

September/69.

"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 - II

In the first Gospel promise, God indicated that He would introduce an element - enmity - into the situation caused by the entrance of sin into the human experience.¹ Prior to the consent of man to sin, "enmity had no natural existence" in his heart.² God had created man with a capacity to love. But when man sinned, this pure capacity was perverted, and instead of loving God, man developed an enmity toward God.³ How was this perversion to be overcome, and man placed on vantage ground? "God pledged Himself to introduce into the hearts of human beings a new principle, - a hatred of sin, of deception, of pretense, of everything that bears the marks of Satan's guile."²

This element of enmity is not of human origin, but a part of the divine nature. It is one of the life-giving energies that Christ brought into His human nature, that man can receive into his nature. Describing the divine principle of enmity in the life of Jesus, the Spirit of Prophecy states:

The enmity put between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman was *supernatural*. With Christ the enmity was in one sense natural; in another sense it was supernatural, as humanity and divinity were combined. And never was the enmity developed to such a marked degree as when Christ became an inhabitant of this earth. Never before had there been a being upon earth who hated sin with so perfect a hatred as did Christ. He had seen its deceiving, infatuating power upon the holy angels, and all His powers were enlisted against it.⁴

This divine energy combined with the righteousness of truth gives complete victory, for of Christ it is stated, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness

above thy fellows." 5

We are prone to measure energy in terms of formulas such as $E=MC^2$, and assume that all true energy is resident only in material substances of the universe. But hatred, negative in its aspect by our human judgment, can operate as a most powerful, positive force in our conflict with sin, whether in our own life, or in the church, or in the world. We, as parents, should have learned among our first lessons in dealing with our children, the powerful force of hatred. If a child disliked a certain food with a passionate hatred; no matter how much the parent believed that the food was good for the child's health, the child wouldn't eat it. The parent could force it into the child's mouth, but getting the child to swallow it was another thing! If we would but receive the divine enmity against sin offered to us by God, we would not swallow the deceptions and suggestions of Satan. We would become conquerors in the battle with evil through partaking of the divine nature.

To recognize the power of sanctified hatred - the divine enmity against sin - and then not use it in a practical way by receiving its life-giving energy robs the individual of victory, and the church of its purity. Let us consider first, its application to our individual lives.

The revelation of Jesus - the Pattern Man - in our flesh revealed a glory of God that was not material but spiritual - full of grace and truth.⁶ In the previous thought paper, we discussed truth as one element of the life-giving energies of the divine nature. But with truth came also grace. Now grace has come to be so interpreted that it is almost synonymous with overlooking sin. But true grace is not of this nature. "The grace that Christ implants in the soul. . . creates in man enmity against Satan."⁷ "In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin, and determined resistance against it."⁸ When this divine grace comes into our lives, we will become hard on every sinful indulgence

that we have coddled in our experience. And when our insight is truly restored by the heavenly eyesalve, we will see self so fully sinful so as to understand the necessity for the experience wherein "our old man is crucified with [Christ] that the body of sin might be destroyed."⁹ We will not seek to minimize the strength of sin, or to think that we can psychologically put away our sins by merely writing them down on a piece of paper and burning them on an improvised altar in the front of a church. Instead we will understand that ---

The evil tendencies of mankind are hard to overcome. The battles are tedious. Every soul in the strife knows how severe, how bitter, are the contests. *Everything about growth in grace is difficult*, because the standard and maxims of the world are constantly interposed between the soul and God's holy standard.¹⁰

The same difficult work which accompanies the working of grace in the individual life, also accompanies the working of grace in church fellowship. As the wheat and tares grow together toward the harvest, marked differences begin to appear in the maturing process. The closer we come to the harvest, the more marked will be these differences. The more earnest the "wheat" in attaining to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be their perception of sin, and more decided their disapproval of any deviation from the right.¹¹ As their righteous souls become vexed with the actions and influence of the "tares", they find that the "tares" have so interwoven their worldly maxims into the church's thinking that love is defined as a grace from God to overlook sin in the church. This false concept of charity - a love-sick sentimentalism for the sinner - lies close to the true concept of Christlike patience and understanding which the "wheat" need to manifest toward the erring. However, the result too often is that the "wheat" fail to let the divine impartation - enmity - have its perfect work in the heart. A forbearance degenerates into a toleration of sin. The church then becomes simply an institution, worldly orientated, and worthless as an instrument for the salvation of man. This factor has been well stated ---

