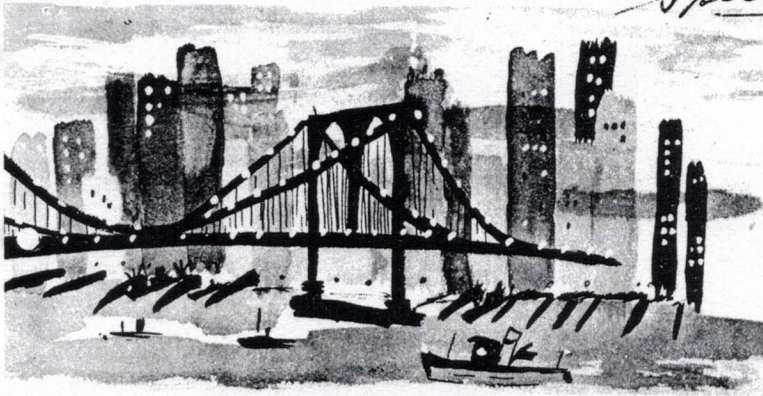


Special May 17!



"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

WHAT NEXT?

A book, highly recommended through our church publications, has at last reached the readers.¹ This book carries the imprimatur of both Elders R. H. Pierson and Neal C. Wilson. The objective of the book is simple. It seeks to blunt the challenge presented to the church in 1950 by Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short.² It further seeks to justify the illicit fraternization with the Evangelicals which resulted in the book, Questions on Doctrine.

The general thesis of the book is that the General Conference Session in 1888 constituted "the Great Divide" between a formative period in the development of certain doctrines regarding the Deity of Christ, His atonement in relationship to the Cross, and the nature of the humanity assumed by the Son of God in the incarnation; and a period when these doctrines became "perfected 'beliefs'" as embodied in the book, Questions on Doctrine.³ To support this contention, Froom places heavy emphasis on the Arian views of Christ's pre-existence as held by Uriah Smith and J. H. Waggoner. This Arian heresy that Christ was "the first created being"⁴ is linked with the teaching of these men regarding the Atonement. Here are Froom's words - "These positions on these two truths seemed to go hand in hand."⁵ Either they did or they did not go hand in hand! To structure an argument so that by association two different ideas seem to be both erroneous is deception of the worse kind. A limited view of the Atonement as held by these men who taught Arian concepts on the Deity of Christ does not necessarily spell an erroneous view in the matter of the Atonement, but merely

a weighted emphasis toward one phase of the atonement. In our haste to teach an Atonement which will bring us acceptance with the Evangelicals, we dare not betray the sacred trust placed in us by God to present the fullness of the final atonement transpiring in the sanctuary above since 1844. "The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men."⁶

To Froom, the doctrinal issue concerning the Deity of Christ and His atonement was the "underlying issue at stake at Minneapolis." He wrote:

The last works of J. H. Waggoner and Uriah Smith - in 1884 and 1898, respectively - need to be pondered together, and compared and contrasted. Waggoner's regrettable assertions were vigorously repeated just four years *before* the Minneapolis Conference. Smith's came out ten years *after* the '88 session. The first, or Waggoner's volume, had a definite bearing on the 1888 crisis. A confrontation had now become unavoidable.

On the other hand, the last, or Smith treatise, was actually the swan song as it were - in book form - of the erroneous views of the "Deity" and "Atonement" that Smith and Waggoner shared alike, and so seriously and vigorously championed. The period that began around 1888 marked the turn in the tide. Here was the real *underlying* issue at stake at Minneapolis.⁷

Into this setting, Froom places the messages of Dr. E. J. Waggoner (son of J. H. Waggoner) given at Minneapolis. The teachings of Dr Waggoner at the session are supposed to be at complete variance with what his father and Uriah Smith taught on the subject of the Deity of Christ.⁸ However, a careful comparison between what Smith wrote in his "swan song" - Looking Unto Jesus - in 1898, is almost identical in thought with what Waggoner stated in Christ and His Righteousness. Note the parallel in the following paragraphs: [Smith will be quoted first, and similar expressions will be underscored to assist in the comparison.]

