



"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

LEAVENED BREAD - II

We Christians have had a Passover Lamb sacrificed for us - none other than Christ himself! So let us "keep the feast" with no trace of the yeast of the old life, but with the unleavened bread of unadulterated truth! I Cor. 5:7-8 (Phillips)

The second section of the "statement of consensus" drawn up by the theologians and administrators at Palmdale, California, April 23 - 30, 1976 was entitled - "The Humanity of Jesus Christ in Relation to Righteousness by Faith."¹

In setting forth the God-man as revealed in Jesus Christ, the study group is to be commended on their use of the phrase - "truly God and truly man" in contrast to the phrase found frequently in the study of Christology - "fully God and fully man." I would hope that this distinction indicated that they recognized that when the Pre-Existent Son laid aside the glory which He had with the Father,² that glory included His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and immortality.³ When we recognize this distinction clearly, we have arrived at the basis of an understanding of what constitutes the "divine nature" which finds its source in God, even as the external aspects of "the form of God" which Michael surrendered in becoming Jesus Christ. It is this "divine nature" which must be received by every born again child of humanity if he should reflect the image of Jesus fully, and be a son of God. Yet in a clear perception of this vital distinction between "the form of God" and "the divine nature" which Jesus had, and which we must receive, no one perceives of himself in this experience as becoming a demigod. It is indeed the beginning of a genuine appreciation of the relationship between the humanity of Jesus Christ and Righteousness by Faith.

Having begun well, the study group immediately enters into a fatal compromise with truth. After quoting Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:14,17, and 2 Cor. 5:21, they state:

Not all Christians view these passages alike. For example, for some they mean that Jesus did not commit sin either in word, deed, or thought; for others they mean that Jesus not only committed no sin but was without the inherited tendencies to sin common to fallen humanity.⁴

Reducing this language to the parlance of the laity, it is saying simply that some view these Scriptures to mean that even though Christ took upon Himself the fallen nature of Adam, He did not commit sin in word, deed, or thought, while others reject the idea that Christ took fallen humanity, and instead believe that He was "exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam."⁵ In other words, Jesus bore the "sinless nature of Adam before [the] Fall."⁶ Or to state the matter very bluntly, the choice is between the historical position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the "new look" which developed within the church as a result of the fatal Barnhouse-Martin dialogue of the 1950's, and which has been expressed in the publications just quoted.

And to what conclusion did the study group come? - "Whichever of these views Christians may hold of Christ's humanity, we believe that the central concept is to recognize Jesus as the Saviour of all mankind, and that through His victorious life, lived in human flesh, He provides the link between divinity and humanity."⁴ So now you can hold whatever view you wish in regard to the nature that Christ assumed in the Incarnation and still be a good Seventh-day Adventist. This is an adulteration of truth - leavened bread - and to accept the second position makes it totally impossible to reflect the image of Jesus fully without accepting the basic tenet of the Holy Flesh doctrine - the eradication of the fallen nature.⁷

In arriving at pure unadulterated truth - unleavened bread - in regard to the humanity which Christ assumed in the flesh, one may start at either the point of His pre-existence, and work forward, or he may look at the Cross and see the fulness of the condescension and the completeness of the victory. Let us briefly do both.

We are told that "Christ was one with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid. . . This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths."⁸ This Being did not cease to be at the Incarnation; He only exchanged one form of existence for another - from "the form of God" to the form of a "servant".⁹ It was a slave form that He took to appear as a man. In Him was no sin, but in the form which He took upon Himself, all that makes us slaves, except for the commission of sin, He accepted and experienced. This is clearly stated:

Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. . . He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united Himself with the temple.¹⁰

By experiencing in Himself the strength of Satan's temptation, and of human sufferings and infirmities, He would know how to succor those who should put forth efforts to help themselves.¹¹

In the womb of Mary was prepared by divine stimulation a body of our humiliation. And what went into this body which "a divine spirit" took upon Himself, we are not left in doubt. The prescription reads:

Christ was to take humanity upon Him, not as it was when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden, but as weakened and defiled by four thousand years of sin. He was to come as the Son of man, like every child of Adam, accepting the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were, what was the inheritance bequeathed to Jesus in His human nature, Scripture reveals in the history of those who were the earthly ancestors of our Saviour. With such a heredity, Jesus came as one of us, to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the Example of a sinless life.¹²

This is the only way a true Example could be given; any other way would not have given an example that could be followed by man in the fallen nature of Adam. In other words, it is impossible to relate the concept that Christ took the nature of Adam before the Fall with a true perception of righteousness by faith *except* that the concept of righteousness by faith be limited to justification alone. And this is what the study group did, thus opening the door to give status to the non-historical position of the Church in the matter of the Incarnation. They served up leavened bread.

