



"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

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)

For several months now I have been made aware of a theological controversy which has been developing in Australia. It involves the subject of righteousness by faith, and the nature of the humanity which Christ assumed in the Incarnation. Naturally with this came the subject of 1888 itself. Now in the latest Review to come to my desk,¹ there is a report of a conference held in Palmdale, California involving administrators and theologians from Australia with their counterparts in the General Conference and professors from Andrews University.² While the report carefully stated that it was not "a formal presentation of doctrine, nor. . .an official pronouncement by church leaders", nevertheless because it is presented as "a statement of consensus" by these administrators and theologians, it will mark the course of the doctrinal stance the church will take in the days ahead.

The controversy in Australia involves a paper prepared by Mrs Desmond Ford, wife of the head of the Bible Department at Avondale College.³ According to the information available, this paper was challenged by Pastor F. A. Basham at a hearing among Church leaders at Avondale, February 3 - 4, this year. One of the points raised by Elder Basham caused Robert Brinsmead to issue what he called a "Thought Paper" which he asked not to be circulated among church members.⁴ Brinsmead noted a key position held by Mrs Ford, and stated - "It is true that I do agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Ford."⁵ The statement in question reads - "Righteousness by faith is justification alone."⁶ This is the basic emphasis of Brinsmead's Decade II teaching. However, he claims that this teaching by the Ford's preceded his own acceptance of the position.⁷

This position on righteousness by faith - moved by the Fords and seconded by Brinsmead - was the first point discussed in the "statement of consensus" released in the Review. It stated - "We agree that when the words *righteousness* and *faith* are connected (by "of," "by," et cetera) in Scripture, reference is made to the experience of justification by faith."⁸ And the unstated inference is that the phrase - "righteousness by/of faith" applies only to justification when used in the Bible. We do not need to take much time with this point, except to quote two texts, and let you, the reader, decide if this conclusion is true.

The first one reads:

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the

hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?⁹

Observe the phrase - "the hope of righteousness by faith" - and compare this relationship with Romans 8:19-25, noting carefully the expressions: "the manifestation of the sons of God;" those having "the first fruits of the Spirit;" and "the redemption of our body," as Paul relates all these ideas to being "saved by hope." In regard to the phrase - "obey the truth" - check the definition of "righteousness by faith" which means - "the righteousness of Christ, which is pure unadulterated truth."¹⁰ Are these expressions involving righteousness by faith, and the text so states, involved only with justification? Or do they cover the whole gambit of man's growth in grace?

Now for the second text - and it speaks for itself:

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith!¹¹

The other main aspect of the "statement of consensus" - the humanity the Son of man assumed in the Incarnation - will be discussed in the next thought paper - "Leavened Bread - 2"

It should be increasingly clear to the laity who desire to know truth for themselves of the need to have assembled a library of source materials that can be made readily available for such study; and equipment for their reproduction for those who wish to avail themselves of this material, but who are unable to come to the library. This is the goal which the Adventist Laymen's Foundation has in their plans by setting up a study and resource materials center in the Ozarks of Arkansas. It does require means to house this material, and purchase the necessary equipment so that it can be made available to those who wish to pursue truth. In the light of the need of the present hour, and the lateness of time, we invite those who have such means to make them available to complete the project which has now been started.

¹¹"Christ Our Righteousness", Review & Herald, May 27, 1976, pp. 4-7

²See footnote (p.4) to the above noted report for names of those who were involved in "the study group." The names of some who have written authoritatively in recent years on the topics discussed are missing. This should tell the laity something.

³Gillian Ford, The Soteriological Implications of the Human Nature of Christ, a 53 pp manuscript in which the author claims indebtedness "to each member of the Avondale College's theological faculty" for their contributions of helpful criticisms. (p. 3)

⁴R. D. Brinsmead, "The Current Righteousness by Faith Dialogue". A nine page "thought paper" published "for responsible brethren already involved in the righteousness by faith controversy." It was requested by the author - "Please do not circulate among church members."

⁵Ibid., p. 1

⁶Ford, op. cit., p. 9

⁷Brinsmead, op. cit., p. 1 - "It is true that I do agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Ford. It is not true to say, however, that Dr. Ford is following my teachings. He was unopposed in teaching these things before I saw the light in his positions."

⁸Review & Herald op. cit., p. 4

⁹Galatians 5:4-7

¹⁰Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 65

¹¹Hebrews 11:7

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BATTLE LINES BEING DRAWN - ARE YOU READY?

"The Sabbath is God's Day. But Jesus said that man was not made for the Sabbath; the Sabbath was made for man. This suggests the two prongs of the attack I wish to recommend: the first has to do with man in a right relationship to God and the second with man in a right relationship to nature. Christians must learn of this twofold meaning of the Sabbath and come to a place where they practice Sabbath observance and also use their energies as members of Caesar's kingdom to get secular nations to do the same, albeit for different reasons. Primarily Christians celebrate the Lord's Day because it belongs to God and in it they can worship him suitably and with reverential trust and fear. But the Sabbath has in it more than the religious, or man's relationship to God in worship and commitment. It was and is part of God's natural revelation for man in nature itself. Men, converted or unconverted, are a part of nature and need the Sabbath as earthy people who in their bodies are inextricably dependent on water, air, and soil.