God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, - a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, - appeared the Word. . . This uncreated Word was the Being, who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe. It is set forth in the mysterious expressions, "his [God's] only begotten Son", . . . "the only begotten of the Father", . . . and, "I proceeded forth and came from God." (John 8:42). Thus it appears

that by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possibly only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared...

This Son was in the likeness of the Father, and was equal with the Father. . . Man had sinned, and must perish unless some means for his redemption could be devised. No one but Christ, the only being save God, above law, and therefore able to meet the demands of the law in behalf of the sinner, could rescue him. . . Christ was there, the associate Majesty of heaven, equal with the Father, and sharing equally in the glory; and he could have "held fast to", and have "preferred" to remain in that condition. But in that case, man must perish. . .

This union between the Father and the Son does not detract from either, but strengthens both. Through it, in connection with the Holy Spirit, we have all of Deity. Through it we are enabled to "see Jesus" in all his fulness and glory; for it pleased God that in him should "all fulness dwell", even "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." ⁹

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The Scriptures declare that Christ is "the only begotten Son of God." He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it, in these words: [Micah 5:2 margin, quoted] . . . There was a time when Christ proceeded and came forth from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning.

But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son, and not a created subject. He has *by inheritance* a more excellent Name than the angels; He is "a Son over His own house". . . And since He is the only-begotten Son of God, He is the very substance and nature of God; for the Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead.¹⁰

While Froom scores Uriah Smith as heretical, he seeks to justify Waggoner's position with a "score card".¹¹ But a close check of what Smith wrote as quoted above, would give him a high rating also on the same "score card". What we need to face is the simple fact that a full and complete understanding of the pre-existent Deity of the Son of God came through the Spirit of Prophecy when Sister White wrote: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."¹² But to admit this would knock another flimsy prop out in Froom's thesis -

that Ellen White did not deal with such doctrinal errors unless, and until, there had first been a sound presentation of truth from the Bible thereon, and the position had been clearly presented and defin-

itely set forth, as based on Scripture.¹³

In Froom's judgment, there is another error that needed to be corrected before the church could become acceptable to the Evangelicals as "brethren in Christ." It was the question of the human nature of our Lord in the incarnation. Froom notes a deletion from the standard Adventist book - Bible Readings - in words: - "The lingering "sinful-nature-of-Christ" misconception was remedied by expunging the regrettable note in the revised Bible Readings of 1949".¹⁴ An attempted explanation of how this note found its way into Bible Readings is given by Froom in another section.¹⁵ But what does the note teach? Here it is:

In His humanity Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature. If not, then He was not "made like unto His brethren", was not "in all points tempted like as we are", did not overcome as we have to overcome, and is not, therefore, the complete and perfect Saviour man needs and must have to be saved. The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is need. On the human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, a sinful nature. On the divine side, from the His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit.¹⁶

This is also the teaching of Dr. E. J. Waggoner. Here is what he wrote:

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it was sinful man that He came to redeem. . . Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He "was made of the seed of David *according to the flesh.*" David had all the passions of the human nature. He says of himself, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5 ¹⁷

How does Dr. Froom seek to have Waggoner teach the same concept that occurs in Questions on Doctrine - that Christ assumed the nature of man, vicariously", rather than the "misconception" appearing in the "regrettable note" found in Bible Readings? In his summary of what Dr Waggoner taught in 1888 at Minneapolis, Froom deletes what Waggoner actually taught, and substitutes his own word -"vicarious-

ly".¹⁸ One has only to study carefully what Waggoner actually wrote, and what Froom says he wrote, to see how much vaunted scholarship has been prostituted to unholy ends to cover apostasy.

