the book. Second, the thought stirs that it may not be entirely true that Adventist pastors were all perfectionists until the sixties (not that Paxton says precisely that, but to many readers it is implied). A third question, more vital theologically, is whether Paxton is promoting justification to the exclusion or

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even denigration of sanctification. A fourth question has to do with whether Paxton has adequately represented Martin Luther's understanding of justification. Finally, some object to his treatment of certain historical details — particularly regarding the situation in the Australasian division. What shall we say regarding these objections?

With regard to Brinsmead's influence on the author, we should keep in mind that it was primarily through Brinsmead that he became acquainted with Adventism. Both men shared an interest in the criticism of charismatic revivalists, and this led to fellowship between them. We should also keep in mind that Paxton's interest in Adventism does not seem to be a merely superficial avocation. Indeed, he was principal of an Anglican Bible school in Brisbane, Queensland, and lost his job because of his refusal to lay aside his interest in the Adventist "cult."

I have personally witnessed Paxton's physical metamorphosis — between the two occasions when he called at Avondale College he appeared to have dropped at least 40 pounds and ten years — and must confess that it seems clear that he has considered very seriously at least some aspects of the Adventist message, even its door-opener — health reform. That this interest is certainly deeper still has been shown in closely reasoned discussions on doctrinal matters. His inquiries at Avondale College as to Adventism's understanding of the doctrine of the judgment, for example, seemed entirely serious.

But is this book a mere apologetic for Brinsmead? I confess to being a little troubled that the author did not underline the fact that for years Robert Brinsmead taught a theology plainly at odds with that of the Reformation. Some of us remember *God's Eternal Purpose*, which in the 1950s set forth the ideal that the saints should become as perfect in the flesh as Christ was, and that they like Him should tread underfoot all sinful tendencies until they had achieved perfect righteousness.⁵ Such error in Brinsmead's past should, I think, have been clearly indicated. Still, most of us would be reluctant to be judged largely on the basis of what we have failed to

say. And besides, it should be said that Paxton by no means attempts to shield Robert Brinsmead from guilt for his part in Adventism's cultic mentality, which has sought truth primarily from the writings of the pioneers (and particularly Waggoner and Jones) and relegated the Bible and the illumination of the Spirit through the centuries to the status of poor secondary sources. But the truth is that, in any case, we should not dodge the force of Paxton's argument concerning righteousness by faith by brushing his book aside as Brinsmead propaganda. Mr. Paxton, let it be remembered, is not one of Robert Brinsmead's sabbathkeeping followers, but an Anglican still.

Another reason we must not dismiss *The Shaking of Adventism* on the grounds of Robert Brinsmead's prominence is the undeniable fact that he *has* had, particularly with respect to righteousness by faith, considerable doctrinal influence on the Adventism of the past two decades. But for him we may never have had some of the best writing of Edward Heppenstall and scores of lesser figures influenced by him. No one can deny, moreover, that the literary guardian of Adventist orthodoxy, the *Review*, has had its eye on Brinsmead theology for nearly 20 years; and entire books, such as *Redeeming Grace* by Harry Lowe (the sixties) and *Perfection: The Impossible Possibility* (the seventies) have had Brinsmead theology in focus. One might well ask: inasmuch as Paxton's book concerns the relationship between Seventh-day Adventists and the crucial doctrine of the Reformation, righteousness by faith, how could Brinsmead not have been prominent?

The second objection — to the seeming implication that all Seventh-day Adventist pastors were perfectionists before the sixties — requires the statement that many of us from experience can answer "No." But if the question were worded, "Has the official doctrinal stance of Adventism veered towards perfectionism?" the answer is certainly "Yes," and while Paxton has not been exhaustive, I believe he has substantiated his case at this point. Fortunately, there have always been individual Adventist pastors who, like Ellen White herself, have read on this topic outside the realms of the Pacific

Press, the Southern Publishing Association and the Review and Herald Publishing Association, and this has been their salvation and likewise for their flocks. All capable of reading Ellen White without the prejudices of the majority have perceived her dual emphasis on the infinite ideal of holiness and man's abysmal depravity, making him ever dependent on the forgiving grace of Christ.⁶

