



"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 EXERCISE OF THE WILL (Part - 2)

The process by which our human wills interact with the purposes of God is presented clearly in The Desire of Ages. Note the following:

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.¹

When I choose to surrender to Christ - crown Him Lord of all that I am and have - and sensing my great need, cry for deliverance, I am imbued with the energy of the Holy Spirit, so that my decisions harmonize with the will and purpose of God for my life. Obedience becomes literally what we sometimes call "second nature" but which is merely the restoration of what was originally man's endowment. We read:

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart-work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.²

In this statement we find the key to the surrender of the will, so that when imbued with the divine energy, we can carry out the purposes of God. Observe again - "When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience." Jesus prayed - "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."³ This is our great need, for we read - "The knowledge of God that works transformation of character is our great need. If we fulfill His purpose, there must be in our lives a revelation of God that shall correspond to the teaching of His word."⁴

What is this knowledge of God which we must have? We must believe that God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold from us anything that would be for our best interest. "God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as coworkers with Him."⁵

Let me illustrate. Suppose I ask you to give me your bank account, the keys to your car, and I assure you that I will direct your life and future so that in the end you will be completely satisfied with the direction your life was lived. Would you do this? No! Why? Either you really do not know me, or you really do know me - and because my promises are only human you cannot trust me with your life. BUT - can you trust yourself anymore than you can trust me? We read: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it."⁶ Again - "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."⁷ We must come to the place where we trust God with our all - absolutely all!

Jesus came to reveal the Father as One in whom all could place their trust without fear. But you say, He let Jesus go to the Cross, and He might let me go there, too. This is absolutely correct - He will take you there! Of this there can be no question for Jesus in revealing the Father has clearly stated - "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."⁸ But if not, what?

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you.

It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed; for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. However bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet "it is profitable for thee."⁹

While the hymn recorded by Paul in his letter to the Phillipians teaches some very critical concepts regarding the Incarnation, there is also deep spiritual lessons to be learned. He admonishes - "Think ye, even as Jesus Christ thought". Then Paul lists the thinking of Jesus with its results. Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be retained while men perished, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.¹⁰ And what did God do? He exalted Him above all, and returned Him to His own throne. God's way leads back to glory from whence we have wandered. And there can be no return except via the Cross. We are told:

The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain

of the heart. The battle which we have to fight - the greatest battle that was ever fought by man - is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up.¹¹

Those who go through the gates of the City of Light will be those who have surrendered, not those who have conquered. "We cannot overcome the mighty foe who holds us in his thrall. God alone can give us victory."¹² This concept that victory lies in surrender is so alien to the philosophy of this world that it is difficult for the human mind to grasp. Human history glorified in its annals of wars and battles with its heroes and generals teaches the student that to the conqueror belongs the spoils. Not so the true philosophy of history, but we have so long drunk of the broken cisterns of the human evaluation of history that we are unable to perceive the pure water of life which Christ the center of all true history invites us to drink.¹³

Why must we surrender to receive the gift of God in Jesus Christ? Why is Jesus able to save us to the uttermost? Note:

This holy Substitute is able to save to the uttermost; for He presented to the wondering universe perfect and complete humility in His human character, and perfect obedience to all the requirements of God.¹⁴

What was the process in the victory of Christ? First perfect and complete humility in His human character, which was followed by perfect obedience to the commandments of God at each step of His life. Of ourselves we cannot keep the commandments. Suppose then that God gave us the power to keep the commandments before we manifest perfect and complete humility - before we surrendered fully to Him - what would be the result? Pride second only to Lucifer, and the germ for a second rebellion - which God will never permit to arise again. Jesus said - "Of mine own self, I can do nothing." This too, we must recognize, and then hearing the Word of God, be willing that this be done. In a life thus surrendered, God can accomplish His Word - perfect obedience. "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul."

¹Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 466

²Ibid. p. 668

³John 17:3

⁴Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 8, p. 329

⁵Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing, p. 329

⁶Jer. 17:9

⁷Prov. 16:25

⁸Luke 9:23

⁹Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, pp. 96-97

¹⁰See Phil. 2:5-8

¹¹White, Op. cit., p. 203

¹²Ibid., p. 204

¹³John 7:37

¹⁴Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk., i, p. 256

DO YOU KNOW?

