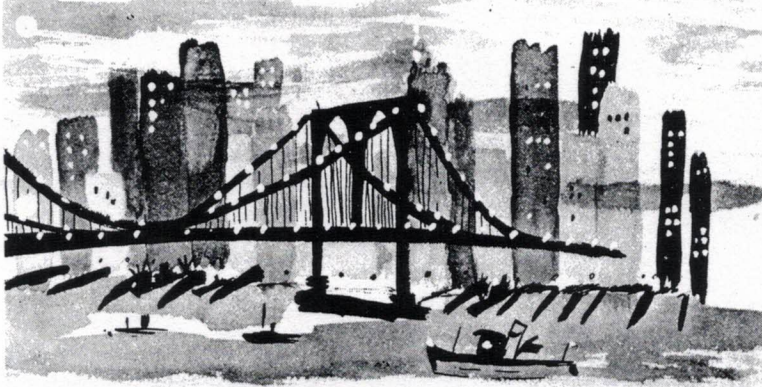


September 1974



# "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 GOSPEL OF CHRIST

In his letter to the church of Galatia, Paul spoke of those who would "pervert the gospel of Christ." Upon such Paul placed a curse, and declared, "Let him be anathema."<sup>1</sup> The perversion of the gospel of Christ was not limited to the time of Paul, but even in this enlightened hour, the simple gospel of Christ is being perverted - even by some who profess they have the truth. What then is the pure gospel of Christ? Paul indicated that "it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."<sup>2</sup> This topic sentence of the book of Romans is the key to the whole question of what constitutes the true gospel, and how that gospel relates to the believer.

The first question in the analysis of this key verse of the book of Romans is to what or to whom does the "therein" (εν αυτω) refer? To the gospel (το ευαγγελιον); or to everyone that believeth (παντι τω πιστευοντι)? In other words, through what is the righteousness of God *revealed* - a plan of procedure, or the plan activated? The context in which Paul wrote also cast light on the question. Paul declared that "the wrath of God is *revealed* from heaven against all. . . unrighteousness."<sup>3</sup> As evidence of this truth, Paul showed that by God simply giving man up to his own natural inclinations, these unholy desires produced in the life their own wrathful fruitage - "vile affections", "a reprobate mind", etc.<sup>4</sup> So even as the wrath of God is revealed in the very lives of those "who hold the truth in unrighteousness", likewise the righteousness of God is revealed in those

who believe from faith to faith. And what does it mean - "from faith to faith"? "The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith; that is, from your present faith to an increased understanding of that faith which works by love and *purifies the soul.*"<sup>5</sup>

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul made another distinction of terms which is most interesting. He declared himself to have been "separated unto the gospel of God."<sup>6</sup> This good news of God, in contrast to the good news of Christ is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."<sup>7</sup> God was in Christ demonstrating that even in a body made of the flesh of David, His righteousness and holiness could be revealed. The result - the Pattern Man "by whom we have received grace and apostleship to *the obedience of faith* among all nations, for His name."<sup>8</sup> For - "as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."<sup>9</sup> The true gospel of Christ is simply the outworking of His priestly intercession, whereby through the Spirit, He ministers His life to "everyone that believeth." "The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the only begotten Son of God, binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ."<sup>10</sup>

Paul, in the first eight chapters of Romans, delineated, the steps in the working of the power of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ. First is the revelation of what we have "in" Christ - "the remission of sins that are past"<sup>11</sup> - so that we can stand before God as if we had never sinned. Second is the revelation that "through" Christ, "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled [filled full] *in us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."<sup>12</sup> The objective to which both phases of the gospel of Christ gravitates is concisely

stated by Paul - "that we might be partakers of His holiness."<sup>13</sup> Whether the experience is forgiveness of sins - whereby the grace of God is revealed - or whether it is being kept from sinning - whereby the enabling power of God is made manifest - all is of God in cooperation with the surrendered soul. "God does nothing for man without his cooperation. . . From first to last man is to be a laborer together with God."<sup>14</sup>

In a direct comment on the topic sentence of the book of Romans, the servant of the Lord has written:

The gospel of Christ becomes *personality* in those who believe, and makes them living epistles, known and read of all men. In this way the leaven of godliness passes to the multitude. The heavenly intelligences are able to discern the true elements of greatness in character; for only goodness is esteemed as efficiency with God.<sup>15</sup>

To merely proclaim our faith in that which has been done for us "in" Christ and to minimize the power of God which leads to an experience of the life that Christ actually lived in our fallen human nature - a life in harmony with the Law of God - is to proclaim a gospel that is only as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." This is "Babylonian" justification by faith, for its fruit does not lead to true sanctification. "Justification means that the conscience, purged of dead works, is placed where it can receive the blessings of sanctification."<sup>16</sup>