The chief criticism theologically against *The Shaking of Adventism* — we come now to the third objection listed earlier — concerns

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Paxton’s “silence” on sanctification. I submit that he is not actually silent, though sanctification is not prominent in the book. On page 45 he writes:

The Reformers acknowledged that faith in the righteousness of Christ in heaven is never present *without* regeneration and renewal, and that good works follow as a consequence of faith. But the righteousness of faith is not, in whole or in part, that renewal which is present *with* faith. Neither is it that renewal which *follows* faith. The righteousness of faith is never to be confused with sanctification. It is not sanctification, nor does it include sanctification.

This clear distinction between the righteousness of faith and sanctification was the massive breakthrough made by Martin Luther. The medieval church had mingled the two types of righteousness. But when this synthesis was rent asunder in the mind of Luther, the Protestant Reformation was born. Luther called the righteousness of faith (i.e., the righteousness of Christ) a *passive* righteousness because we have it *while we do nothing for it*. He called the other righteousness (i.e., that which is the result of faith) an *active* righteousness because it is the diligent good works of the believer

performed through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The passive righteousness is *perfect*, for it is Christ’s righteousness; the active righteousness is *imperfect*, for it is the work of sinful men. The former righteousness is by faith alone; the latter righteousness is by good works engendered by faith. The former is *justification*; the latter is *sanctification*.

This quotation makes it clear why Paxton does not stress sanctification. To him righteousness by faith is, by definition, justification by faith, not sanctification by faith. And it should be pointed out here that every preacher of the New Testament gospel has had to meet the same charge as Geoffrey Paxton. It began in the days of Christ and Paul. The Master was accused of “receiving sinners, and eating with them” — which was the glory of His message and the heart of justification. Paul likewise was charged with saying “let us sin then that grace may abound” and making void the law through faith. In truth, we could say that if the charge of making void the law and of downgrading sanctification does not arise, it is probably because the free grace of Christ’s gospel is not being faithfully proclaimed.

Those who contend that Paxton is guilty of separating justification from sanctification and ignoring their organic and dynamic connection should be reminded that to make distinctions is not to affirm severance. Paxton himself says:

As the theology of those who have broken the synthesis makes clear, this does not mean a *separation* of justification and sanctification. Rather, the “breaking” means (1) the clear *distinction* between justification and sanctification and (2) the *primacy* of justification.⁷

All are agreed that Christ had two natures, divine and human, and that it is impossible to separate the two but nevertheless vital to distinguish between them. Similarly, all the orthodox believe in a distinction between the members of the Trinity but not separation; the three Persons do not exist alongside each other but in and through and unto each other. Again, law and gospel in Scripture are dis-

tinct but not separate, as therefore are also faith and works.⁸ So with respect to many doctrines, we make logical distinctions without affirming separation.

Unless we make the distinction between justification and sanctification that Paxton makes — a distinction I believe all the Reformers made — how can we give full glory to God, or offer assurance to human beings? The plain fact is that Christ's objective work for us on the cross is perfect and complete whereas the work of the Spirit to make us righteous is neither perfect nor complete — not because the Spirit is imperfect but because of the polluted tabernacle wherein He operates, and because "sanctification is the work of a lifetime."⁹

To look to anything within sinful man as a condition of acceptance with God detracts from the wonder of God's sheer grace and also results in placing the believer under the tyranny of law as the method of salvation, whereas the New Testament is clear that law is to be rejected as a means of justification but cherished as a standard for sanctification. To speak of dynamic union and organic connection between justification and sanctification is entirely correct, but unless the distinction is as clearly emphasized, the gospel is dissolved and we land back into the doctrinal bosom of Trent. Calvin's whole contention against Osiander was that, by linking justification with the indwelling Christ, he actually destroyed it. I suggest, moreover, that no one can read Luther's sermon on "The Twofold Righteousness" or his 1531 Lectures on Galatians, or Calvin's chapters on justification in the *Institutes* without seeing that, like Paul, the Reformers did distinguish between justification and sanctification but did not separate them. The case is the same with Paxton. Neither should it be said that Paxton looks upon faith as something originated by man and detached from the operation of the Spirit. He has cited the dictum of Luther that "no one can give himself faith, and no more can he take away his own unbelief."¹⁰

The Roman Catholic argument against Luther and Calvin was that they believed grace to save man without changing him. This, of course, was sheer misunderstanding or misrepresentation. When the identical ar-

gument is repeated against those who, like Paxton, stress the distinctness and primacy of justification, it remains as invalid today as in the days of the Reformation.