Do you know how your Sabbath School dollar is spent? A recent publication of the new Worker, called Action reveals that only 49% - or 49¢ of each dollar given - goes to the World Mission Fund for exclusive overseas work. Of each dollar, 34¢ is retained by the General Conference Administration and its Institutions. The remaining 17¢ reverts back to the Unions and Local Conferences for "ministerial training, church buildings, elementary school education." (Worker- Action, October, 1977, p. 3)

The editorial appearing in this issue was most intriguing. It reads in part:

"And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof." (2 Kings 4:42) We are often intrigued by what the Bible leaves unsaid. Who was this farmer? Why did he bring this gift to the prophet Elisha? The record is silent concerning any further details; even the place from which he came cannot be certainly identified.

Never mind. This man retained his integrity as a worshiper of Jehovah in a period not only of physical crisis, with severe drought and famine, but of spiritual crisis. Thus, instead of bringing his offering of first fruits to unfaithful priests, he brought it to Elisha, whom he recognized as being a true servant of God. (p. 2)

Need more be said or written?

+++++

ALONE? NO! YET SEVEN THOUSAND

Back in May - the week-end of May 21 to be exact - Dr Edward Heppenstall gave two studies in the Paradise, California Seventh-day Adventist Church. Friday evening's study was titled - "The Sinlessness of Christ's Nature." On Sabbath morning he spoke on "God's Way of Saving Lost Men." A sister in the state of Washington who evidently was present wrote to me regarding these presentations and told me they had been taped. I wrote and obtained the tapes this past month. They can best be summarized as diabolical heresy. Professing to believe Ellen G. White to be a prophet, he ignored her writings, twisted and distorted what she did write when faced with same at a question and answer period. His premise was simply that one must first consider what the Bible says on any given subject - this is laudable - but when one resorts to what is termed "orthodox" Christianity through the centuries to bolster his position, something is wrong.

On Sabbath afternoon, there was an extended Question and Answer session. As I listened to this tape, my heart rejoiced for I heard men and women of the laity bring forth strong arguments from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy which left

Dr Heppenstall confounded, and even at one point completely confused in how he replied. The point a sister made from the Bible which completely confused and routed Heppenstall is worth noting. On Friday night in presenting his heresy on the Incarnation, Heppenstall had used Romans 8:3-4 seeking to emphasize that "likeness" meant only "appearance" in relationship to "sinful flesh". But he ignored Philippians 2:6-8 in his presentation. So this unnamed sister asked on Sabbath afternoon if Heppenstall would consider the meaning of "likeness" in the phrase - "likeness of men" - as found in the book of Philippians. [The word is the same in the Greek in both texts.] She ably pointed out that if likeness means only "appearance", then Christ was not a real man, but only appeared to be so. But this is Docetism - a well known heresy of the early church - and Heppenstall wanted to avoid this. But he trapped himself with a docetic incarnation, and did not know how to escape!

May God bless these faithful laity who stood firmly for the historic position of the Adventist Church against this scholastic heretic! Yes - there are still seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. May this faithful remnant soon be gathered into one.

+++++++

NOT FOR SALE

In the book Education (p. 57) is found the oft quoted and classic statement which defines the world's need. The first of these needs is stated to be - "men who will not be bought or sold." Most people have price tags - some go rather cheaply, some not so cheap as rated in the currency of this world.

On several occasions over the past year, I have been approached personally and by letter with the suggestion that if I would change the format of the thought paper somewhat - be a bit more sparing in my comments on certain people in high church office, and put a little more "love-sick sentimentalism" - they call it just "love" - into what is written, they had sizeable amounts of money that they were undecided just where to place. The inference was clear that if I would acquiesce, these monies would come to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation for the work of publication and research.

Let it be known by all - high or low, rich or poor - that the thought paper - "Watchman, What of the Night?" - is not for sale, neither is anyone connected with the Adventist Laymen's Foundation or its Board of Directors. When God says - "Cry aloud, spare not" (Isa. 58:1) - He means just what He says, and no amount of money can get us to drop part of this text which reads - "Spare not." We have found an interesting thing, that when some who have contributed over a period of time to the work of the Foundation, and then because we could not be bought, dropped their support, that God raised up others very soon thereafter who filled the gap. Yes, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. 3:9)

+++++++

COMMENTS FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Over the past decade we have thought of publishing certain letters which we have received from readers. In fact, we have at times asked permission, and received the same to quote these letters, but to the present we have held off from doing so mainly because of lack of space to quote in full the letter or letters. But in the future from time to time we shall select letters - pro and con - and quote and comment thereon. The next section of this month's thought paper will be our start.