And what is sanctification? Is it something that is imputed to us by Christ, the reality of which He keeps locked up till He comes again the second time? No, a thousand times, No! "Faithful to His promise, the Divine One, exalted in the heavenly courts, *imparted His fulness* to His followers on earth."<sup>17</sup> "The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ."<sup>18</sup> "The life which Christ alone can give is given *only on condition of obedience*. This obedience takes in the whole man, mind, heart, soul, and strength. . . This is true sanctification. 'This do, and thou shalt live', is the only genuine definition of sanctification."<sup>19</sup>

Little do we realize - our faith fails even to approach the proverbial grain of mustard seed - the glorious possibilities provided by the power of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Through the help provided, *man*, in his fallen nature, *can do the very things God expects him to do*. He can walk and work and live by faith in the Son of God. The Lord draws man close to His side, to walk with him, to work with him, and to teach him how to overcome temptation. With every temptation there is a way of escape by walking humbly with God."<sup>20</sup>

Consider these words:

The true Christian *obtains an experience which brings holiness*. He is without a spot of guilt upon the conscience, or a taint of corruption upon the soul. The spirituality of the law of God, with its limiting principles, is brought into his life. The light of truth irradiates his understanding. A glow of perfect love for the Redeemer clears away the miasma which interposes between his soul and God. The will of God has become his will, pure, elevated, refined, and sanctified. His countenance reveals the light of heaven. His body is a fit temple for the Holy Spirit. Holiness adorns his character. God can commune with him, for soul and body are in harmony with God.<sup>21</sup>

To interpret Paul's teachings in Romans otherwise than is revealed in the inspired sources quoted in this thought paper is to teach another gospel. Of such Paul declared - "Let him be anathema." He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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- <sup>1</sup>Galatians 1:7-8 ARV  
<sup>2</sup>Romans 1:16-17  
<sup>3</sup>Romans 1:18  
<sup>4</sup>Romans 1:21-28  
<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, September 18, 1908  
<sup>6</sup>Romans 1:1  
<sup>7</sup>Romans 1:3-4  
<sup>8</sup>Romans 1:5 margin  
<sup>9</sup>John 1:12 margin  
<sup>10</sup>Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 5, 1906  
<sup>11</sup>Romans 3:25  
<sup>12</sup>Romans 8:4  
<sup>13</sup>Hebrews 12:10  
<sup>14</sup>Ellen G. White, Notebook Leaflets, "The Church", No. 5, p. 3  
<sup>15</sup>Ellen G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 200  
<sup>16</sup>Ellen G. White, Ms. 113, 1902 (7BC 908)  
<sup>17</sup>Ellen G. White, Education, p. 95  
<sup>18</sup>Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers, p. 285

<sup>19</sup>Ellen G. White, "The Two Great Principles of the Law" Ms, Dec. 10, 1898

<sup>20</sup>Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 15, 1909

<sup>21</sup>Ellen G. White, Letter 139, 1898 (7BC 909)

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#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

In the Review dated July 20, 1972 was an editorial entitled - "F. Y. I." This information brief referred the reader to some previous announcements. The "NOTICE" which caused the problem stated - *"This recommendation is endorsed by the General Conference officers."* (Review, June 10, 1971, p. 32) The "NOTICE" plus \$19,518.85 which settled the suit read: - *"The notice did not have the approval of the General Conference officers."* (Review, June 22, 1972, p. 24) Maybe we need more information? A credibility gap?

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The Mission Story for July 15 carried the title - "Did an Angel Carry the Sign?" Those who recall the story at the Sabbath School Mission period will remember that a mob had sacked a library, and as they turned to vent their continued rage on the mission hospital across the road, they were suddenly stopped. Later it was learned that "a tall man who was dressed as a Moulvi (Moslem priest) walked back and forth in front of the hospital gate. He was carrying a sign telling of the wonderful work the hospital is doing and how 90 per cent of its employees and patients are local citizens." (World Mission Report, Third Qrt., '72, p. 8) Would an angel of the Lord impersonate a Moslem priest? Is the employee profile as to residence the basis of God's decision as to the value of an institution? Was the library staffed with out-of-town personnel?

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Two excellent articles appeared in the Review of July 27, 1972. - "Is There Consistency?" (p. 9), and "Christian Women Should Stand Up and Be Counted?" (pp. 10-11) Read them! Take whatever action is necessary.

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