



# "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 DIVINE PROVISION (Part One)

Consider the following texts of Scripture:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.<sup>1</sup>

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. . . So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.<sup>2</sup>

The whole duty of man is summed up in the Law of God, and by it he is to be judged. Further, if a man keeps the laws, statutes, and judgments of God, he shall find life therein. To this divine way of life - keeping the commandments - God signed His name. After declaring - "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them" - He stated - "I am the Lord."<sup>3</sup> This is the same principle which had been enunciated in Eden. Do and thou shalt live; disobey, and thou shalt die.<sup>4</sup> We are told:

The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden, - perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament.<sup>5</sup>

In the light of these statements from Scripture, and the summation given in the Gift of Prophecy, would you say with Paul:

I consent unto the law that it is good. . . I delight in the law of God after the inward man.<sup>6</sup>

**BUT** in the same Book, I also read the following:

Can the Ehtiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.<sup>7</sup>

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.<sup>8</sup>

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?<sup>9</sup>

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind,

have taken us away.<sup>10</sup>

In the light of these verses, would we also confess with Paul -

I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?<sup>11</sup>

Now let us do some very fundamental reasoning and honest thinking - as free as possible from the deceitfulness of our own hearts. By coming to Jesus in confession, my past is covered. God declares the righteousness of Jesus "for the remission of sins that are past."<sup>12</sup> Do I have anymore strength today to direct my steps than I had yesterday, before I came to Jesus confessing those yesterdays? In other words, can I walk alone, now that I have been justified? Suppose the day I come to Jesus in confession, I stop eating meat, drinking coffee, using dairy products; then that day I stop sinning because I did these things. Ridiculous, you say - and you are right!

Dare I call the mere adoption of reforms the objective of sanctification? Such a concept leads to a spiritual pride equalled only by the most rigid devotees of the pharisaical way of life in the times of Jesus. We read:

The proud hearts strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven [justification] and our fitness for heaven [sanctification] are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow. From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fulness dwells.<sup>13</sup>

What then is heaven waiting to bestow, since man cannot of himself obtain righteousness, whether it be justification or sanctification? Read carefully and thoughtfully -

Because man fallen cannot overcome Satan with his human strength, Christ came from the royal courts of heaven to help him with His human and divine strength combined. Christ knew that Adam in Eden, with his superior advantages, might have withstood Satan, and conquered him. He also knew that it was impossible for man, out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the Fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. In order to bring hope to man, and save him from complete ruin, He humbled Himself to take man's nature, that, with His divine power combined with the human, He might reach man where he is. He obtains for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that strength which it is impossible for them to gain for themselves, that in His name they may overcome the temptations of Satan.<sup>14</sup>

From this reference, let us note certain salient points:

1) Man fallen - out of Eden - cannot resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength.



all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam are heretics of "distortion". (pp. 18-19) BUT by his own use of the Spirit of Prophecy in seeking to show that Sister White did not teach this concept of the Incarnation, he became the arch-heretic by his own definition. A series of statements lifted from various parts of the Spirit of Prophecy are given, but no where in the entire paper do the following clear-cut statements appear:

In Christ were united the divine and the human - the Creator and the creature. The nature of God, whose law had been transgressed, and the nature of Adam, the transgressor, meet in Jesus - the Son of God, and the Son of man. (Ms. 141, 1901)

Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin." (Y. I., Dec. 20, 1900)

Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with His own sinless nature, because by this act of condescension He would be enabled to pour out His blessings in behalf of the fallen race. Thus He has made possible for us to partake of His nature. (R & H, July 17, 1900)

[A whole series of these statements appear as Appendix C in the manuscript - An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.]

Let us consider the last statement in the light of R. D. B.'s own definition of heresy as a distortion. He affirms - "What is true of the nature is true of the Person." He uses the illustration that because Christ's human nature suffered hunger and thirst, it would be correct to say that "He was hungry and thirsty." Then he draws the analogy that if Christ's human nature was sinful, it would be correct to say that Christ was sinful. (p. 21) But here is distorted logic, and only frail human reasoning, because R. D. B. chooses to be a heretic by his own definition and does not take into consideration all aspects of truth. Did Christ - perfect, eternally perfect - become sinful because He chose to unite the "offending nature of man" with Himself so that fallen man might be blessed? He was made to be sin for us, and in this fallen state of existence, He condemned sin in the flesh. (II Cor. 5:21; Romans 8:3) Then to top off his heresy, R. D. B. concludes - "The principle is true of the saints too. As long as they have sinful natures, they are sinners." (Op cit.) Evidently, he is willing to ignore, or perhaps he no longer believes what Sister White wrote concerning the living saints prior to their shedding of the "vile bodies." She heard "a voice, musical, and triumphant, . . . saying: 'They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled.'" (G. C., p. 636) Perhaps, R. D. B., if he still believed the servant of the Lord, and would cease being a heretic, could understand that these living saints had accepted the blessings to be obtained through Christ's incarnation in taking upon Himself our sinful nature, and had in turn become "partakers of His nature."

