

August 169.



"WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night
if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

"LIFE-GIVING ENERGIES" - I

In the previous thought paper, we observed that Christ "brought into His human nature all the life-giving energies that human beings will need and must receive" that they may be conquerors in the battle with evil.¹ Yet when the Son of God became the Son of man, He laid aside His immortal glory. However, there was a revelation of the glory of God in His earthly life. John states that when the Word became flesh, the glory of the Father was seen - "full of grace and truth."² Too often we conceive truth to be something abstract, which is to be discussed, assented to; but truth as it was in Jesus was a way of life, an integral part of His divine nature. He stated, "*I am. . . the truth.*"³

Truth as revealed in the life of Christ was a life-giving energy. "Thy word is truth," Christ prayed.⁴ With this weapon - truth - Christ met the tempter, and gave a manifestation of glory which was greater than any miracle that He could have performed. And so long as Christ held to this position of truth, the devil could gain no advantage.⁵

Truth - the way of God - was and is the basis of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The power of God as revealed in His immortal glory was not and is not the issue. Lucifer wanted to use that power unaltered to be exercised according to his own natural whims. God had been exercising this vast power in behalf of the universe according to His character - grace and truth. The whole question resolved itself into the direction that the power of the Godhead was to be exercised - whether according to truth and righteousness, or

according to deception and unrighteousness. The Bible itself speaks of the energy resident in falsehood and deceit. Paul indicates that the coming of the mystery of iniquity (the counterfeit of the mystery of godliness) was to be by the "energy of Satan."⁶ Because men would accept this delusion in place of the revelation of God in the flesh, God would permit them to come under "an energy of error."⁷ (Greek - ενεργιαν πλανης)

As a result of the decision that men will make in the final scenes of the great controversy - whether they will accept "the energy of error", or the life-giving energy of truth, two images will be produced. Of the one image we read:

Through yielding to satanic influences, men will be transformed into fiends; and those who were created in the image of God, who were formed to honor and glorify their Creator, will become the habitations of dragons, and Satan will see in an apostate race his masterpiece of evil - men who reflect his own image.⁸

Of the other likeness, it is stated:

Through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses *truth* upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people unto Himself.⁹

We may not have considered truth as an element of the divine nature - or we may never have thought of it as wholly of divine origin. But truth is not natural to fallen man. The corruption of man's nature, and his unwillingness to acknowledge truth is seen in the first encounter with the Lord God following the fall in Eden. When God asked man some searching questions as to the why of his conduct, man replied, "The woman. . . she gave me to eat of the tree, and I did eat."¹⁰ The answer is factually correct. But it was not basically truthful. Adam was unwilling to face the decision of his inmost soul, the decision to put Eve in place of God.¹¹ Eve likewise displayed this same basic dishonesty. When asked by God for an explanation of her conduct, Eve responded, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."¹² This is an accurate statement of fact.

She had been tempted; the enemy had presented things in a false light. She was beguiled. But this was not basically truthful. The Scripture states, that when Eve "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."¹³ Neither Adam nor Eve were willing to admit honestly to God, the real reason for their conduct. They would state observable facts, but would not admit to the reasonings of their minds.

Only as truth could be restored to the inmost soul, could man be set free from the bondage in which sin has enslaved him. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," declared Jesus.¹⁴ In promising to His disciples His continued presence after He should return to the Father, Jesus stated that He would send the Comfortor, "even the Spirit of truth."¹⁵ This Divine Spirit would come "with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power."⁹

The first work of the Holy Spirit is to help us to see ourselves as we really are. The Spirit of truth is to help us to evaluate our inmost thinking, basically dishonest, and to impress upon our hearts the need for the life-giving energy of truth. There are three things among others that we so need to see:
1) Our participation in Calvary; 2) Our Laodicean state; and 3) Our part in the delay of our Lord's return.

Deception, lying, and murder go hand in hand.¹⁶ They originated in the heart of him who lusted to kill God. The devil abode not in the truth, and therefore, his whole existence and policies are devoid of truth. He revealed himself fully when God placed His Son in the hands of men. This father of lies and murder led the professed people of God to plot the death of the Son of God. The Son came to reveal to man the way, the truth, and the life; but men did not want their hearts revealed, and rather than be truthful with themselves, they killed the Truth. So blinded by falsehood were the men who perpetrated this

crime of the ages, that Jesus prayed - "they know not what they do." "That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that has ever lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon *all* rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God."¹⁷ This "all" includes you and me, no matter how good we may think we are. And when we come to this realization - accepting it in our inmost souls - we will be at the starting point where the perfection of the divine image can become a reality in our experience.

The One who can read the hearts of men has indicated that our spiritual condition as a church is wretched - miserable, poor, blind, and naked.¹⁸ We are willing to mouth the admission that the church is feeble and defective, but only treating it as a mere statement of fact. But we are not willing to come face to face with the actual spiritual decline that is in the church - we will not be truthful. We seek to cover "the putrifying sores" of our spiritual sickness with glowing bandages of our statistical reports. We vote large financial budgets, and then sing, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow", while the Father-heart is weeping over us because we will not accept the Balm of Gilead - Truth presented in the power of Elijah! Our God does not need our money (He will use it); but He does want a clean church, as He wanted a clean temple in days of Jesus. He would have a church free from liars, and tithe desanctifiers, and a ministry cleansed from professionalism and jealousy.

Our Lord wants to return to claim His people unto Himself. Yet we will not read our church history with a heart open to truth, so that we can see what is causing the delay. We continue to give lip service to the concept of righteousness by faith, but will not acknowledge the truth that we have rejected, and continue to reject the basic aspects of that message as given to us in 1888.

If accepted in truth, it would lead us to repent of our continued insubordi-
nation to God's plans for His church, educationally, medically, and organiza-
tionally. It has been well stated:

The tremendous issues of eternity demand of us something besides an imaginary religion, - a religion of words and forms, where the *truth* is kept in the outer court, to be admired as we admire a beautiful flower; they demand something more than a religion of feeling, which distrusts God when trials and difficulties come. Holiness does not consist in profession, but in lifting up the cross, doing the will of God. Saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" will not secure for us an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."¹⁹

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- ¹Ellen G. White, "Christ, Man's Example", Review, Sept. 4, 1900
²John 1:14 ³John 14:6 ⁴John 17:17
⁵Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, p. 120
⁶II Thess. 2:9 Fenton ⁷II Thess. 2:11 Fenton
⁸Ellen G. White, "Character of the Last Conflict", Review, April 14, 1896
⁹Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, p. 671 ¹⁰Gen. 3:12
¹¹See Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 56
¹²Gen. 3:13 ¹³Gen. 3:6 ¹⁴John 8:32
¹⁵John 14:17 ¹⁶John 8:44
¹⁷Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, p. 745
¹⁸Rev. 3:17
¹⁹Ellen G. White, "Faith, Not Feeling", Review, May 21, 1908

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A Book YOU should read:

IN SEARCH OF THE CROSS, by Elder Robert J. Wieland. Published by the Sentinel Publishing Association, Kenilworth, Cape Town, South Africa. (1967)

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