There is a difference between Jesus Christ and all the other children of Adam, and this difference arises because of the mystery of the pre-existence. Let us reiterate. "The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a *distinct person*, yet one with the Father."⁸ Thus at Bethlehem, this self identity, or Divine Ego, was not created, nor bequeathed to Him by natural generation. He had ever been. In that "painful process"¹³ by which the Eternal Son became a Son of man, the "Divine Ego" [I use this terminology for the want of a better vehicle of expression] assumed humanity - the humanity of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. The Spirit of Prophecy states simply as noted previously - "A divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh."¹⁰ This temple in the Bible is defined as "the likeness of sinful flesh."¹⁴ The servant of the Lord states - "He took upon Him our sinful nature."¹⁵ And we are further informed that the words - "flesh", "fleshly" and "carnal lusts" - embrace the lower corrupt nature, and have "their seat in the body."¹⁶ But this flesh cannot act of itself contrary to the will of God, unless the individual gives consent for these cravings of the body to manifest themselves.

Our identity or "ego" was received by natural generation, and we are powerless of ourselves to resist the strong movings of the flesh to do evil. Jesus Christ on the other hand recognized the constant necessity for the divine power of the Holy Spirit for victory, and ever kept His "Ego" submitted to the revealed will of God. Thus He didn't even in one instance yield to the impulses of His human flesh that called for expression. When this clear distinction is understood, then we come to realize that our "ego", or self, must be crucified, for only in such an experience can the Holy Spirit work in us to the complete conquering of the impulses of our flesh to do evil. When "self" is surrendered fully, completely, and unreservedly, then the image of Jesus can be fully revealed in us. This is the basic relationship between the experience of Jesus Christ in humanity and righteousness by faith which is to be our experience.

Now let us fix our eyes upon the Cross of Calvary. From Bethlehem to Golgotha, Jesus descended "step by step, to the level of fallen humanity."¹⁷ On the Cross, "when He bowed His head and died, He bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth."¹⁸ The power of Satan's kingdom is founded upon only one thing - sin.¹⁹ But Christ in His own body brought the pillars of sin upon which that kingdom rests down to the earth with Him.

These twin pillars are the weakened hereditary nature of man, and the cultivated tendencies to sin which have become in man habit patterns. For thirty years the Son of God as the Son of man demonstrated that the weakened hereditary nature was no excuse for sin. He condemned sin in the flesh - His flesh. But the question remained - Could He carry the weight of the load of man's accumulated transgression and remain faithful and true? Could He sense the need of man chained in the habit patterns of sin? No wonder all heaven looked on with amazement as the cup trembled in the hand of the divine Sufferer! Yet He drank it to the last bitter dregs!

In His closing hours, while hanging upon the cross, He experienced to the fullest extent what man must experience when striving against sin. *He realized how bad a man may become by yielding to sin.* He realized the terrible consequence of transgression of God's law; for the iniquity of the whole world was upon Him.¹³

Though the darkness covering the Cross hid from Christ the sustaining presence of the Father, and though He was unable to see through the portals of the tomb, Jesus,

by faith, grasped the pillars of Satan's kingdom and brought them down, even as Samson in his blindness grasped the two central columns of Dagon's temple, and brought that temple of the devil crashing in a heap of stones. Even as it cost Samson his life, so it cost the Son of God His life. He resisted unto blood - His very own blood - striving against sin.

The picture of a complete Saviour - a Saviour who for thirty three years cumbered with the fallen nature of the descendents of Adam did not sin in word, thought, or deed; and who on the Cross accepted the realization of the depths of the cultivated sins of fallen man - was the heart of the message of 1888. Hear A. T. Jones saying:

O, He is a complete Saviour. He is a Saviour from the sins sommitted, and a Conqueror of the tendencies to commit sins. In Him we have the victory.²⁰

AND - Christ in us through the indwelling Spirit is our hope of glory.

4-7 ¹Review & Herald, May 27, 1976 - Statement on "Christ Our Righteousness", pp.