To call a sinful act good in order to get people in contact with the Church neither alters the wickedness of the act nor aids the sinner who needs regeneration. It most certainly does not attract sinners to the Church. Indeed, when the Church approves what sinners do, the need for the Church quickly disappears.¹²

If ever the life-giving energy of the divine nature - enmity, a hatred of sin - were needed in our church, it is needed today. Spiritually, we are about ready to die. Forms and programs have increased, and statistically measureable activities are much in evidence. But where is the evidence of that righteousness by faith that God is looking for in His church? The work of the church is to prepare a people to stand in the day of God. And the only thing that will stand is a character formed after the Divine likeness - not statistics or numbers!

We have reached an hour again in the history of the church when Satan is using -----

every advantage he can obtain to cause souls to become beclouded and perplexed in regard to the work of the church, in regard to the word of God, and in regard to the words of warning which He has given through the testimonies of His Spirit, to guard His little flock from the subtleties of the enemy.¹³

To meet this onslaught of the enemy, through men within the church, calls for a straightforward course on the part of those who desire God's truth to triumph, and the church to be pure. "To believe that evil must not be condemned because this would condemn those who practice the evil, is to act in favor of falsehood."¹⁴

How apropos is the question asked by the servant of the Lord in the hour of the alpha apostacy at the turn of the century! It asks:

Shall the servants of Jehovah, into whose heart He puts enmity against every evil work, be assailed as not being right when they call evil evil, and good good? Those who feel so very peaceful in regard to the works of the men who are spoiling the faith of the people of God, are guided by a delusive sentiment.¹⁵

*"We pray that this enmity may be more decidedly seen, that righteousness may be exalted, and sin called by its right name."*¹³ For -----

When God's people are fully awake to the danger of the hour, and

work fully on Christ's side, there will be seen a sharp contrast between their course and that of those who are saying, "Good Lord, and good devil," and we shall see much firmer and more decided work done to counterwork the schemes of satanic agencies.¹⁶

Ponder long this counsel:

The apostle [John] teaches that while we should manifest Christian courtesy, we are *authorized to call sin and sinners by their right names* - that this is consistent with true charity. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, and labor for their salvation, we should not make a compromise with sin. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand, as did John in his time, unflinchingly for the right, in opposition to soul-destroying errors.¹⁷

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- ¹Gen. 3:15
²Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 6
³Romans 8:7
⁴Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk i, p. 254
⁵Hebrews 1:9
⁶John 1:14
⁷Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 506
⁸Ibid., p. 508
⁹Romans 6:6
¹⁰Ellen G. White, The Faith I Live By, p. 135
¹¹See Acts of the Apostles, p. 503
¹²Editorial, Christianity Today, March 14, 1969, p. 26
¹³Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 9
¹⁴Ibid., p. 10
¹⁵Ibid., p. 10-11
¹⁶Ibid., p. 11
¹⁷Ellen G. White, The Sanctified Life, p. 65

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Personal - This September Thought Paper is coming to you earlier than usual in the month because we will be away from our home in Florence for about three weeks in August. We plan to unite our oldest daughter, Nancy in marriage to Mr Ronald Renk of Goodrich, North Dakota at a ceremony in Lincoln, Nebraska. Then following the ceremony, we hope to take our youngest daughter, Anne, back to Loma Linda University where she will begin her second year in medicine. We solicit your prayers that God will grant to us all traveling mercies.

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October Thought Paper - We plan to present with this issue, and those for several months to come, a study of certain aspects of our church history beginning with the date - 1888.

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