The fourth objection to Paxton's book comes from persons who try to avoid the thrust of Paxton's charges by citing that phase of Lutheran scholarship which, in harmony with the theology of Trent, affirms Luther's use of "justify" to include a making righteous inherently, as well as a declaring righteous. These scholars rely chiefly upon early statements of Luther. I think recent scholarship is more accurate in its support for Luther's own claim to have arrived at the true understanding of justification around 1519. In *What Luther Says*, Plass declares:

At first the term "to justify" (*iustificare*) appears in Luther's writings in a broader meaning than the Pauline sense of simply pronouncing righteous. It includes the *making* personally righteous. This is the Augustinian (and essentially Catholic) view of justification. If Luther, even after he had come to recognize the *sola fide*, for a while occasionally uses the term in such a sense, this is not surprising. He then speaks of justification as a growth. But later this use of the term disappears, and he tells us that justification takes place "at once, and does not come piecemeal," and, as J. Neve points out, his "*propter Christum* always means the sinner's justification solely by virtue of Christ's perfect obedience to God" (*History of Christian Thought* I, 233).

This position explains the great contrast

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between Luther's commentaries on Romans (1515) and Galatians (1535). The former treats Romans 1:17 with thrift, bestowing only 18 lines upon the crucial words, *iustitia Dei revelatur*, and half of these are padded with Augustine and Aristotle, authors with

whom Luther dispensed in later times: “When the door was opened for me in Paul, so that I understood what justification by faith is, it was all over with Augustine.”¹²

No one really understands the mature Luther’s exegesis of righteousness by faith until he has studied the Reformer’s favorite work — his commentary on Galatians. Here the Protestant position on justification is crystal clear:

Christian righteousness, therefore, as I have said, is the imputation of God for righteousness or unto righteousness, because of our faith in Christ, or for Christ’s sake. When the popish schoolmen hear this strange and wonderful definition, which is unknown to reason, they laugh at it. For they imagine that righteousness is a certain quality poured into the soul, and afterwards spread into all the parts of man. They cannot put away the imaginations of reason, which teacheth that a right judgment, and a good will, or a good intent is true righteousness. This unspeakable gift therefore excelleth all reason, that God doth account and acknowledge him for righteous without any works, which embraceth his Son by faith alone, who was sent into the world, was born, suffered, and was crucified etc. for us.

This matter, as touching the words, is easy (to wit, that righteousness is not essentially in us, as the Papists reason out of Aristotle, but without us in the grace of God only and in his imputation . . .).¹³

It is true that the later Luther, like Scripture, sometimes uses “make righteous” for justification but usually in the sense of granting status, not as the equivalent of regeneration or sanctification. For example, almost at the close of his comments on Galatians 4:5 he speaks of “Christ alone, who first maketh us righteous by the knowledge of himself in his holy gospel, and afterwards he createth a new heart in us. . . .” These comments cohere perfectly with the Formula of Concord prepared only a few years after Luther’s death, and also with the classical statement of justification as found in Melancthon’s student Martin Chemnitz in his *Examination of the*

Council of Trent. Scholars who document Luther’s development in this way include the Seventh-day Adventist William Landeen, as well as Uuras Saarnivaara, F. Edward Cranz, Ernst Bizer, Kurt Aland, John Dillenberger, Lowell C. Green.

Now it is a fact, of course, that even some Protestants have used the term justification (and at times the term regeneration) in a comprehensive sense for salvation, and this usage explains the wording in some early creedal statements of the Reformation which appear ambiguous. But what we must remember is that this comprehensive usage was never intended nor understood to deny the distinction between righteousness imputed and righteousness imparted.