²John 17:5

³See Desire of Ages, pp. 335-336 for "omnipotence" laid aside; Matt. 24:36 for "omniscience" laid aside; Desire of Ages, p. 669 for "bmnipresence" laid aside; and BC, Vol 5, p. 1127, col. 1 for his having laid aside, "immortality."

⁴Review & Herald, op. cit., p. 5

⁵Questions on Doctrine, p. 383

⁶L. E. Froom, Movement of Destiny, p. 497

⁷See Manuscript - The Holy Flesh Movement, Chapt. IV - "Threads of the Fabric"

⁸Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 5, 1906

⁹Philippians 2:6-7

¹⁰Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, Dec. 20, 1900 (4BC:1147)

¹¹Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, March 18, 1875

¹²Prepublication Draft of Desire of Ages, p. 49 (Andreasen Collection #2)

¹³Ellen G. White, Ms. 29, 1899 (7BC:915)

¹⁴Romans 8:3

¹⁵Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, December 15, 1896

¹⁶Ellen G. White, Adventist Home, pp. 127-128; C. O. L., p. 346

¹⁷Ellen G. White, Our High Calling, p. 17

¹⁸Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, April 25, 1901 (5BC:1108)

¹⁹Ibid., June 28, 1900 (7BC:924)

²⁰A. T. Jones, General Conference Bulletin, 1895, p. 267

COMMENT ON "THE 1888 ERA"

The third section of the Statement of Consensus briefly notes the issues involved in our sad history of 1888. This is probably the first time since Elders R. J. Weiland and D. K. Short submitted their landmark manuscript on 1888¹ that a group of church administrators and theologians in an official statement have admitted that the real issue regarding 1888 was not the Reformation doctrine of Justification by Faith, but

was indeed the rejection of "the 'beginning' of the latter rain and loud cry."² While there will be readers who will conclude that real progress has been made in setting the record straight regarding our rebellion at Minneapolis, a total picture of what was written still reveals that the study group did not come to grips with the magnitude of that rebellion and insubordination, nor faced up to the basic issue of repentance which that experience demands. The servant of the Lord wrote:

All the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been present before them, they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.³

Besides this, there is the "vote" issue that must be settled.⁴ Whether the official record has been kept hidden, or was destroyed to cover up what was done, we do not know; but this must be clarified and publically altered.

The tragedy of this third section by the study group is the affirmation - "We take our stand not only with the messengers whom the Lord used in 1888 to proclaim the most precious message of the righteousness of Christ, but with all who may have faithfully presented it in the years since."² Who all are covered in the last clause is not spelled out, but it is evident that the first clause means Elder A. T. Jones and Dr. E. J. Waggoner. To make such a statement following what was agreed to in the previous two sections is nothing short of attempted deception. Anyone who has read, or will take the time to read Waggoner's Studies in Romans as given at the 1891 G. C. Session knows that he did not understand the message of Paul in Romans to be "the specialized meaning of justification" which this study group declared it to be. Also anyone familiar with the 1895 studies which Elder A. T. Jones gave at the General Conference, or the position Waggoner wrote out in his book, Christ and His Righteousness finds it utterly impossible to harmonize this position with the permissive conclusions on the Incarnation drawn up by the study group at Palmdale, California.⁶

The affirmation of standing with Jones and Waggoner is mere lip service without the corresponding evidence, in fact evidence to the contrary. Would to God that every laymen reading this Statement of Consensus will have the "first love" of the Ephesian period of the Church that "tried them that called themselves apostles and [were] not, and. . . found them liars."⁷

¹R. J. Weiland & D. K. Short, 1888 Re-Examined. Written in 1950

²"Christ Our Righteousness", Review & Herald, May 27, 1976, p. 6

³Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series A, No.6, p. 20

⁴See Thought Paper, "Ellen G. White Vs Ellen G. White Estate", March, 1976, p.5

⁵E. J. Waggoner, Studies in Romans, #10. Cmp with Statement of Consensus, p. 4

⁶A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message" #13, G. C. Bulletin, 1895, p. 232:

Commenting on John 1:14 - "This world does not know any other flesh of man, and has not known any other since the necessity for Christ's coming was created. Therefore, as this world knows only such flesh as we have, as it is now, it is certainly true that when 'the Word was made flesh,' He was made just such flesh as ours is. It cannot be otherwise." Waggoner wrote: "The fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is the 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.'" Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 26-27

⁷Revelation 2:2