



"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

HAS ROME CHANGED?

As a result of Vatican II Council, the impression gained acceptance in the minds of the Protestant world that Rome has changed. This concept has also been voiced within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Attending the Vatican II Council as observers were M. E. Loewen of the Religious Liberty Department, R. F. Cottrell of the Review, B. B. Beach from the Northern European Division, who has been prominent in ecumenical discussions with the World Council of Churches, and the late Arthur S. Maxwell who at the time was editor of the Signs. The latter gave voice to his impressions in a sermon delivered at the University Church in Loma Linda.

After mentioning the new "friendliness" of the atmosphere at the Vatican, Elder Maxwell stated there was another aspect revealed in the Pope's opening speech of the final session - love. Here are his words:

It was a beautiful speech. . . Do you know what his subject was? Love. I quote one paragraph:

The council offers to the church and especially to us a panoramic view of the world. Can the church, can we, do anything but look upon it and love it? Such a contemplation was one of the chief activities of the present session. Again and above all, love - love to all men today, whoever they are, wherever they are. While other currents of thought and action proclaim other principles for building up human civilization such as power, wealth, science, struggle, self-interest, and the like, the church proclaims love. This council is a solemn act of love for humanity.

I thought of offering this whole speech to our president - that is to the new president if there is one. You know, that speech of the pope's could have been given at a General Conference Session. It might be better than some we've had. You know the whole thing was a picture of the church loving humanity. Now, we've got to adapt our thinking a bit. There was no condemnation here of Protestants, no suggestion of a persecution of anybody,

but love, unfeigned love: for everybody - the separated brethren and people who don't belong and all people of all faiths and religions. Very, very wonderful change and a very, very significant change.¹

While admitting that the Roman Catholic Church "on matters of faith and doctrine has not changed,"² Maxwell considered the Declaration on Religious Liberty by the Vatican Council "a tremendous change" in setting "itself alongside Protestants in declaring that every man has the basic human right to choose his own religion and follow the dictates of his own conscience."³ And what conclusions did he draw from this? Read carefully what he said:

Whether the church will stay by that forever, I don't know. No, I'm not predicting the future - I couldn't say - but it does alter the situation in the Catholic Church and should alter our own attitude towards that church. . .³

What suggestion did Elder Maxwell make? Note:

We must rethink our approach to our Roman Catholic friends. How can we reject an outstretched hand and be Christians?⁴

We have restructured our concepts of Roman Catholicism. In the second brief filed by the legal counsel for the officials of the Church in the Merikay Silver v. PPPA case, we clearly indicated "there was a period in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the denomination took a distinctly anti-Roman Catholic viewpoint," - but all of this "has now been consigned to the historical trash heap so far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned."⁵ Further we have stated that "for a period in its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had an aversion to Roman Catholicism and especially to the papal form of church government - an aversion shared by virtually all Protestant denominations." But now "it is not good Seventh-day Adventism to express. . . an aversion to Roman Catholicism as such."⁶

Can we really say with Elder Maxwell - we cannot predict the future in regard to the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore, our attitude toward Roman Catholicism should be altered as has been done by our church leadership? Do we have no light?

Is it not time to open the book - Great Controversy - and reread the chapter,

"Aims of the Papacy"? Note the very first paragraph of the chapter:

Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. . . The time was when Protestants placed a high value upon the liberty of conscience which had been so dearly purchased. They taught their children to abhor popery, and held that to seek harmony with Rome would be disloyalty to God. But how widely different are the sentiments now expressed.⁷

And can we know what the future will be?

The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. . . Let the restraints now imposed by secular government be removed, and Rome be re-instated to her former power and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.⁸

We might ask why has this new attitude toward Rome come about - not only among Protestants in general, but also in the legal pronouncements of the Seventh-day Adventist church? Again the servant of the Lord has clearly stated:

It is not without reason that the claim has been put forth in Protestant countries, that Catholicism differs less widely from Protestantism than in former times. There has been a change; but the change is not in the papacy. Catholicism indeed resembles much of the Protestantism that now exists; because Protestantism has so greatly degenerated since the days of the Reformers.⁹

When we enter upon "the track of Romanism"¹⁰ and seek to coerce men into a mold, and control the religious experience and activities of all the members of the church, then we see very little difference between the hierarchical patterns of the Catholic church, and our own "orders of clergy". Why then should we have an aversion toward Roman Catholicism? We shouldn't - for we have become like them!

The tragedy of all of this change is that it is being brought about under the cloak of "love", and "Christlikeness." "The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged. Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today."⁹ Why should we be so deceived? There are two reasons. 1) We have stepped off the platform of truth, and have altered our basic doctrines.¹¹ 2) Our hearts are not being renewed by the Holy Spirit.

