



"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

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT WE FACE TODAY

In the Great Controversy we read concerning the Papacy¹- "She is silently growing in power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. . . Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike." Is the hour when the Papacy will strike, the most important event we face today? NO! In Country Living, we read - "The trade unions will be one of the agencies that will bring upon this earth a time of trouble such as has not been seen since the world began."² Is this time of trouble the most important event we face today? NO! Documentation is not lacking from political sources that Communist infiltration is growing in our own national government to a point where it has reached an alarming level. Should the objective be realized - the take over of our government - would this be the most important event which we face today? NO! What then is the *most* important event? We have reached the final and last generation of men, and we face the close of human probation!

Because of this fact, a text from the book of Revelation trumpets forth to us for recognition and evaluation. It is the edict of our High Priest when He completes His work of final atonement. This edict declares - "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy let him be holy still."³ Consider the repeat of the word - "still". If I am to be still "holy" after Jesus ceases His intercession, then I must "holy" when the decree goes forth. Since the decree works no change, only fixes beyond all change our earthly state of character, then I must be "holy" prior to the issuing of the decree. Not only is this event the most important event which we face today, but also the question of "how" this state of holiness might be realized is the most important question which we face today. All other research, all other study and investigation should take second place to this all-important question!

This verse in Revelation consists of contrasting couplets - unjust and righteous; filthy and holy. From the letter of the Vienne and Lyons Martyrs in the 2nd Century, which antedates any manuscript upon which the New Testament text is based, we find that the first part of this verse reads - "He that is lawless (Greek - anomos) let him be lawless; and he that is righteous [or justified] let him be righteous (lit., 'be justified') still."⁴ The two verbs which are connected with the other couplet, filthy and holy, are in the passive thus projecting "the constant middle sense of passive verbs when the act depends on a man's self."⁵ For example one clause would literally read - "Let the filthy pollute himself still." Thus the action indicated by the verbs in this verse reveals the two - not four - distinct groups of people when probation's hour closes - *the dead and the living!* This edict, then, closing

the final atonement, reflects the results of the judgment of the dead, and the judgment of the living.

Summarizing Revelation 22:11, we find:- those who have died in Christ have been justified, and that justification has been made eternal; and those who are alive of the redeemed, reflect that Holy Likeness fully, and are decreed by their Divine Intercessor forever to reflect that image. But this holiness rather than being imputed - justified - arises from the *impartation* of the divine nature. Thus will be fulfilled the prophecy - "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath *made herself* ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is *the righteousness of saints*."⁶ Commenting on this same group of saints, the servant of the Lord wrote: -"Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. *Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort*, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil."⁷ This does not permit a shift to the left, solely by grace, which is justification only; neither does it permit a shift to the right - salvation by works. It is to be a cooperative picture, God and man working for the objective of God's glorification - His character fully revealed in a group of fallen humanity.

The group who will be declared holy when probation's hour closes are clearly defined in other references in the book of Revelation. They are the "remnant" of the seed of the woman, and they "keep" the commandments of God.⁸ This "seed" not only gives mental assent that the Commandments should be kept - this is the theological position of the woman in white, and had been the position of the true church through all of its ages - but the remnant experience the reality of this theoretical theology; they keep the commandments! The law which Paul declares to be "holy, just, and good"⁹ becomes through the New Covenant operation by the Holy Spirit¹⁰ so much a part of their lives that the decree that closes probation declares that they shall be holy still. This picture in Revelation 12 is the Biblical source of the statement:

I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary, through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully.¹¹

The original Seed of the woman was the Man-Child. His victory caused the Voice in heaven to declare - "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ."¹² That "power" was the "spirit of holiness" because of which the grave could not hold Him.¹³ When the final vindication is given in the lives of the "remnant of her seed", this same Voice will again be heard proclaiming - "They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels."¹⁴ From the deadly bondage of their fallen natures, they have experienced a spiritual resurrection revealing an impartation of life - even the divine nature.¹⁵

Revelation 14 tells us that this group is the end product of the Three Angel's Messages. Following the Third Angel, the declaration is made - "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."¹⁶ They not only give lip service to the message of the Third Angel, but they also experience the verity of that message. Several wrote to Sister White after the 1888 Minneapolis meeting asking if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message. Her reply was - "It is the third angel's message in verity."¹⁷ We may study about 1888, and we may know all the ins and outs of the rejection of the message. We may call the attention of

the church to this phase of our history by manuscripts, and series of lectures but unless we understand the objective of the message itself, we are going to come short in the final hour when the decree goes forth. We may still be talking about the theology of the church - that men ought to keep the commandments of God - instead of sensing the significance of the "remnant" in relationship to the woman when probation's hour closes.

We must ever keep in mind that the basis of commandment keeping is found in the prologue which God Himself had proclaimed with His holy law - "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."¹⁸ Only when we realize the redemption from the bondage of Egypt (sin), can we start on the path of imparted righteousness. What we have failed to realize is that "the church [the woman in white] has turned back from following Christ her leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt."¹⁹ It is impossible to join this retreat toward Egypt, and obtain the deliverance from Egyptian bondage which permits the realization which is experienced by the "remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God".⁸ Ours is to determine with which group we shall be associated.²⁰

The experience which leads to the final determination of filthiness is also the result of a religious involvement. In Revelation 17 it speaks of another woman clothed in purple and scarlet through whom "the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." They drink from the golden cup in her hand, which is "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."²¹ (The word translated, filthiness, in this verse is not the same word in Rev. 22:11 translated, filthy, although the final result will be the same.) This woman - Babylon the great - has become "the habitations of devils."²² Those who drink of her doctrines reflect the image of their source, even as those who drink from the cup in the hand of Jesus will reflect His image. We read:

Through yielding to satanic influences, men will be transformed into fiends, . . . become the habitation of dragons, and Satan will see in an apostate race his masterpiece of evil, - men who reflect his own image.²³

Herein lies the great deception. When men declare that it is impossible for the law of God to be kept; that it is by grace alone, and has been done for us in Jesus, and that our perfection rests upon the acceptance of the fact of an accomplished act; and when these same theologians place Christ in His earthly life on a level above the plane of fallen man, they are but echoing the sentiments of the arch apostate who declared from the beginning of the controversy that "the law of God could not be obeyed" by a creature.²⁴ The end result will be - even while giving lip service to Seventh-day Adventism - a reflection of the image of satan.

Basic in this false theology is the failure to differentiate between the state required for man at death, and the state required for the living when probation's hour closes. But in this differentiation is found the genius of the Advent Movement raised up by God in 1844. This differentiation is the thread that is woven into our history of 1888, and the deviations that have taken place in such intermovements of the church as reflected in the Holy Flesh Movement of Indiana, and the Brinsmead Awakening of the past decade. This we shall analyze in the next thought paper.

¹Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 581

²Ellen G. White, Country Living, p. 10

³Revelation 22:11-12

- ⁴Jamison, Fauset, and Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 604
⁵Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, Vol. IV, p. 747
⁶Revelation 19:7-8
⁷Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 425
⁸Revelation 12:17 ⁹Romans 7:12 ¹⁰Hebrews 10:15-16
¹¹Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. 71
¹²Revelation 12:10 ¹³Romans 1:4
¹⁴Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 636
¹⁵II Peter 1:4 ¹⁶Revelation 14:12
¹⁷Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 1, 1890
¹⁸Exodus 20:2
¹⁹Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 217
²⁰For full presentation obtain taped sermon - "Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son!"
²¹Revelation 17:2, 4 ²²Revelation 18:2
²³Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 14, 1896
²⁴Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, p. 761

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A CRISIS

The Palmdale Accord entered into by theologians and administrators of the Church has produced a crisis rather than the unity of the Holy Spirit. (It is true that these men professed to have achieved a "unity of spirit and viewpoint." But this is vastly different than a unity in the Holy Spirit.) These men agreed that "when the words *righteousness* and *faith* are connected (by 'of', 'by' et cetera) in Scripture, reference is made to the experience of justification."¹ Note the "period." In other words, they are saying according to the Bible, righteousness by faith is justification alone. Then in the same accord, these men declare, after enlarging the concept of "righteousness", "thus Seventh-day Adventists have often used the phrase 'righteousness by faith' *theologically* to include both justification and sanctification."¹ But if the first concept is true, then the second acknowledgement as to the position of the church *theologically* is unscriptural!

As if this weren't enough to add to the confusion, these learned men of the Church concluded the statement on "Justification and Sanctification" with this sentence: "Sanctification thus begins with the new birth *and* justification, and all flow from the righteousness of Christ."¹ Is the "new birth" something apart from "justification"?² It has already been agreed that justification involves an "experience." What is this experience if it is not the "new birth"? Should not this sentence have read - "Sanctification begins with the new birth *or* justification, the whole experience thus flowing from the righteousness of Christ."

Let us consider the crisis in which this accord places us as Seventh-day Adventists. If the idea that both sanctification and justification are included in the phrase "righteousness by faith," and that this concept is not Biblical, then upon what have we based such a theological position? The answer is clear - the men whom the Lord sent to the Church with "a most precious message" in 1888,³ - and the servant of the Lord who stood behind these men. The real crisis over justification by faith concerns, therefore, the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy in the area of theology,

and the heart of the message of 1888.

This crisis has been painfully pointed up by a recent publication from the Southern Publishing Association - Perfection, the Impossible Possibility. Containing essays by four men of the Church - Douglass, Heppenstall, LaRondelle, and M. Maxwell - the conclusions drawn in these presentations thwart any "unity of spirit and viewpoint", let alone "the unity of the Holy Spirit." One reviewer of the book has with clear insight classified these essays into two categories:- the possibles, Douglass and Maxwell; the impossibles, Heppenstall and LaRondelle. And with keen perception the following table was compiled by the reviewer as to the number of times each of the authors used the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to substantiate their position:⁴

<u>Author</u>	<u>Bible</u>	<u>Spirit of Prophecy</u>
Douglass	47	101
Heppenstall	53	8
LaRondelle	232	4
Maxwell	60	148

This is followed by the inescapable conclusion:

It cannot be doubted that sinlessness is not usually implied in the Biblical concept of perfection; the "impossibles" have proved their point. Yet they have largely ignored the Spirit of Prophecy in doing so, as the above table shows. It is difficult to deny that Ellen G. White taught sinlessness as a requirement for translation; many of her statements are simply too plain to be explained away.⁴

Then the question is asked - "WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?" The evidence compiled in the book review on Perfection, and the Palmdale Accord on "Righteousness by Faith" spells only one answer - a crisis of the greatest magnitude!

¹"Christ Our Righteousness", Review, May 27, 1976, p. 4

²A. John Clifford & Russell R. Standish, Conflicting Concepts of Righteousness by Faith in the Seventh-day Adventist Church - Australian Division, pp. 74-75

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91

⁴"Book Review", Southern Accent, September 16, 1975, p. 6