In connection with these remarks concerning the Reformation, I may insert three related objections that have been made against Paxton’s book. One is the denial that Adventists claim to be “the heirs of the Reformation.” The answer to this is that Ellen White and prominent leaders of this movement could not be numbered among advocates of such a denial.¹⁴ Still others say we are heirs of the Anabaptists rather than the magisterial reformers in the sense that we believe in separation of church and state, noncombatancy in war, etc. This has a goodly measure of truth in it as regards what it affirms but not in what it denies. When Ellen White declares justification by faith to be “the third angel’s message in verity,” “the foundation of Christianity,” the “one subject to swallow up every other,” the “one interest to prevail,” it is obvious that she has in mind the cardinal tenet of Luther and Calvin rather than subsidiary truths such as separation of church and state, and matters of practical piety such as participation in war, etc. There is just no way of dodging the impact of the quotations on pages 25ff. of *The Shaking of Adventism*.

Again, some critics ask: “But is not the New Testament rather than the creeds of the Reformers the test of truth?” And there can be only one answer to that. However, Mr. Paxton also would say “Yes” with equal emphasis, for the Reformation motto concerning the need for continual Reformation is not news to him. But I suspect he would respond

further with the plea that new truth does not nullify old truth, and that justification by faith is nothing other than that gospel once for all time given to the saints (Jude 3) and not, therefore, open to change and revision in its essence.

The last of the five main objections mentioned at the beginning involves Paxton's treatment of certain historical details. It would be a false reticence here to ignore his comments regarding the Fords and the Australasian division. He is wrong in saying (128) that Gillian Ford's little book *The Soteriological Implications of the Human Nature of Christ* precipitated the Palmdale conference. It may have looked that way from outside the chain of events but, in fact, Palmdale was contemplated by leaders of the Australasian and North American divisions before the storm over Gillian Ford's manuscript.

Paxton is right in indicating that the theology department of Avondale College supported the theology present in *Soteriological Implications*. A statement to that effect appears in the preface of the first edition. But he is wrong in implying (as it seems) that the present reviewer rather than his wife was responsible for *Soteriological Implications* (139). Gillian Ford wrote the manuscript in response to questions from a young marrieds Sabbath School class at Avondale Memorial church.

Also, on p. 128, Paxton affirms that the Avondale meeting of church leaders on February 3-4, 1976, to hear charges against me by a group of chiefly retired ministers had for its focus "Ford's understanding of righteousness by faith." It is true that one participant, F. A. Basham, argued that this was the central issue, but others such as J. W. Kent, leader of the group of retired ministers, disagreed. The chief concern of Kent and his associates was that I was not saying everything in the same way as our earlier books and therefore should be viewed as heretical. The Biblical Research Institute of the division rejected these charges, and cleared both me and Avondale College.¹⁵

Paxton is correct (136) in saying that this writer has acknowledged his use in earlier

years of the phrase righteousness by faith homiletically rather than exegetically — that is, as including both justification and sanctification. In the classroom, key passages in Romans on righteousness by faith had been interpreted as applying forensically to justification, but frequently the typical Adventist all-encompassing definition was used in preaching. In the book *Unlocking God's Treasury* written in 1962 (published first in Aus-

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tralia in 1964) I set forth righteousness by faith as the “declaring righteous” of justification. And throughout the years of controversy with Robert Brinsmead, my position, often expressed verbally as well as in printed materials, was that the believer has acceptance only on the grounds of Christ's imputed righteousness because no human sanctification can meet the demands of the law.¹⁶ In fact, the central emphases of the theology of Avondale College have not changed since 1961, the years when I have been chairman of its theology department; Paxton rightly affirms, however, that during the recent controversy, some issues have been more sharply defined.