As another example of the errors in this paper resulting from being a heretic - by his own definition - is to be found in his distorted "logic" which stated: "Because Jesus [in His incarnation] was still God in the highest sense, He did some things which we can never do - things which we could not imitate without blasphemy." (p. 9) (Some of the items listed support his "logic" and are true. This is why the paper

should be called - "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" - because other concepts disprove his logic, and reveal his heresy.) He evidently overlooked the plain words of Jesus Himself which read:

Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (John 14:12)

And these words were said, while bearing our humanity! R. D. B. cites what he thinks to be an irrefutable example of what Jesus did that no mortal will ever do. He even used the Spirit of Prophecy for proof to continue to beguile his devotees who still believe in her gift. The Desire of Ages is quoted:

When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ's tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. . . In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. (p. 785)

BUT he omitted -

Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave, - not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal. (D A, p. 388)

Now I recognize that to accept what is written in The Desire of the Ages on p. 388 is to spell the death-knell to R. D. B.'s distorted "gospel" which he is presently advocating. Thus from his viewpoint, it is best to not give the whole picture; but by so doing - by his own definition - he is a heretic!

We can pursue this point a bit further. In the section (pp. 13-14) attempting to prove that "Imitation Theology" denies the real strength of Christ's temptation, R. D. B. quotes the following from the pen of Sister White:

It was as difficult for Him to keep the level of humanity as for men to rise above the level of their depraved natures, and be partakers of the divine nature. (7BC:930)

While the statement is true, it does not prove his point, and says far more that R. D. B. would really like for it to say. While it was difficult for Christ to keep to the level of humanity, He did do it! And while it is also recognized as exceedingly difficult for us with our depraved natures to rise above such a level, it will be accomplished in us who believe and surrender, and to those who so do, they will become partakers of the divine nature. But according to R. D. B., this is a subjective gospel. Now we will let him explain what it means to become a partaker of the divine nature, and what it means that Christ became one flesh with us that we might become one spirit with Him, and that by this being accomplished "in us", we now have the beginning of the life eternal. (DA, p. 388)

In seeking to disprove that a follower of Jesus can imitate the example set, R. D. B. takes partial sentences from two references completely out of context. (p. 14) The partial quotes is - "We cannot equal the pattern. . ." (2T:549, 628) In context this is talking about the sacrifice Christ made in coming down to earth to be our Saviour. How can we equal such a sacrifice, when we never had a pre-existence which involved us as part of the Godhead? To apply these references to the character revealed by Jesus when He came to show not "what a God can do, but what a man could do through faith in God's power to help in every emergency" (OHC:48) - is the worst type of heresy as defined by R. D. B. himself.

Not only is heresy interwoven throughout the paper with some truth, but also just plain bold-faced lies are stated. For example, to smear if possible the messengers whom God sent to this people in 1888, R. D. B. says - "Waggoner and Jones. . . together with Dr. Kellogg developed what EGW called "the alpha of deadly heresies [pantheism] around the turn of the century." (p. 23) Now why this lying attack on Jones and Waggoner? Because both Jones and Waggoner taught the doctrine of the Incarnation according to what he calls the "Theology of Imitation" which is to him anathema. But does such a false attack on these men destroy the truth they taught regarding the Incarnation? Absolutely not.

Waggoner taught:

The fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is, that 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." David had all the passions of human nature. He says of himself, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5. (Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 26-27 Emphasis his)

Jones taught:

In Jesus Christ as He was in sinful flesh, God has demonstrated before the universe that He can so take possession of sinful flesh as to manifest His own presence, His power, and His glory, instead of sin manifesting itself. And all that the Son asks of any man, in order to accomplish this in him, is that the man will let the Lord have him as the Lord Jesus did. . .