We have nothing to fear for the future, "*except* as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and *His teaching in our past history*."¹⁹ At the turn of the Century another attempt was made to alter the basic truths of the Advent Movement. It was called the alpha of deadly heresies. At that time the servant of the Lord revealed "that the omega would follow in a little while;" and she "trembled for our people."²⁰ Then as now, "it is the constant effort of the enemy to remove these truths from their setting, and to put in their place spurious theories."²¹ But when God laid the foundation of this Movement, He laid it well. Through the prophetic gift, "light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood."²² We have been plainly warned that "we must *firmly* refuse to be drawn away from the platform of *eternal truth*, which since 1844 has stood the test."²³ "As a people, we are to stand firm on the platform of *eternal truth* that has withstood test and trial."²¹ This Movement was laid in truth, not falsehood, or deception. Its final destiny - a triumphant revelation of the character of God in human flesh - will be based in truth, and not in a perversion of facts to serve as a covering for apostasy. It can be understood now why Sister White trembled for our people. Need we not to do a little trembling for ourselves?

¹LeRoy E. Froom, Movement of Destiny (R & H Pub. Assoc.) 1971

²R. J. Wieland & D. K. Short, 1888 Re-Examined, 1950

³Froom, loc. cit., Chart # 2 pp. 74-75

⁴Uriah Smith, Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation, p. 59, (1865 edition)

⁵Froom, loc. cit., p. 149

⁶Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 488

Waggoner (cont.)

were lost and without strength. He could not enjoy His glory while man was outcast, without hope. So He emptied Himself, divesting Himself of all riches and His glory, and took upon Himself the nature of man, in order that He might redeem him. And so we may reconcile Christ's unity with the Father and the statement, "My Father is greater than I."

It is impossible for us to understand how Christ could, as God, humble Himself to the death of the cross, and it is worse than useless to speculate about it. All we can do is to accept the facts as they are presented in the Bible. If the reader finds it difficult to harmonize some of the statements in the Bible concerning the nature of Christ, let him remember that it would be impossible to express it in terms that would enable finite minds to grasp it fully. Just as the grafting of the Gentiles into the stock of Israel is contrary to nature, so much of the Divine economy is a paradox to human understanding.

Other scriptures that we will quote bring closer to us the fact of the humanity of Christ, and what it means to us. We have already read that "the Word was made flesh", and now we will read what Paul says concerning the nature of that flesh: [Rom. 8:3,4 quoted]

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem. Death could have no power over a sinless man, as Adam was in Eden; and it could not have had any power over Christ, if the Lord had not laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of a sinful man, that is, that flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He "was made of the seed of David *according to the flesh.*" David had all the passions of human nature. He says of himself, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5

The following statement in the book of Hebrews is very clear on this point:- [Heb. 2:16-17]

If He was made in all things like unto His brethren, then He must have suffered all the in-

From (cont.)

Divesting Himself of these powers, He "took upon Himself the nature of man, in order that He might redeem him." (P. 25) To accomplish this He became obedient "even to the death of the cross."

The transcendence of it all is an unfathomable truth, beyond the "human understanding" of "finite minds." (P. 26)

As to His humanity, Christ came in the "likeness of sinful flesh." (Rom. 8:3,4).

God, "laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He "took" all the

"weaknesses" of man.
(Pp. 26, 27)

Waggoner (cont.)

firmities, and been subject to all the temptations, of His brethren. Two more texts that put this matter very forcibly will be sufficient evidence on this point. We first quote 2 Cor. 5:21:- [quoted]

This is much stronger than the statement that He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh". He was made to be sin. Here is the same mystery as that the Son of God should die. The spotless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin. Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon Himself sinful nature. He was made to be sin in order that we might be made righteous.

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Froom (cont.)

More than that, He was actually "made" vicariously - to "be sin for us", that we "might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21). On this Waggoner comments:

"Here is the same mystery as that the Son of God should die. The spotless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin. Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon Himself sinful nature. He [sic] was made to be sin in order that we [sic] might be made righteous." (Pp. 27,28)
Such was the exchange - our sins for His righteousness.

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NOTE: Beginning with the regular issue of the thought paper - September, 1971 - we shall discuss and document certain issues raised by Froom's rewrite of our church history, in the book - Movement of Destiny.

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