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September/74



"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 WARNING HAS BEEN GIVEN

When Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short wrote their controversial manuscript in regard to the General Conference Session of 1888,¹ the main reaction of the "brethren" centered over the question of what actually happened at the session. Was the message of Righteousness by Faith as given in 1888 by Elders E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones accepted; or was it in reality rejected as Wieland and Short contended? Because of the controversy centering over this basic point, another equally basic warning has been largely overlooked. It concerns the worship of the true Christ vs the worship of the false Christ, or Baal.

Chapter 11 of the manuscript - 1888 Re-Examined - is entitled - "Predictions of Infatuation with a False Christ." The premises which are discussed in this chapter are clearly defined - "(1) Mrs White's predictions that the apostasy of the modern popular churches will lead to a confusion of a false Christ for the true; (2) the grave danger of our becoming involved ourselves in the prevailing general confusion through a failure to recognize our true Lord and Christ in the message of 1888."² In support of the first premise, the following quotations were given:

Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair.³

The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world, - after riches, fame, pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregen-

erate heart. Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are truly serving a false god as were the worshippers of Baal.⁴

Among the deceptions which Satan will use are listed - "multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions."³ In fact, "all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error" will be lost.⁵

It is the second premise - the danger of our involvement in these heresies - which Wieland and Short were most concerned about, and which should likewise be our chief concern. They point out that Satan's attempt to get us involved in the darkness that prevails in the popular Evangelical churches, as well as the other segments of spiritual Babylon, will be the "final death grapple between the enemy and the Body of Christ on earth." These brethren predicted that Satan - - -

will endeavor to secure our allegiance and service through a misconception of the third angel's message in verity. Since that verity is the message of Christ's righteousness, it follows that Satan's final effort to deceive and allure us would be an attempt to infatuate us with Babylon's understanding of the "doctrine" or "tenet" of "justification and righteousness by faith." If he can first lead Babylon into worship of a false Christ; and then lead us to mistake their doctrine of "faith in Christ" for the third angel's message in verity, he will have us, to all intents and purposes, confused with a false Christ, in spite of our verbal protestations.²

Certain plain statements from the pen of inspiration support this prediction:

In His work on earth, Christ saw how, by a disregard of the injunctions of God in regard to righteousness and true doctrines, evil would be made almost indistinguishable from good.⁶

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

We must never forget that in this final death grapple with the enemy, we are dealing with "seducing spirits" and "doctrines of devils."⁸ While terminology may be clear in our minds, the actuality of the deceptive teachings will not be so obvious. In other words, we, in our thinking, separate the names, "Christ" and

"Satan" - as opposite personalities; but we forget that the teachings of the latter will seek to counterfeit the teachings of the former. The difference will not be apparent. Of this we are warned:

Deception will come, and of such a character that if it were possible they would mislead the very elect. If marked inconsistencies and untruthful utterances were apparent in these manifestations, the words from the lips of the Great Teacher would not be needed.⁹

This warning needs to be carefully considered. Jesus Christ is the One who has cautioned us that the deceptions of the last days would be of such a nature that if possible the very elect would be deceived.¹⁰ If error and falsehood were apparent, it would not deceive. Herein lies the grave danger, we read labels, and not the contents. Just because an item is labeled - "The Doctrine of Jesus Christ" - does not make it the doctrine of our Lord. It might very well be the doctrines of devils under the guise of that label. Now the necessary ingredient of any deception is that it contain some measure of truth. Thus on a casual reading, we think that an article, magazine, or a book is teaching truth, when the truth that surfaces is only a facade used by the enemy to cover the subtle error beneath. For example, in the book - Questions on Doctrine - you can read statements that sound like basic Adventist doctrine; and then a few paragraphs either before or after, you can read damnable heresy. However, this publication set the format for much that has followed - a mixture of truth and error.

When these warnings against the subtle errors that the enemy is introducing among us are given, what reaction follows? The leadership which gave their approval to such publications suggest to the laity that the warning voice is merely an "accuser of the brethren" thus adding to their crime of deception of God's professed people. Well did the servant of the Lord ask - "Shall the servants of Jehovah, into whose hearts He puts enmity against every evil work, be assailed as not being right when they call evil evil, and good good?"¹²

The guide lines in regard to our attitude toward the deceptive workings of the enemy, and how we are to actively react to these deceptive influences are spelled out in detail by the pen of inspiration. These guide lines read:

There is to be a constant conflict between good and evil. Those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit's power are to strive with every power of their being to snatch the prey from the seductive influences of men who refuse to obey the word of God, whether they be in high places or in low. Christ's property is not to pass out of His control into the control of the children of darkness.

If this matter were rightly understood and closely guarded, God's servants would feel a continual burden of responsibility to counterwork the efforts of the men who do not know what they are about, because they are enchanted by the delusive allurements of Satan. When God's people are fully awake to the danger of the hour, and work fully on Christ's side, there will be seen a sharp contrast between their course and that of those who are saying, "Good Lord, and good devil," and we shall see much firmer and more decided work done to counterwork the schemes of satanic agencies.¹³

¹R. J. Wieland & D. K. Short, 1888 Re-Examined. A manuscript submitted to the General Conference in 1950, which has been published with the replies of the committees of the General Conference under the title - A Warning and Its Reception.

