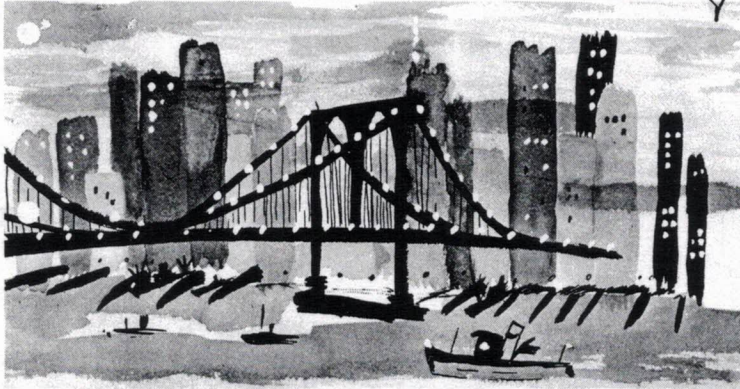


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February 174.



"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

"Write It Not"

In letters coming to the Foundation office, and in telephone conversations with concerned folk, the question has been repeatedly asked - "What is your judgment and opinion of 'An Earnest Appeal from the Annual Council'?"¹ This appeal was augmented by a special editorial in the Review the following week.² "An Open Letter" to the paid working force of the church has followed.³ All carry the same underlying theme - reform, that the work might be finished. Worthy indeed is such an appeal, and needful are the reforms advocated. The Lord alone knows the full extent of our apostasy in the areas of education, health, and dress reform, and the attendant permissiveness that has resulted from these departures from the Blue Print given to this people.

After careful re-reading of all three of these appeals before attempting to evaluate them, and thus give an answer to the question that is being asked, (My opinion means nothing; this analysis is for your own thoughtful consideration) I sensed a strange omission in all - especially the follow-up appeals. While external reforms are advocated, and a general plea is made to enter into a personal experience with Christ rather than letting Him continue to remain outside the door of the Laodicean church, no mention is made of the doctrinal apostasy that has occurred in the church since 1950. The only suggestion that came near to this area was a condensation of a devotional message given at the Annual Council the morning of October 15.⁴ In it the head of the Ministerial Department called for

a converted ministry. He suggested a careful study of "the tremendous message" of Malachi which "deals almost exclusively with this subject" In outlining the messages of Malachi, Elder Dower noted that one of the problems involved "a subtle, distorted theology." No further elaboration appeared in the condensation.⁵

Reports which have been written of this Annual Council state that it was different from previous council sessions. It has been hailed by some as possibly "the most important meeting of the church since 1888 in Minneapolis."⁶ In contemplating what these things mean, and my own reaction and response, my mind was directed to another experience in our past history. In 1903, a meeting was held in Battle Creek, which was marked by confession and unity. The reports of this meeting cheered the heart of Sister White when she was told about it. It was a crucial time in the history of the church. Already the alpha apostasy was developing. The book - The Living Temple - had been written. Its full impact had not yet been revealed. But Sister White, encouraged by the reports that might indicate a change for the better, was about to record a testimony of thankfulness in her diary when her hand was stayed, and the Voice said to her -

"Write it not. No change for the better has taken place. Teachings that are turning souls from the truth are being presented as of great worth. Doctrines are being taught that lead into by and forbidden paths; doctrines that lead men to act in harmony with their own inclinations, and to work out their unsanctified purposes; doctrines that, if received, would destroy the dignity and power of God's people, obscuring the light that would otherwise come to them through God's appointed agencies."⁷

The lesson of this experience stands out clear and distinct. A meeting of confession and unity has no value in the sight of heaven unless there is a corresponding doctrinal purification. The basis of all right action is right thinking. Right thinking is based in truth. Character development - that single element for which Christ is waiting to see in His people⁸ - can come only when our doctrinal concepts are squared with the Truth of divine revelation.

We talk about receiving the Holy Spirit in its fulness; we talk about experiencing the message of 1888, and being covered by the righteousness of Christ. But let us face the fact that the essence of the message of 1888, which was rejected, was "the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth."⁹ The Holy Spirit is to "first" dwell in our hearts as the Spirit of truth. On the other hand, "through false theories and traditions," Satan obtains power over the mind. By thus directing man to false standards, he misshapes the character. But "through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of Truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself."¹⁰

We dare not forget that the Apostle Paul enjoined Timothy - "Take heed unto thyself, and *unto the doctrine*; continue in *them*: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."¹¹ Reforms in life, and practice of the individual or the church - educationally, health-wise, and in dress, etc., - are one thing; but unless accompanied by a doctrinal purification, they will only produce a pharisaical righteousness - a righteousness based upon outward self conduct and behaviour.

Our basic problem is that we refuse to admit that which has obviously taken place in our midst - the omega of apostasy. The leadership of the church has deceived the people, and permitted publications to come to them as standard doctrinal presentations of the church, when in reality they contain deadly heresies. But to this we will not confess. We will call attention to insubordination in areas of outward conduct, and suggest reforms in educational, health, and dress standards, but the leadership of the church is not willing to say - "We have endorsed and sent forth to you with our imprimatur a book - Movement of Destiny -

which misrepresents and falsifies the message God sent through Elder Waggoner in 1888; a book which seeks to justify our illicit fraternization with the Evangelicals which in turn produced the book, Questions on Doctrine.¹² We have permitted a book to come from our publishing houses which questions the spiritual insight of our prophetess to reveal final events of this present age, and which recommends involvement with spiritual Babylon."¹³ When I read and hear such a confession on the part of the leadership of the church, then there will be cause for true rejoicing, provided that action follow such a confession in harmony with actions which marked genuine reformations of the past.