We are devoid of the Spirit of God.¹² These are the very two essentials that would make us fool-proof against the stealthy by rapid progress of the papal power. Note:

None but those who have planted their feet firmly upon the foundation of truth, and whose hearts are renewed by the Spirit of God, are proof against her [papal] influence.¹³

While blindness covers the sight of "Israel", there are voices out in what we term, "Babylon" who sense what is taking place. Eric Gurr, who on October 1, 1975, was installed as Pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada commented in an interview relative to Billy Graham - "What worries me about his [Graham's] stance is that the ecumenical movement is being gradually taken over by Rome." The reporter, Tom Harpur, Religion editor of the Star, noted that "Gurr is convinced that the growing friendliness among the churches will end in one world-wide super-church ruled from Rome." "In spite of the current renewal in the Roman Church, [Gurr] believes that Rome is farther from the principles of the Protestant Reformation today than 400 years ago."¹⁴

Does this not concur with the prophecies of the book of Revelation? Will not the woman in scarlet ride again? While Rome through its Vatican II Council seemingly opened the Bible for Catholics to read and study, we who have had the light of those Scriptures are closing our Bibles, - especially those books which warn us of the coming resurgence of the Papacy - Daniel and Revelation. The seventh chapter of Daniel still states the same things it always has. Revelation 13 still sounds the warning it did when the church was first organized. The lines are drawn clear and distinct. There are only two women in the book of Revelation - one in white, and the one in scarlet. There is none in either brown, nor gray. There is no reaching over the abyss to clasp the outstretched hand of Romanism.

However, there is a picture in Revelation of a coming union of religious forces - the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet send forth their spiritual power to unite the world in one great confrontation against God.¹⁵ Would we know what "love"

and "Christlikeness" will be manifest? Let us read:

If the reader would understand the agencies to be employed in the soon coming contest, he has but to trace the record of the means which Rome employed for the same object in ages past. If he would know how papists and Protestants united will deal with those who reject their dogmas, let him see the spirit which Rome manifested toward the Sabbath and its defenders.¹⁶

Is it not time to recover from the "trash heap" where our church leaders have "consigned" our "anti-Roman viewpoint", and clean off the soiled truth, and let the faith of our fathers shine forth once more in its genuine luster?

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- ¹A. S. Maxwell, "Impressions of Vatican II". A sermon delivered in the University Church, Loma Linda, Calif., transcribed in Present Truth, No. 3, 1968, pp. 3-4
- ²Ibid., p. 6 ³Ibid., p. 11 ⁴Ibid., p. 13
- ⁵Merikay Silver v. PPPA, Second Brief of Deft (C-74-2025 CBR #84) March 3, 1975 p. 4, Footnote. Legally filed as Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. PPPA; (& General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 30
- ⁷Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 563
- ⁸Ibid., p. 564 ⁹Ibid., p. 571
- ¹⁰Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 362 (1962 edition)
- ¹¹See "No 'New Organization'", Watchman, What of the Night?, November, 1973
- ¹²See Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 210: - "But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." Vol. 8, p. 250 - "My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed."
- ¹³Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 567
- ¹⁴Tom Harpur, "Fundamentalism Thrives at Jarvis Street Baptist Church", Toronto, Star, March 6, 1976
- ¹⁵Revelation 16:13-14
- ¹⁶Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 574

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IX-6 (June, 1976)

SPECIAL NOTICE - As of July 1, 1976, please direct all correspondence to Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 178, Lamar, Ark., 72846. The July thought paper may be delayed slightly due to the transition of operations. We do solicit your prayers, and patience during this transitional period.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 Tracts - For several years we had sensed a muting of the prophetic proclamation found in these two chapters as to the "little horn", "the beast", and the number "666". At that time we prepared two tracts which contain the fundamental and historic Adventist position on these prophecies. They are still available for distribution. See the Order Form.

The Challenge of the Book of Revelation - II - This second study on tape A-04, gives consideration to the present ecumenical attitude toward the powers of apostasy in the light of what the book of Revelation actually reveals. This sermon though prepared years ago during the active ministry of Elder Grotheer in the regular organization has an up-to-date message in the light of present developments. All tapes from the library may be obtained for \$2.00 (two sermons per tape.)

New Tape A-08 - Side #1 'Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son'
Side #2 'Visions of God' (An overview of Ezekiel 8, 9, 10, 11.)

The Taped Ministry - Each tape sent out is spot checked to see if it has been properly recorded from the master tape. Since we do not check it completely there is the possibility of a faulty transcription due to several material and/or mechanical factors. If you should receive such a tape, we will replace the same without cost to you. Just let us know.

Personnel Needed - We have available now on campus a 45 ft trailer with a 12' by 16' room addition. The trailer is not the best in the world, but it will give temporary residence to a young couple who wish to unite their talents in the program of the Foundation, or to a middle-aged lady who might wish to find a residence and give companionship to Sister Miller on the campus. The couple we are interested in finding should know gardening, and be willing to lead in this activity. If interested, please send a resume to P. O. Box 178, Lamar, Ark., 72846. We will reply to each received. Also if possible include a non-posed snap shot.

A Storm Breaking - There is a storm brewing in the Adventist sky, darker and as devastating as any tornado which has swept through the land. The controversy over righteousness by faith in Ausutralia has reached our headquarters in Washington. This not only involves Brinsmead's present emphasis but also the theologians at the Australian College. We had planned to pursue the present subject as found in this and recent past thought papers. But it is becoming evident that we must reconsider for our readers the basic historic faith of the Adventist Movement in the light of the coming storm. So while more research is being made as to our prophetic thinking as revealed in legal briefs, we will begin in the next thought paper to lay the ground work for a consideration of our historic faith, which was to make us a unique people to accomplish a special purpose that God designed that we should fulfill.

1967 Again - "Since 1967, gold has been walking a tightrope. Since that day the U. S. has continued to press for the excommunication of gold from the monetary system. It has threatened repeatedly during the last nine years to demonetize the metal. It has taken very strong steps in this direction." Myers Finance & Energy, April 23, 1976, p. 1. Would you know more about the significance of 1967? Be sure to obtain and read and study - The Times of the Gentiles Fulfilled - a monograph published by the Foundation. See Order Form.