+++++

WHY?

A correspondent wrote -

We had a quick visit from [Brother] W last week... He says they had a "lovely" camp meeting this year and all the people in attendance signed up for next year. He was speaking to Elder "T. D." who was there doing a series on Righteousness by Faith. [Brother] W asked him if he thought the church would ever get back on the right track, and Elder "T. D." said "No". He also said that the Spirit of Prophecy points out that the majority of Adventists will be lost.

And then this reader asked the searching question - "Why does what these leaders say in private differ so much from their public utterances?"

Let us be absolutely honest with ourselves. If I teach righteousness by faith, but yet I know that the church will never get back on the right track, and that the majority will be lost, how can I give them only the doctrinal aspects and not the full picture of the meaning of 1888 and its present implications as of 1977? In other words, I would be saying, Stay with the "ship" even though it will not arrive in the right harbor. How can one then get to the right harbor? Is this approach not one reason why so many Adventist will be lost? And is not this the warning of the Spirit of Prophecy? Note the following:

Spiritual death has come upon the people that should be manifesting life and zeal, purity and consecration, by the most earnest devotion to the cause of truth. The facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God, speak more loudly than their profession, and make it evident that some power has cut the cable that anchored them to the Eternal Rock, and that they are drifting away to sea, without chart or compass. (Review & Herald, July 24, 1888)

You will observe by the date that this was written in 1888 prior to the General Conference of that year. The message came at the Session which was to reverse this trend of spiritual death, and bring to the Church a chart and compass. But it was rejected, and the full message is still being rejected today even by some who are teaching it doctrinally correct, besides the many who are giving the message lip service. Righteousness by Faith is more than a doctrine - it is a

way of life, including the conduct and administration of the Church.

What the future holds because of the continued failure to reverse the trend of spiritual death is given in the prophecy found in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 211. One can read:-

Here we see that the church - the Lord's sanctuary - was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together.

Observe closely the last sentence - "Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together."

Men in positions of influence know that the majority will be lost, and many know why - the hierarchy has betrayed the church - but why will they not speak out in public what they know to be true, but will say it privately? That's a good question!

However, some are saying certain things in public that the laity need to know. On the week-end of May 14, this year, the religion faculties of the three West coast Seventh-day Adventist colleges were together on the PUC campus for their annual conference. On Friday evening, Dr. Fred Veltman conducted the vespers. In this service he stated - concerning the Church - "Even its theology and religion has undergone change, though such developments are only recognized unofficially." (Spectrum, Vol. 8, #4, p. 42) In this gathering were three vice-presidents of the General Conference - Drs. Hackett and Hammill, and Elder Eva. So far I have not heard any challenge to the veracity of what Dr. Veltman said. And when you couple what Dr. Veltman said with what Elder "T. D." said about the possibility of the church getting back on the right track, the layman who wishes to be true to the faith is faced with a personal crisis of the greatest magnitude.

The answer to this crisis lies in the lesson of history. It is either continuity of organization, or continuity of truth. It is not both and never has been in any similar religious crisis in Church history. Paul faced this same choice on the Damascus Road. Either the Jewish church, and the continuity of organization, or the Lord Jesus Christ, and the continuity of truth. Luther faced the same decision on the stair case at Rome. The Millerites faced it in the pre-1844 Advent Movement. Every sincere Adventist today - not born such -

- 8

faced it when he chose between the church in which he was raised, and the Truth that came to him through Bible Studies, a book, a tent meeting, or some other means of evangelism. Now today the Church has apostitized from the Truth - it has changed its theology and religion - or else Dr. Veltman is a liar, and should not be entrusted with the training of the future ministry of the Church - thus the same choice confronts us - either continuity of organization, or continuity of Truth. Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

++++++

OCTOBER MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP -

By request, we are altering from October 1, to October 8, the second Sabbath for this month only.

Sabbath School - 9:30 a.m. - Lesson Study will be -

"The Garden Home" Gen. 2. This is an experimental series of SS School Lesson we are using for the fourth Quarter.

Worship - 11 a.m. - Topic - "In the Lion's Den"

Holy Communion - 3 p.m.

++++++

X-10 (Oct., 1977)

Adventist Laymen's Foundation
P. O. Box 178
Lamar, Ark., 72846

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer,
Manager of Publication and Research