



September/71

*"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*

A "NEAT" TRICK

The misrepresentation of the teaching and belief of Elder E. J. Waggoner in regard to the incarnation of our Lord by Dr. Leroy E. Froom in his much publicized book - Movement of Destiny - has created a credibility gap as far as the whole book is concerned.¹ The belabored attempt to show a difference between Uriah Smith's position on the Deityship of Christ in 1898, and E. J. Waggoner's position that "there was a time when Christ proceeded and came forth from God",² only served to intensify this credibility gap.

In the book another device is used in seeking to discredit basic truth. When men cannot answer sound principles of truth, they seek to smear the presentation of truth through a devious means known as "guilt by association." This is a "neat" trick, if one can get away with it. All too often it is successful!

Prior to the release of the book, a booklet entitled - The Facinating Story of Movement of Destiny - was circulated as a supplement through The Ministry. This booklet contained a complete analytic outline of the book itself. As I surveyed the contents of this booklet, my eye caught the title of Section IV, in Chapter 26 - "Elimination of Erroneous Note in Bible Readings." Here was the clue as to what was coming. When I received my copy of the book by Dr Froom, this was the first section that I read. Let us note the contents and observe the arguments used to discredit an explanatory note appearing in Bible Readings for the Home Circle in the chapter entitled - "A Sinless Life."³

The subtitle of Section IV, par 1, Chapter 26, reads - "Erroneous Position Injected by Colcord".⁴ But who was Colcord? A biographical footnote by Froom tells us that William A. Colcord was on the book committee of the Review & Herald Publishing Association from 1907 to 1914, and that in 1914 he "regrettably lost faith in the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."⁵ What are the facts? In 1915, a new, revised, and enlarged edition of Bible Readings was published by the Review & Herald. Naturally such an enlarged edition would be on the "drawing boards" prior to its publication date, which would include at least the year, 1914. Thus if a statement of doctrine at variance with Froom's thesis could be associated with a man who lost faith in the teachings of the church in 1914, the note in Bible Readings need not be considered on its merits, but could be dismissed by association with an apostate. It is simply argument based on "guilt by association." Such scholarship is unworthy of a Movement of destiny such as the great Second Advent Movement.

But let us pursue the picture a bit further. To be a member of a book committee does not mean that one writes the explanatory notes in a book to be approved and released by the committee. What is written is usually reviewed and approved by the whole committee. There is not a single shred of evidence presented by Froom to justify the assertion that Colcord injected the note into the new edition of Bible Readings. In fact, Froom states, "Apparently it was first written in by W. A. Colcord, in 1914."⁵

On March 19, 1971, this writer wrote to the President of the General Conference calling his attention to this section of Dr Froom's book. A carbon copy was also sent to Elder Neal C. Wilson and Froom. Froom replied, but without giving one iota of evidence in support of his contention in regard to Colcord, stated: "I am a bit surprised that you did not observe that "apparently" refers to the year (1914) in which Colcord apparently wrote that note. The uncertainty was

over the precise year, not the authorship or content of the note."⁶ I will leave with the reader the determination as to whether "apparently" refers to Colcord, or the date, 1914, in the section of Froom's book under discussion.

The whole thrust of Froom's argument against what he assumes to be an "erroneous note" is that this position on the incarnation was uniquely Colcord's. Froom indicates that when Professor D. E. Rebock deleted the note in the 1949 edition, he found "that some still held with Colcord in his position."⁵ Did Colcord initiate the teaching among us that "in His humanity, Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature"? Let us check.

In 1890, Dr E. J. Waggoner wrote that -

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."⁷

A. T. Jones in his book, The Consecrated Way, stated that "as man, Jesus took the nature of man as he is since death entered; and not the nature of man as he was before he became subject to death."⁸

The following concepts from Senior Sabbath School Lesson Quarterlies of the period indicate the concensus of thought on the incarnation:

Jesus was God acting in sinful flesh on behalf of the sinner. He made Himself one with humanity.⁹

By assuming sinful flesh, and voluntarily making Himself dependent upon His Father to keep Him from sin while He was in the world, Jesus not only set the example for all Christians, but also made it possible for Him to minister to sinful flesh the gift of His own Spirit and the power for obedience to the will of God.¹⁰

That Son took the flesh of sinful man, and overcame where man failed, overthrew sin in the flesh.¹¹

Thus from 1890 to 1914, a common belief was held and taught by the church. The note in Bible Readings merely summarized this general belief. This teaching did not originate with Colcord!

Froom takes particular exception with the expression that Christ during His incarnation "partook of our sinful, fallen nature."⁵ A standard dictionary definition of "partook" means simply "to take or have a part or share in common with others." And strangely enough this is the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy! Observe closely the following extracts:

In redemption, He [Christ] takes humanity unto Himself. He makes it a part of His own being.¹²

He [Christ] consented to actual union with man. . . Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with His own sinless nature.¹³

Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful nature.¹⁴

How paradoxical is the position of Froom. He lauds Ellen G. White as the "Peerless Witness" of Adventism¹⁵, and yet seeks to justify the deletion of a note in Bible Readings which is in complete harmony with her writings. How alarming is the extent to which men will go in seeking to compromise with the theologians of Babylon so that they will no longer "censure" us as a church "for tolerating this erroneous minority position."⁵ But the supreme question is - How does God look upon this apostasy and deviation from the truth under the guise of presenting an authenticated record of the Movement of destiny?