Then God will so take us, and so use us, that our sinful selves shall not appear to influence or affect anybody; but God will manifest His righteous self, His glory, before men, in spite of all ourselves and our sinfulness. That is the truth. And that is the mystery of God, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," - God manifest in sinful flesh. (GC Bulletin, 1895, p. 303)

POSTSCRIPT - Throughout this brief comment, I have used the initials - "R. D. B." - because this is the way it appears on the title page. It did not say Robert D. Brinsmead is the author, but merely that he initialed it. Who all the authors of this paper might have been is anybody's guess - Ford, Paxton, or some professor at Andrews University - who knows? But Brinsmead did initial it!

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

Several have written asking, what I thought was the intent of the series of editorials in the Review which focused on why a schism developed in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. I have read carefully these six editorials by R. F. Cottrell, starting with the January 13, 1977 issue, and concluding in the February 17th number. In this analysis - dry as the hills of Gilboa - Cottrell was careful to use certain terms in describing the contending groups. No group was "liberal" - they were only "moderates" seeking to keep the "conservatives" from taking their church to a place theologically where it would be termed a "sect." (R&H, Feb. 17, 1977, p. 10) There can be no question but this series of comments on the problems of the Missouri Synod were written because, whether we like it or not, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is facing the same crisis.

The real issue that the membership of the Missouri Synod faced is not written in the regular paragraphs of the editorials but in the fine print of the footnotes. Footnote #1 of the last editorial (Ibid., p. 11) needs to be carefully read. It states:

In a paper presented to a Synod theological convocation in the spring of 1975, Dr. Ralph A. Bohlman, now president of Concordia Seminary, said that "considerations of truth must take precedence over considerations of [brotherly] love, should these be in conflict."

How Cottrell views this issue of priorities can be seen in his summary which states that "a spirit of brotherhood [must be] paramount over every other consideration, and that [it] controls all discussion and action." (Ibid.) Reduced to simple terms it means that our internal PR - personal relations - should predominate over "considerations of truth." In other words, unity within the human organization is more important than truth which is of divine origin. Here is a crisis of the greatest magnitude that each individual in the church will need to face for himself.

Through our evangelistic programs we have produced a situation within the Church very similar to what the early church faced when following a period of persecution an influx of membership occurred. It reads: - "When Christians consented to unite with those who were but half converted from paganism, they entered a path which led farther and farther from the truth." (G. C. p. 45) Not only have we baptized numbers who have little real knowledge of the basic Adventist Truth, but we have adopted Babylonian techniques to achieve this outward success. This has only compounded our problem. The tempo has not been altered, nor the techniques corrected.

Now faced with a crisis over the unity of the Church with the "liberals" calling for more representation in administration, and the "traditionalist" controlling the curia on the Sligo, and the Evangelical orientated faculty of theology dominating the Seminary, we are really in a worse situation than the Missouri Synod was prior to its schism. So what is the solution - "the ounce of prevention" which Cottrell recommends? Our internal PR must become paramount even if truth is sacrificed! How did the faithful in the early church react to this kind of philosophy? Note:

After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity

if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example which would imperil the faith of their children and children's children. To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war.

Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls were revived in the hearts of God's professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their souls to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ. (G. C. pp. 45-46)

+++++++

FIRST SABBATH OF THE MONTH MEETING (JUNE 4)

Sabbath School - 9:30 a.m. - Lesson Study subject - "Model of Faith"

WORSHIP HOUR - 11:00 a.m. - "Days of Preparation" - This will be the second study in the series on Daniel.

The Afternoon Discussion Hour will be concerned with the prophecy of Daniel 7.

+++++++

DID YOU NOTICE THE THOUGHT PAPER FOR LAST MONTH? It was a bit different. We can say literally that we go to "press". The old mimeograph is now on a standby basis. We are printing each of the monthly issues of the thought paper. This saves us paper, and postal expense to Canada ( by one penny).

ALSO - we now plan to reprint the Studies in Romans by Waggoner for which we have had so many calls, and which is now depleted. We shall keep you informed as to when this new edition of the Studies will be ready.

+++++++

Send all correspondence to:

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer  
P. O. Box 178  
Lamar, AR., 72846 USA

Send all orders for publications & tapes to:

ADVENTIST LAYMEN'S FOUNDATION  
Same Address