Having looked at these numerous objections, let me say that I think the great majority of Paxton's critics ignore his main thesis, which simply stated is: Righteousness by faith according to Scripture and the exegetes of the Protestant Reformation signifies justification only — the gracious conferral of a righteous status on the grounds of Christ's merits alone. It does not include sanctification inasmuch as this work is something done within man by the Holy Spirit and being in this life always incomplete can never fulfill perfectly the requirements of the law. To include sanctification within the meaning of righteousness by faith is to confuse the

unfinished sanctifying work of the Spirit with the finished redeeming work of the Son and can only lead to lack of Christian assurance and consequent crippling of Christian witness.

What, then, should we say about this main thesis of *The Shaking of Adventism*? I suggest that we should confess its truth, and in so confessing smash the doctrinal and experiential barriers that cripple the progress of our work. We must remember, to begin, that Paul is the theologian of the New Testament. Only he sets forth an analysis of the plan of salvation, and the phrase under discussion is found solely in those books of Scripture which bear his name. Only in the book of Romans does he systematically present righteousness by faith (specifically 3:21-5:21), though, obviously, the preceding and following chapters are related to this central discussion. What I wish to emphasize is that it is here we must find the basic nature of righteousness by faith. If what we believe is not here, we need to think again.

All exegetes I know of, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, agree that the theme of this section is justification. It is not about that gradual growth in holiness theologians call sanctification, which is discussed in chapters 6-8 (presentation) and chapters 12-15 (application). The theme of the section is clearly stated in 3:21-28, where the key sentence declares that "a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (v. 28). The faith mentioned is faith in what Christ has done as our atoning sacrifice (v. 24, 25). The result of this faith is declared to be for the believer a status of righteousness "apart from law" as a result of God's gracious gift. This status automatically involves the forgiveness of all our sins and becomes ours, though we who believe are yet "ungodly" (4:5). We are for Christ's sake acquitted, or "declared righteous."

It should not be overlooked that this section is introduced by the words: "Now the righteousness of God has been manifested." Moreover, the following verses repeat the theme "... the righteousness of God through faith ... to show God's righteousness ... he justifies him who has faith ... a man is

justified by faith . . . he will justify the circumcized. . . and the uncircumcized through their faith." There can be no denying that Romans 3:21-28 is an exposition of righteousness by faith and, furthermore, that it is here set forth as justification. Sanctification is not included. Thus, Romans 3:21-28 shows that righteousness by faith has to do not with holy works prompted by the regenerating Spirit but with a *new standing before God*. Inasmuch as only a *perfect* righteousness can give us such a standing, we see the impossibility of introducing sanctification as a means towards our acceptance or, in other words, as a part of righteousness by faith. One hundred percent righteousness is found only in Christ. It has to be His gift, it can never be our attainment in this life, for "sanctification is the work of a lifetime."

Romans 3:21-28 should never be divorced from its immediate context. Chapter 4 illustrates exactly what Paul has said so crisply in the closing section of chapter 3. The theme in chapter 4 is justification. And here again, a close inspection will reveal that righteousness by faith is seen as justification and justification only. In chapter 5, Paul discusses not character, primarily, but relationships. He says that all men are lost because of their relationship to the first Adam, but similarly all men have been judicially redeemed by the last Adam, and a right relationship to him confirms "acquittal," a being constituted, or reckoned, as "righteous." All this is declared repeatedly to be the result of grace, in contrast to any relationship based on law. Sanctification is referred to in this chapter (vs. 3, 4) and it is a fine opportunity for Paul to apply the phrase we are studying to it if it truly fit. But instead, we find sanctification portrayed as the *fruit* of the righteousness by faith described in the preceding passage of 3:21-5:2 (see particularly 5:9, 10).