¹See Documentation in Special Thought Paper, What Next?, May 1971

²E. J. Waggoner, Christ and His Righteousness, p. 21

³The Chapter presents such sound and fundamental truth that it is being reproduced as an Appendix to this thought paper. (Canadian and Overseas readers may have a copy upon request.)

⁴Leroy E. Froom, Movement of Destiny, p. 427

⁵Ibid., p. 428

⁶Letter of Leroy E. Froom to Wm. H. Grotheer, March 31, 1971

⁷Waggoner, op cit., pp. 26-27

⁸A. T. Jones, The Consecrated Way, p. 21

⁹International Sabbath School Quarterly, Senior Division, 2nd Qrt, 1909, p. 20.

¹⁰International Sabbath School Quarterly, Senior Division, 1st Qrt, 1913, p. 15.

¹¹International Sabbath School Quarterly, Senior Division, 1st Qrt, 1914, p. 16.

- ¹²Ellen G. White, "The Word Made Flesh", Andreasen Collection #2
¹³Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, July 17, 1900
¹⁴Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, December 15, 1896
¹⁵Froom, op. cit., p. 443

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Postscript - In a letter to a laymen, who questioned certain conclusions in the book - Movement of Destiny, Dr Froom wrote - "I might allude to the fact that 60 of our ablest men around the world, top leaders in about seventeen different categories have approved of what I placed in Movement of Destiny." This is confirmed in a letter which this writer received from Elder F. C. Webster, Assistant to the President of the General Conference. Elder Webster wrote: "I am sure that you are familiar with the fact that in the development stages of the book, MOVEMENT OF DESTINY, a very wide group of counselors assisted Brother Froom by reviewing the copy."

All of this raises some very serious questions. How is it that sixty scholars were not able to catch the misrepresentation of Elder E. J. Waggoner's position on the incarnation? Was there a conspiracy to deceive the people of God? If not, does this indicate that when a man is asked to review and place his approval on a book written by an acclaimed scholar of the church, he becomes so elated at being chosen that his moral judgment of what constitutes a correct handling of truth is so blunted that he is willing to approve error? The church of the living God is due an answer. The church at large has a right to know who these sixty "princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown" are. Let them come forward and explain their approval of deception. As far as this writer is able to determine, two of the most knowledgeable men of the church at the present time in regard to the history of the 1888 General Conference Session and its aftermath were not consulted on the contents of this book by Froom. Why was this?

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A SINLESS LIFE¹

1. What testimony is borne concerning Christ's life on earth?
 "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." 1 Peter 2:22
2. What is true of all other members of the human family?
 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23.
3. With what question did Christ challenge His enemies?
 "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" John 8:46
4. To what extent was Christ tempted?
 "[He] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15
5. In His Humanity, of what nature did Christ partake?
 "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." Heb. 2:14.
6. How fully did Christ share our common humanity?
 "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Verse 17.

Note - 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 needed. On His human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, - a sinful nature. On the divine side, from His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit. And all this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that in the same way every one who is "born of the Spirit" may gain victories over sin in his own sinful flesh. Thus each one is to overcome as Christ overcame. Rev. 3:21 Without this birth there can be no victory over temptation, and no salvation from sin. John 3:3-7.

7. Where did God, in Christ, condemn sin, and gain the victory for us over temptation and sin.
 "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8:3

Note - God, in Christ, condemned sin, not by pronouncing against it merely as a judge sitting on the judgment-seat, but by coming and living in the flesh, in sinful flesh, and yet without sinning. In Christ, He demonstrated that it is possible, by His grace and power, to resist temptation, overcome sin, and live a sinless life in sinful flesh.

8. By whose power did Christ live the perfect life?

"I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5:30. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but *the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.*" John 14:10.

Note - In His humanity Christ was as dependent upon divine power to do the works of God as is any man to do the same thing. He employed no means to live a holy life that are not available to every human being. Through Him, every one may have God dwelling in him and working in him "to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure." I John 4:15; Phil. 2:13.

9. What unselfish purpose did Jesus ever have before Him?

"For I came down from heaven, *not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*" John 6:38.

¹Taken from Bible Readings for the Home Circle, 1915 edition, pp. 115-116. All emphasis as in original.

An Observation:- The note under question 6 is termed by Dr Froom as "erroneous", "inaccurate", and "unfortunate". See pages 427-428, Movement of Destiny. However a careful student of the Spirit of Prophecy can detect that the notes - all of them - are but paraphrases of sections of the inspired Testimonies. - whg