

March 171.

• "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

THE FABRIC OF THE ALPHA APOSTASY

In the regular January thought paper, we stated that "our only hope today is to study carefully the fabric of the alpha apostasy so as to be able to discern in suggested programs of activity, and in published books and articles those seductive threads of apostasy which will constitute the omega." Once the threads are unraveled, and their substance analyzed, we should be able to tell if the same threads are being interwoven into the cloth of the garments being presented for the church to wear today. The body of Christ will be clothed in its corporate identity either with those garments woven in the loom of heaven in which there is not one thread of human devising, or else it will be clothed by garments sewed together by the hands of men in which will be woven the threads of the omega apostasy.

First let us consider the reaction of Dr. J. H. Kellogg when confronted with the charge that his book - The Living Temple - contained "the alpha of deadly heresies."¹ He replied "that his views were really no different from those expressed by Mrs White in the chapter "God in Nature" in her book, Education."² He even maintained that he did not know the meaning of the word, pantheism, until he was accused of teaching it, and that all he was doing was simply trying to express "God's omnipresence in such a way as to show its 'practical significance."³

A comparison between certain statements found in the book - Education - and Kellogg's work - The Living Temple - is most interesting. Sister White wrote:

A mysterious life pervades all nature, - a life that sustains the

unnumbered worlds throughout immensity; that lives in the insect atom that floats in the summer breeze; that wings the flight of the swallow, and feeds the young ravens which cry; that brings the bud to blossom, and the flower to fruit. . .

The heart not yet hardened by contact with evil is quick to recognize the Presence that pervades all created things.⁴

Kellogg stated the following in his book:

There is a clear, complete, satisfactory explanation of the most subtle, the most marvelous phenomena of nature, - namely, an infinite Intelligence working out its purposes. God is the explanation of nature, - not a God outside of nature, but in nature, manifesting himself through and in all objects, movements, and varied phenomena of the universe. . .

So there is present in the tree a power which creates and maintains it, a tree-maker in the tree, a flower-maker in the flower, - a divine architect who understands every law of proportion, an infinite artist who possesses a limitless power of expression in color and form; there is, in all the world about us, an infinite, divine though invisible Presence, to which the unenlightened may be blind, but which is ever declaring itself by its ceaseless, beneficent activity.⁵

As one reads these two series of statements, he cannot but be impressed with their similarity. However, as one reads carefully the full context of the thought in the book - Education - the difference becomes distinct. The servant of the Lord has clearly enunciated the fact that God exercises His power through laws, and that from Him - as a Personal Being - "all life proceeds."⁶ Whether God is "an essence" in nature, "declaring *itself*" in the varied activities of life; or whether God is truly a Presence manifesting *Himself* through the laws of life is more than merely stating the same truth in two different ways - semantics - it is the statement of error versus truth! One of the threads of the alpha apostasy was the suggestion that truth was being stated in a little different wording, but that it meant the same as that truth which had been given under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

We dare not forget that ----

The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both

tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error.⁷

Another part of the fabric of the alpha apostasy has been well documented by Dr. David Duffie in a recent publication. The chapter - "Seventh-day Adventists and Spiritualism" - is outstanding.⁸ One will need to study the chapter against the back-drop of what the Spirit of Prophecy defines as "the teachings of spiritualism." These are broad and comprehensive, and are listed for the reader by Dr. Duffie in a preceding chapter.⁹

Varied threads are discovered in the twice-repeated charge that the alpha apostasy sought to insinuate itself under the guise that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists.¹⁰ What would have resulted had not the servant of the Lord met the issue head-on is clearly defined:

- 1) The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years [1850-1900] would be accounted as error.
- 2) Books of a new order would be written.
- 3) A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.
- 4) The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work.

A separate thought paper could be written concerning each of these "threads" as we see the cloth of the omega being woven before our very eyes.

Let us select as an illustration the single thread - "Books of a new order would be written" - and see what application can be made to the present. Of all the books published in the past two decades by our church, none has caused the concern and dissent as the book - Questions on Doctrine. The apologists for the book have sought to allay the fears of those who became rightly disturbed by suggesting that any differences between statements in the book and fundamental Adventism was simply a matter of semantics. This reasoning is in itself an echo from the alpha apostasy.

A mature student at Andrews University decided to take one area of concern in the book - the subject of the incarnation - to see if there had been any real

change between what the book - Questions on Doctrine - taught and the fundamental position of the church during its previous history. His findings are worthy of careful thought and study. His conclusion reads:

The findings of this study warrant the conclusion that Seventh-day Adventist teachings regarding the human nature of Christ *have* changed, and that these changes involve concepts and not merely semantics.¹¹

Beneath these threads of the fabric are deeper causes for concern. The errors of the alpha were "received even by some who. . . had a long experience as teachers in the word of God."¹² On this point the servant of the Lord commented "that those whom we thought sound in the faith should have failed to discern the specious, deadly influence of this science of evil, should alarm us as nothing else has alarmed us."¹³ Will the omega be any different? With what alarm then, should we view the lack of recognition of the sophistry, the error, and the compromising attitudes which prevail in our midst! Gospel truth in the final hour of human history "must be pure and unadulterated if it is to produce a people 'without spot' ready for the seal of God." How can a genuine revival be experienced on the campuses of institutions which have introduced "a system of intellectual philosophy" contrary to the simple faith outlined in the Blue Print? Are we not beginning to see the start of that false latter rain which if possible would deceive the very elect?

There is yet another danger beneath the fabric of the alpha apostasy. When the teachings of Kellogg through The Living Temple became a live issue some counseled an attitude of moderation and restraint in dealing with the "spiritualistic sentiments" taught in the book, and toward those who approved them. But not so the servant of the Lord! That men of long experience in the truth would receive and contenance the errors of the alpha caused Sister White to declare: - "When such men consent to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we are not to regard the subject as a matter to be treated

with great delicacy."¹³ But what do we see today? Men who know, and who should speak forth are holding their peace. Fear of the loss of position and favor - economic security and ecclesiastical advancement - has sealed the lips of many a minister. Thus the laity remain unwarned. Some of the laity sense that something is wrong, but they are unable to tell what. They are torn between reports that all is well - that great things for the vindication of the church in its present spiritual state are about to transpire - and what they see about them in church fellowship. Would to God that every watchman on the walls of Zion would covenant with God in the words of Isaiah -

FOR ZION'S SAKE WILL I NOT HOLD MY PEACE, AND FOR JERUSALEM'S SAKE
I WILL NOT REST, UNTIL THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THEREOF GO FORTH AS BRIGHT-
NESS, AND THE SALVATION THEREOF AS A LAMP THAT BURNETH.¹⁴

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- ¹Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 50
²Richard W. Schwarz, John Harvey Kellogg, p. 188
³Ibid.
⁴Ellen G. White, Education, pp. 99, 100
⁵John H. Kellogg, The Living Temple, pp. 28,29
⁶Ellen G. White, Education, p. 99
⁷Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 52
⁸David Duffie, M. D., Psychology and the Christian Religion, pp. 105-121
⁹Ibid., p. 88
¹⁰Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, pp. 54-55 & No. 7, pp. 39-40.
¹¹Robert Lee Hancock, "The Humanity of Christ - A Brief Study of Seventh-day Adventist Teachings on the Nature of Christ", p. 27 (Emphasis his)
¹²Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, p. 36
¹³Ibid., p. 37
¹⁴Isaiah 62:1

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