"It is important*for Christians to know that they are tied to the Sabbath because it was made for man's physical well-being. And it is this aspect of the Sabbath that can be used to bring unredeemed men to the place where they will keep it also - but for different reasons that may be devoid of the primary function of the Sabbath, which is the worship of God. The reason Christians should advance to convince unregenerate men to keep the Sabbath is that they need it, that it will work for their good, and that their failure to keep it is devastating for men and assures them of disaster. In this sense one could argue that outward Sabbath observance for unbelievers may be a form of pre-evangelism and could open the door to the propagation of the Gospel. . . .

"The proper use of the Lord's Day, wholly apart from any religious implications, can come about by free choice or it can be legislated. It is highly unlikely that it will be accomplished by voluntary action by the citizenry generally. Therefore the only way to accomplish the objective is by force of legislative fiat through the duly elected officials of the people. . . .

"Our faith commits us to the proposition that we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. There could be no better way for us to fulfill the second table of the law than to press for social legislation that would benefit our neighbors, and by our efforts show that we love them as we love ourselves. This would be one of the highest forms of social action to spring from our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. It would mark our concern for our fellow man and identify us with common and lost humanity in an area of great need."

--- Harold Lindsell, Editor, "The Lord's Day and Natural Resources",
Christianity Today, May 7, 1976, pp. 9, 12.

*Supply word, "even"

The Supreme Court of the United States - whose decrees were declared to be "the law of the land" by a president of the United States - upheld the constitutionality of the Sunday "blue laws" of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts on May 29, 1961, against attacks that they abridge the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of religion. The rationale of the Court's ruling is that these laws are regulations aimed at protecting the health of the citizens of the State.

Liberty News, June, 1961, Vol. 7, No. 6, p. 1

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THE CAPITAL'S CARDINAL

"The newest Roman Catholic Cardinal in the United States and the only American in a class of nineteen announced April 27 will be remembered by evangelicals primarily for his early interest in the Key 73 evangelistic drive. William Baum, now archbishop of Washington D. C., headed a small diocese in Missouri at the time, and the Key 73 headquarters offices were located in St. Louis. He made the diocese an official participant, one of five representing Roman Catholicism in the endeavor."

Christianity Today, May 21, 1976, p. 37

Two questions: 1) Ever hear of Key 73 before? and 2) Have you been hearing over the all-news stations, the reports assessing the new Cardinal's chances to become a future pope? (From a bishop of a small diocese in 1973 to a Cardinal in 1976 is moving up the ladder fast!)

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CURIA ON THE SLIGO

Curia - "the body of congregations, tribunals, and offices through which the pope governs the Roman Catholic Church." Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.

"WHEN you and I joined the General Conference family something special happened to us. This is not just 'another office.' What goes on in these three buildings is of unique significance to the God whom we serve. Listen: 'When the judgment of the General Conference, *which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth*, is exercised, private independence and private judgement must not be maintained, but be surrendered.' Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 492 (italics supplied).

"Did you notice those sobering words - 'The General Conference, *which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth*'? They should cause every one of us to ponder well their import. When we begin our work in the General Conference office we become part of what inspiration describes as *God's highest authority on earth*. This is a tremendous thought, freighted with great responsibility."

Elder R. H. Pierson, Talk given at General Conference worship,
January 9, 1976, published in the Ministry, June, 1976, p. 7

Note the misuse of the statement from Testimonies, Vol. 3 as used by Elder Pierson.

This was first written about 1875. In 1901, the servant of the Lord stood before the General Conference session and declared:-

That these men should stand in a sacred place to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be, - that is past. *General Conference Bulletin*, April 3, 1901, p. 25

Is it past? Or has a "new curia" sprung up on the Sligo? Even in the 1909 statement in regard to the authority of the General Conference, it does not carry the implications given by the "first minister" of the Church, but rather rests the authority in the General Conference Sessions - not the officers, and committees operating from a three-building complex. See Testimonies, Vol. 9, pp. 260-261. And the statement found in Vol. 9 would be valid only till the time when the Church would be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. See Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 249. The decision rendered by the heavenly court would determine its continued application. If found wanting, no longer would such authority reside even in the General Conference Sessions.

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FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

This organization is to hold its world convention at Miami Beach, Florida, July 5-10, 1976. A brochure telling of the guest speakers has been circulated to the mailing list of their official publication - The Voice. The time during the afternoon session from Tuesday through Saturday is allotted to "Teaching" in the Grand Ballroom of the Americana Hotel, while in adjoining rooms a Ministry in the Holy Spirit is to be conducted. On two of these days, a section of the afternoon teaching session is to be presented by Walter R. Martin, and on Saturday he is the leader of the Ministry in the Holy Spirit.

Now who is Walter R. Martin? Remember the Barnhouse-Martin dialogue? Remember how Martin was given free and unlimited access to the Ellen G. White files in Takoma Park? Have you read recently the Letters to the Churches, by the late Elder M. L. Andreasen? If not, it will refresh your memory.

Do you also remember the result of this dialogue between Barnhouse and Martin, and our Church leaders? It was the book - Questions on Doctrine - in which our basic doctrines were altered. Now here is this man - Walter R. Martin, a teacher at Melodyland School of Theology - a charismatic institution - now fully revealed for what he was - an agent of Satan to bring about the compromise of God's Church with the truth committed to it. And, we are still holding to some of these repudiations of that truth, unashamed, except for the fact that our Book Centers no longer have the book available. But there has been no explanation, or statement of repentance coming from the curia on the Sligo.

IX - 7 (July, 1976)

Note - Due to rising paper costs, we are changing our format. Hope you will like it. Let us know. WHG