



July 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

## PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

Man when he came forth from the hand of his Creator possessed the necessary moral strength to have withstood the temptations of Satan. Adam could have developed a character which would have reflected the glory of Him by Whose word he existed. But fallen man - separated from the light and love of God - could not in his own strength resist the influences of the enemy. Fallen man is sick, miserable, poor, and destitute. He has nothing with which to merit the favor of God.

God's plan of restoration is not patterned after the dole system of a human poverty program, but is a plan to restore the true dignity of man. Man is to be enabled to resist the suggestions of Satan. Man is to experience the victory that comes by thus resisting. Instead of remaining a spiritual baby, having to be carried, fed, and tended, man is to grow up, walking by his own initiative, feeding upon the bread of heaven, and fellowshiping with those invisible beings from the realms of light, not as nursemaids, but as companions and counselors.

To provide for man the strength needful for restoration and victory, One Who is like God - Mi-cha-el - Michael, became Jesus, the Son of man, to give an example of obedience; and yet through His divine association as the Son of God, to give us the power to obey. "Godliness - godlikeness - is the goal to be reached."<sup>1</sup> Through Christ, there is opened to man "the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and appropriate these treasures is imparted."<sup>2</sup> But Paul tells us that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."<sup>3</sup>

We must never forget that these earthen vessels - the vile body of our humiliation - are with us until that hour when the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall appear to fashion them like His glorious body.<sup>4</sup> In these earthen vessels, "our impulses and passions have their seat."<sup>5</sup> When our Saviour accepted the body prepared for Him - His earthen vessel - it "had all the strength of passion of humanity", but not once "did He yield to temptation to do one single act which was not pure and elevating and ennobling."<sup>6</sup> Here IS the Example of obedience!

But where is the power to obey, to imitate the Example? "The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but *what a man could do, through faith in God's power* to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, *to be a partaker of the divine nature*, and to overcome every temptation where-with he is beset."<sup>7</sup> It is at this point that we stumble in our Christian experience. The concept - "divine nature"- gets too big for us. Our faith ceases to be even the size of a mustard seed. But what is this "divine nature" of which we must partake if we are to be victors in the battle of life, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust?

Christ came to the world "to impart His own divine nature, His own image, to the repentant, believing soul."<sup>8</sup> "He brought into His human nature all the life-giving energies that human beings will need and must receive."<sup>9</sup> With these concepts, we can determine first, what the "divine nature" *is not!*

The "divine nature" which Christ possessed when a man was not the immortal substance which He possessed in the form of God. This He had laid aside. "He humbled Himself, and took mortality upon Him. As a member of the human family, He was mortal."<sup>10</sup> It was not until He was ready to leave Joseph's tomb at the call of the Father, that Jesus again took immortality upon Himself. Of this we read:

How carefully Christ Himself folded up the garment which had clothed His mortal body. He laid them away as one would fold up garments which were never again to be used. In Joseph's tomb He wrapped Himself *in the garment of immortality*, and then waited in the world for a sufficient length of time to put beyond doubt the evidence that He was indeed risen from the dead.<sup>11</sup>

The dependent existence of the Son of God while clothed in the habiliments of humanity is further attested by this statement:

While bearing humanity, Jesus was dependent upon the Omnipotent for His life. In His humanity, He laid hold of the divinity of God, and this every member of the human family has the privilege of doing. Christ did nothing that human nature may not do if it partakes of the divine nature.<sup>12</sup>

Yet while bearing our humanity, Christ is declared to be the fullness of the Godhead bodily.<sup>13</sup> Those "life-giving energies" which make God, God, - apart from the immortal substance - were brought by Christ into His human existence. With these He maintained the purity of His divine character, and left the example of perfect obedience. Because He was the fulness of God in human form "is why, although tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world, from His first entrance into it, untainted by corruption, though surrounded by it."<sup>14</sup> ALL of this was done for man - the example, and the provision to receive these same "life-giving energies". "Are we not also to become partakers of that fulness, and is it not thus, and thus only, that we can overcome as He overcame?"<sup>14</sup>

"Christ could have done nothing during His earthly ministry in saving fallen man if the divine had not been blended with the human. The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery - the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be a partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery."<sup>15</sup>

The mystery of Bethlehem - Christ coming as one with us in flesh that we can become one in spirit with Him - cannot be explained; but the same Divine Power which exerted itself to accomplish the transition is available so that man can

experience that which He cannot fully explain or understand. We read:

The carnal heart must be crucified; for its tendency is to moral corruption, and the end thereof is death. Nothing but the life-giving influences of the gospel can help the soul. Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed.<sup>16</sup>

This is not some far off, distant experience, or something that is going to be accomplished in a second work of grace just as Christ is about to leave the sanctuary. It is an experience that is to be realized NOW! It is thus, and only thus, that we shall ever be able to reflect the image of Jesus fully --- the image of Him who was the union of the human and the divine.

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- <sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Education, p. 18                      <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 29  
<sup>3</sup>II Cor. 4:7    <sup>4</sup>Phil. 3:21  
<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 346  
<sup>6</sup>Ellen G. White, In Heavenly Places, p. 155  
<sup>7</sup>Ellen G. White, Our High Calling, p. 48  
<sup>8</sup>Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, June 2, 1898  
<sup>9</sup>Ellen G. White, "Christ Man's Example", Review & Herald, Sept. 4, 1900  
<sup>10</sup>Ibid.  
<sup>11</sup>Ellen G. White, "The Only True Mediator", Ms., 128, 1897  
<sup>12</sup>Ellen G. White, "The Word Made Flesh", Andreasen Collection Vol. 2  
<sup>13</sup>Col. 2:9  
<sup>14</sup>Ellen G. White, Ms. 16, 1890 (7BC, 907)  
<sup>15</sup>Ellen G. White, Letter 5, 1889 (7BC, 904)  
<sup>16</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 5, p. 267

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