Consider the revival and reformation under King Asa of Judah. Specific action was taken, not mere recommendations. (There is a difference!) Asa "took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim."¹⁴ This resulted in a true meeting of confession and repentance. The spirit of the gathering was such that they voted - not an appeal with suggested recommendations to various institutions of Israel, but a specific course of action - "that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman."¹⁵ This action was carried out even to the extent that Asa removed the queen mother from her position because she continued her idol worship.¹⁶ But such decisive action brought the desired blessing - The Lord "was found of them."¹⁷ Judah who had for a long season been without the "true God" again found their God, and His power to save. He "gave them rest round about."¹⁸

The reformation under Nehemiah stands as an example of what must be done now since the situation is so desperate, and the apostasy has been permitted to go so long unchecked. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, and found that the ministerial leadership had allied themselves with aliens of the faith to the extent that

they had permitted Tobiah to come even into the sacred courts, he literally "cleaned house."¹⁹ The intermingling of the Hebrews with the nations through marriage and other fraternal connections, brought a quick response on the part of Nehemiah. He "contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair."²⁰ "A grandson of the high priest, having married a daughter of the notorious Sanballat, was not only removed from office, but promptly banished from Israel."²¹ Concerning such a work of reform, it is written:

In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is need of men, who like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work, will not hold their peace when wrong is done, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. They will remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that severity to a few may prove mercy to many. They will remember also that in the one who rebukes evil, the spirit of Christ should ever be revealed.²²

This type of reformation has not yet been seen in the midst of the church. Neither is this type of reformation called for in "An Earnest Appeal from the Annual Council", nor in the supportive messages of the President of the General Conference. When the author of Movement of Destiny, and the "Guiding Committee" which approved the book; and the collaborators of Questions on Doctrine are brought to trial, and open confession to the church is demanded, or else expulsion from the church, then we will have some basis upon which to hope and rejoice as Judah of old.²³ (The God to be found now is not a different God from the days of Asa, or Nehemiah.) When the theological faculties at both Loma Linda and Andrews Universities are cleaned up or cleaned out so that the faith of the students sent there are not destroyed by the philosophical concepts presented, the future of the church will be brightened. There is much more to be done than the mere writing of appeals - the hour demands men of action - men who will respond as did Joshua to the word of the Lord; -

"Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? [More than

prayers and tears are required.] . . .Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you."²⁴

That which has been done is too little, and it may even be too late!

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- ¹"An Earnest Appeal from the Annual Conference", Review & Herald, December 6, 1973, pp. 1,4-5
- ²Robert H. Pierson, "Still Here - Why?", Review & Herald, December 13, 1973, pp. 2, 10
- ³Robert H. Pierson, "An Open Letter", Review & Herald, January 3, 1974, pp. 1, 10-11.
- ⁴N. R. Dower, "True Reformation", The Ministry, January, 1974, pp.4-6
- ⁵Ibid., p. 5
- ⁶Editorial, "Annual World Council Spurs Reformation", The Ministry, January, 1974, p. 2. "World publishing leader" quoted as indicated.
- ⁷Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 8, p. 231
- ⁸Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69
- ⁹Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 65
- ¹⁰Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 671
- ¹¹I Timothy 4:16
- ¹²For background on Questions on Doctrine see Movement of Destiny, pp. 476-492. For misrepresentation of Waggoner's position in 1888, see An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, pp. 84-87
- ¹³See Mission Possible by Gottfried Oosterwal, published by the Southern Publishing Association, pp.38-39.
- ¹⁴II Chronicles 15:8
- ¹⁵II Chronicles 15:13
- ¹⁶II Chron. 15:16
- ¹⁷II Chronicles 15:15
- ¹⁸II Chronicles 15:3, 15
- ¹⁹Nehemiah 13:8-9
- ²⁰Nehemiah 13:25
- ²¹Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 674
- ²²Ibid., p. 675
- ²³II Chronicles 15:15
- ²⁴Joshua 7:10, 13

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Elder Wm. H. Grotheer
P. O. Box 237
Florence, Miss., 39073

SUPPLEMENT

Did You Observe?

Adult Sabbath School Lessons, 4th Quarter, 1973, p. 102. The first note read:

"The story of Bethelhem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden 'the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.' Rom. 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life." *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 48-49

Do you observe any deletion marks (. . .)? There are none, but if you had followed carefully the suggestion for "Further Study", you would have found that these sentences were omitted:

Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors.

Why no deletion marks? Perhaps a typist's error, or the proofreader missed. BUT WHY NEED THERE BE ANY DELETION? This is THE question!

In this paragraph in The Desire of Ages, there are three sentences that are inseparably linked by their very wording. Note carefully these three again:

Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

WHY do we seek to avoid the fact that Christ accepted the working of the law of heredity, that this law and its results are revealed in His earthly ancestors. If Christ did not accept what we have to accept, then of what value to us is the example of His sinless life? Is not this a denial of the Third Angel's Message which teaches that His example is again to be seen - "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. Thus by avoiding, or denying the foundation upon which rests the objective of the Third Angel's Message - a group of people who reveal the character of God as demonstrated in the earthly life of Jesus - are we not in reality rejecting the message itself? Why make a farce of the study of "Christ Our Righteousness", if we cannot accept the total reality of that righteousness?

Note the Adult Sabbath School Lessons, 1st Quarter, 1974, p. 30. See the same reference used just before "Think It Through". There are deletion marks this time, but two of the key sentences are missing. WHY? Even as the angel stayed the hand of Sister White in the days of the alpha, and told her - "No change for the better has taken place" - just so today there has been no change from the apostasy resulting from our fraternization with the Evangelicals in the 1950's.