The full impact of Paul's discussion will only be felt as we remember that the term "justification" is not linguistically unrelated to "righteousness," but rather synonymous. The significance of "justify" is "to declare righteous." Thus, to be "declared righteous" by faith is identical in meaning with the expression "righteousness by faith."¹⁷ Indeed, in Romans 3:25f., the words "righteous-

ness,” “just” and “justifier of” — noun, adjective and participle — all spring from the same Greek root.¹⁸

Thus, justification by faith and righteousness by faith are technically synonymous terms in Paul’s writings (which in no wise

detracts, of course, from the necessity for sanctification). And there the case could be legitimately rested. Paxton’s contention to this effect is not novel. It is but a summary of the position of Protestant orthodoxy for four centuries.¹⁹

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Geoffrey J. Paxton, *The Shaking of Adventism* (Wilmington: Zenith Publishers, Inc., 1977), pp. 72, 73, 77.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-145.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

4. “Is this a knotty and useless question? Wherever the knowledge of it is taken away, the glory of Christ is extinguished, religion abolished, the church destroyed, and the hope of salvation utterly overthrown.

“As all mankind are, in the sight of God, lost sinners, we hold that Christ is their only righteousness, since by His obedience, He has wiped off our transgressions; by His sacrifice, appeased the divine anger; by His blood, washed away our sins; by His cross, borne our curse; and by His death, made satisfaction for us. We maintain that in this way man is reconciled in Christ to God the Father, by no merit of his own, by no value of works, but by gratuitous mercy. When we embrace Christ by faith, and come, as it were, into communion with Him, this we term, after the manner of Scripture, *the righteousness of faith* [Calvin’s emphasis].

“It is obvious that gratuitous righteousness is necessarily connected with regeneration. Therefore, if you would duly understand how inseparable faith and works are, look to Christ, who, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. 1:30), has been given to us for justification and for sanctification. Wherever, therefore, that righteousness of faith, which we maintain to be gratuitous, is, there too Christ is, and where Christ is, there too is the Spirit of holiness, who regenerates the soul to newness of life.”

5. The doctrine of the nature of man is basic to a correct understanding of righteousness by faith. There is no separating anthropology from soteriology. To be wrong in the first is inevitably to be wrong in the second. Similarly, Christology and soteriology can only be rightly related where there is a clear perception of the abysmal gap between the spiritual nature of Christ at birth and ours.

Scripture says of Christ that He was “that holy thing,” “holy, harmless, undefiled,” “separate from sinners,” “who knew no sin,” “in him there is no sin,” “the holy one of God.” See, for example, such passages as Luke 1:35; John 3:34; Heb. 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I John 3:5, 7; John 14:30; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 9:14; I Peter 1:19; John 7:18; Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14; I Peter 3:18; Heb. 10:5; Rom. 8:3. In contrast to Christ, all other men are seen as depraved and ruined in nature from conception. See Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Rom. 7:14-24; Isa. 48:8; Ps. 14:1-3. Christ was *affected* by sin (lessened capacity of organism through hereditary deterioration) but not *infected*. He had no inclinations towards evil. Weaknesses and liabilities — yes, evil propensities — no. To attribute to Christ “sinful”

nature, i.e., a nature full of sin, is to affirm He was no Saviour but needed one. The reformers saw all of this very clearly, indeed.

Therefore, Paxton’s presentation is not entirely adequate because to omit Robert Brinsmead’s erroneous base originally in Christology and anthropology, and to fail to stress Adventism’s continual tendency to err in this same area is to fail to explain the errors in the respective theological superstructures — both Brinsmead’s original eschatology, and Adventism’s current soteriology.

6. “We are struggling and falling, failing in speech and action to represent Christ, falling and rising again, despairing and hoping,” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, volume 9 (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), p. 222.

“Repentance is a daily continuous exercise, and must be so until mortality is swallowed up in immortality. Repentance and humiliation, humiliation and sorrow of soul must be our daily meat and drink, till we cease to carry with us so many imperfections and failures.” Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Aug. 19, 1971.

“... when *the servant of God* is permitted to behold the glory of the God of heaven, as he is unveiled to humanity, and realizes to a slight degree the purity of the Holy One of Israel, he will make startling confessions of *the pollution of his soul*, rather than proud boasts of his holiness. . . .