²Ibid., p. 138 (165)

³Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 414

⁴Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 177

⁵Ibid., p. 178

⁶Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 7

⁷Ibid., p. 52

⁸I Timothy 4:1

⁹Ellen G. White, Letter 68, 1894

¹⁰Matthew 24:24

¹¹Documentation of this fact can be found in Letters to the Churches, by M. L. Andreasen.

¹²Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 10

¹³Ibid., p. 11

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Next month - The thought paper will discuss doctrines from modern Baal worship that are appearing in our publications, focusing special consideration upon a recent publication which fulfills the description of "good Lord, and good devil" all in one issue.

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Sept., 74 (VII-9)

EDITORIALIZING - A former member of the General Conference Staff wrote me in regard to a recent editorial appearing in the Review. He stated: "I trust you got the point in the May 2 issue of the Review & Herald editorial. I almost expected to see your name in the third paragraph." The paragraph in question read: -

Unfortunately, many who in good faith follow and support self-proclaimed reformers do not realize that at least so far as the church paper is concerned, the reformers are attacking "straw men." For example, the REVIEW and HERALD stands squarely with those who re-emphasized to the church in 1888 the refreshing truth of righteousness by faith. It stands with the denomination's historic view on the humanity of Jesus and His priestly atonement in the heavenly sanctuary. And it stands firmly for reform in all areas of life mentioned in the Spirit of Prophecy writings, including diet and health. Critics who consume energy and money endeavoring to correct the church on these matters reveal that they are out of touch with the church in 1974. Like centenarians who refight the Civil War, they are obsessed with denominational conflicts of yesteryear and seem unaware of contemporary issues and dangers within the church.

If the editor had done his home work a little more thoroughly, he would have become aware of the fact that I commended an associate editor for his editorials on the Incarnation in my manuscript - An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On page 91, I wrote - "These editorials echoed the historic position of the Church." However, I also stated - "It must be understood, however, that the Review dated, August 31, 1967, was the last to carry in the masthead the status of the Review as the official organ of the Church. After that date it has simply been - 'The General Church Paper of the Seventh-day Adventists.'" Even the author of the editorials on the Incarnation - Dr Douglass - stated that what he wrote "in no way" bound the church body to action, nor did they "reflect any particular position that a committee" had designated. The fact remains that two of the Consulting Editors still have their imprimaturs on the book - Movement of Destiny - which teaches doctrine contrary to what the editor-in-chief claims his editorial staff believes. As to the thought papers being "obsessed with denominational conflicts of yesteryear" maybe the editor-in-chief will consider the next thought paper too contemporary!

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ANOTHER VOICE OF CONFIRMATION - A brother on the West Coast recently sent to this office a photo-copy of several pages from the book, The Promise of the Father, by C. H. Watson, a former president of the General Conference. On page 97, Elder Watson wrote:

The great God, whose holiness we had cast away from our lives, came down from heaven in the person of His Son, who in sinful flesh, bearing our likeness, was made "to be sin for us."

This is stating the doctrine of the Incarnation according to the historic position of the church. The copyright date of this volume is 1936, over a decade before apostasy entered the church, and undermined this basic teaching. We appreciate

the alertness of our readers who are noting each confirmation of the historic faith committed to our keeping. Never can we forget the counsel - "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." Life Sketches, p. 196

THAT DATE - 1967 - "It has now been established over the course of the last seven years - since 1967 - that there is nothing in this world the international monetary authorities can do to stem the advance of gold, or to stem the collapse of inflation - or to avoid the enormous deflation - the global liquidity crunch - and the resulting depressions." - Myer's Finance & Energy, July 4, 1974, pp. 2-3.

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HAVE YOU MADE ARRANGEMENTS SO THAT EVERY FAMILY IN YOUR CHURCH CAN RECEIVE A COPY OF THE STUDY WITH NOTES FROM TESTIMONIES FOR THE CHURCH, VOL. V? CAN WE REST AT EASE IN ZION WITHOUT GIVING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH TO KNOW WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH? THE HOUR IS LATE: WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEEDS TO BE DONE QUICKLY.

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DO YOU KNOW FOR YOURSELF WHAT THE HISTORIC POSITION OF THE CHURCH HAS BEEN IN REGARD TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION? DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE TO YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE? Two Manuscripts have been prepared by the Foundation to aid you in this study.

An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught
by the Seventh-day Adventist Church ----- \$4.00

In the Form of a Slave ----- \$3.50

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Postscript - Those who are unable to accumulate a minimum of 250 names for the mailing of the special tract - "Seal of God - A Study from Testimonies Vol. 5 with Notes" - and wish it mailed from here rather than distributing it personally, please send the names that you have, plus 10¢ per name, and we will bring together in this office the minimum for a mailing. Each mailing will be dispatched as soon as the total names from all sources reach 250. If there are any questions in regard to this matter, please write. This applies only to US Postal service area.