“We may always be startled and indignant when we hear a poor, fallen, mortal exclaiming, ‘I am holy; I am sinless!’ Not one soul to whom God has granted the wonderful view of his greatness and majesty, has ever uttered one word like this. On the contrary, they have felt like sinking down in the deepest humiliation of soul, as they have viewed the purity of God, and contrasted with it their own imperfections of life and character. One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes *every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character*. How can any one who is brought before the holy standard of God’s law, which makes apparent the evil motives, the unhalloed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips, and that lays bare the life, — make any boast of holiness? His acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself, as he views the greatness, the majesty, the pure and spotless character of Jesus Christ.

“When the Spirit of Christ stirs the heart with its marvellous awakening power, there is a sense of deficiency in the soul that leads to contrition of mind, and humiliation of self, rather than to proud boasting of what has been acquired.” Ellen G. White, *Review and*

Herald, Oct. 16, 1888 (Emphasis ours).

7. Paxton, p. 137.

8. Could anyone be clearer than Paul on such distinctions? See Rom. 3:27, 28; 4:2-16; 11:6; Gal. 2:16. But the same Paul does not separate the Gospel from the law, or faith from works. See Rom. 3:31; Gal. 5:6.

9. Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1958), I, 344 is the classic here.

10. Paxton, p. 43.

11. Ewald M. Plass, comp., *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), II, 701.

12. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), Vol. 54, *Table Talk*.

13. Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, tran. Philip S. Watson (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1953), p. 227.

14. "At Wittenberg a light was kindled whose rays should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time." Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 126.

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. . . . With great clearness and power the apostle presented the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. . . . Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind, and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace. For the epistle to the church at Rome, every Christian has reason to thank God." Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), pp. 373-374. See also Paxton, p. 18 ff.

15. Minutes of the Biblical Research Institute, Wairoanga, March 23, 1976:

WHEREAS: The Biblical Research Institute has on two occasions, February 3, 1976, at Avondale College, and February 4, 1976, at the office of the Australasian Division, heard the plea of a number of senior ministers who have expressed their concern about the teaching of Theology at Avondale College, particularly in the area of the Sanctuary, the Age of the Earth, and Inspiration, it now desires to present its findings to the administration of the Australasian Division as follows:—

(1) (a) That the Theology Department of Avondale College is committed to generally accepted Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal positions as set forth in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and

(b) That Dr. Desmond Ford, using the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and representative Adventist authors, has satisfied the Biblical Research Institute as to the soundness of his doctrinal stance.

16. See Paxton, pp. 113 n; 116 f.

17. See Gal. 2:21 RSV and footnote; Rom. 10:4 RSV; Rom. 1:17 RSV; 3:25 RSV; and compare each with the KJV rendering. See also the Jerusalem Bible, Rom. 4:5; and compare the KJV. The NEB translation of "righteousness" as "acquittal" in II Cor. 3:9 is significant and note that the word translated "justification" in Rom. 5:16 is rendered "righteousness" in Rom. 2:26; 5:18; 8:4; and Rev. 19:8. Compare also Rom. 5:17, 18, 19 in the KJV, RSV and the original. Translators both in English and other languages use the words "justification" and "righteousness" as synonyms.

18. A. J. Mattill, Jr., "Translation of Words with the Stem DIK - in Romans," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 9 (1971), 91.

19. See, for example, chapter four of *Paul* by Herman Ridderbos for a synthesis of up-to-date scholarship on this matter. In official Adventist circles, Raoul Dederen seems to make the identical distinctions between justification and sanctification as does *The Shaking of Adventism*. See "What Does God's Grace Do?" *Ministry*, March, 1978, pp. 4-7.

IV. Paxton and the Reformers

by Hans LaRondelle

Paxton's book is the first non-Adventist attempt to focus seriously on the doctrinal heart of Adventism, on our understanding of the everlasting gospel. He observes with great sympathy what he calls a "shaking" within our church that is related to our un-

derstanding of "righteousness by faith," and even considers this crisis to be a "sign of grace." His analysis is divided into three parts, one on Adventism and the Reformation, the second on Adventism before 1950, and the third — the book's main part — on Adventism after 1960. It is his purpose to let the historical facts speak for themselves (11). My remarks here will deal only with Paxton's assessment of Adventism and the Reformation.

Paxton acknowledges frankly: "Seventh-

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