



"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 BATTLE OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY - II

In this second section of our study of the battle of the great day of God, we shall concern ourselves with an over-all look at the Seven Last Plagues as they relate to this battle.

The Seven Last Plagues are outlined in Revelation 16, and declared to be the judgments wherein "the wrath of God" is filled up. (Rev. 15:1) When these final judgments fall upon the earth, the intercession of Christ has ceased in the heavenly temple. "No man" is able to enter the temple "till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." (Rev. 15:8) And the only Man who has been able to enter into the presence of God - into that light unapproachable (I Tim. 6:16) - is the "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." (I Tim. 2:5).

In analyzing briefly each plague, we need to ask ourselves three simple questions: 1) What is the plague? 2) Why is it given? and 3) When was the cause for the plague committed? (for "the curse causeless shall not come." Prov. 26:2)

Plague #1 - "The first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." (Rev. 16:2)

This plague is described as an ulcer breaking out upon the men who had received the mark of the beast, and who worshipped the image to the beast. Now we ask, was the mark of the beast received, and the worship of the beast committed before or after the close of probation? The answer is obvious - "before." In other words, this plague is God's response to what men had done in probationary time.

Plague #2 - "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man." (Rev. 16:3)

Why a plague of blood? The angel of the waters answers - The powers of earth "have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and [God] has given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." (16:6) When was this blood shed? Before or after the close of probation? The answer is again obvious - "before." In other words this plague is God's response to what man has done in probationary time.

Plague #3 - "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood." (Rev. 16:4)

This is the only plague that is compounded. The reason for this plague is the same as for the second plague. (Rev. 16:5-7) Why will God compound this plague of blood? "By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands." (GC., p. 628) This statement in context refers to the "death decree" issued against the people of God after the close of probation. By noting references in Early Writings (pp. 36-37; 282-283), the death decree is issued because the inhabitants of earth seek to stay the wrath of God, and believe that the killing of those opposed to the worldwide religious movement will appease an offended God. This would indicate that the "death decree" is to be issued between the second and third plagues.

Plague #4 - "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire." (16:8)

Why a plague upon the sun? Because men have worshipped the sun, and honored the day of the sun - Sunday. When - before or after the close of probation? Again the answer is obvious - "before." In other words this plague is again God's response to what man has done in probationary time.

Plague #5 - "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain." (16:10)

This is an unique plague - darkness, that effects the tongue. Gross darkness has covered the earth (Isa. 60:2) because of the teachings of the beast, and those who have erected an image to the beast for men to worship. With the tongue not only is confession made unto life, but also "all deceivableness of unrighteousness" is communicated to those who will not receive the love of truth. When did this deceptive darkness engulf the inhabitants of the earth - before or after the close of probation? Again the answer is obvious - "before." In other words this plague, too, is God's response to what man has done in probationary time.

Plague #6 - "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." (16:12)

Now why this plague? John is shown:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (16:13-14)

Was this gathering together done before or after the close of probation? If the same principle is applied that applies to all the preceding plagues, save the third, then the answer must be - "before." This plague is also God's answer to what man has done in probationary time. Observe closely the following reference and how Revelation 16:13-14 is used:

Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. . . . Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of Spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the *last remnant of time*. Says the prophet: I saw three unclean spirits like frogs;. . .they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, *to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.* (Great Controversy, pp. 561-562 emphasis mine)

According to this statement, Rev. 16:13-14 is to be fulfilled in the "last remnant of time." These verses tell of the final great deception that will take in "the whole world." The inhabitants of earth will not awaken from their "fatal security" until the pouring out of the wrath of God commences.

Another reference states the same truth. It reads:

In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him. But Omnipotence will interpose, and to the apostate churches that will unite in the exaltation of Satan, the sentence will go forth, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 62)

Since Revelation 16:13-14 will be fulfilled before the close of probation, what then is the place of this battle to which the leadership of the whole world is to be gathered for the exaltation of Satan when he appears as Christ? At what place will the bishops, prelates, and ministers join in the coronation of Satan as the long awaited Messiah? Where will the chorus ring forth from thousands of voices - "Christ has come. Christ has come"? We shall seek to find the answer to these questions in the next thought paper when we analyze Rev. 16:16.

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"THE BACK PAGE"

On the back page of the Adventist Review (Sept. 7, 1978), was a report on the "Righteousness by Faith Consultation in Washington." I first heard of this meeting while on the West Coast for speaking appointments in August. Interestingly, this consultation coincided with the Silver Lake Week-end Retreat which we reported in the last thought paper. There was a difference - while we could rejoice in the unity of the Holy Spirit among the speakers at the Retreat, the report in the Adventist Review only indicates one agreement - the agreement to disagree!

Reports on the West Coast indicated that the meeting would be an attempt to end all controversy presently engulfing the Church over the subject of Righteousness by Faith. However, the report in the Adventist Review called it "an exploratory session" and indicated that the participants would continue to study "until they meet again" because "many questions remain unanswered."

The meeting was chaired by Elder W. Duncan Eva, a Vice President of the General Conference, and the Secretary was Dr. Gordon Hyde of the Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference. [Interestingly, the Chairman of the Biblical Research Committee at the time of the 1974 North American Bible Conferences was Elder Willis Hackett, also a Vice President of the General Conference. He was not listed as even in attendance at the meeting. Has he fallen from official "grace"?] The names of the participants were given. Some are well known and their position clearly set forth in articles, manuscripts and books. Some are unknown as to their position on the subject of the consultation, except that they are theological "lightweights." While neither Brinsmead nor Paxton were present, their position was represented by Drs. Desmond Ford and Edward Heppenstall.

The report did not indicate that the subject of the Incarnation was discussed, but it is difficult to conceive how the subject of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ could be studied without reference to the Incarnation. Dr. Ford's wife, Gillian, clearly states, and rightly so, that "a correct understanding of the human nature of Christ is crucial for a balanced presentation of Righteousness by Faith." (The Soteriological Implications of the Human Nature of Christ, p. 2)

The report on the consultation was also informative in that it was unable to hide the name calling - or to put it more diplomatically - the labeling that divided the participants of the consultation. Those who expounded the cause of Brinsmead and Paxton were declared to be vendors of "cheap grace." These proponents of the Brinsmead concepts accused their "brethren" as being "legalists, who after they give "nominal assent to the initial need for justification by faith" then become "absorbed with the performance of good works (albeit with acknowledgment of dependence on the Holy Spirit.)"

In the essays which follow, we shall seek to discuss in a simple way the areas of conflict involved in the consultation, and seek to set forth the basic truth involved in justification, sanctification, and the "perfecting of the saints" in the last generation. In doing so, we shall try to keep in mind the counsel of the angel to Sister White in 1850 - "The angel said, 'Some try hard to believe. Faith is so simple ye look above it.'" (Testimony date, August 24, 1850, reprinted in California Missionary, Feb. 10, 1901) We need all the blessings which faith can bring, and so we shall endeavor to make it so plain that even a child can understand.

A Time Element

In all our discussion of truth, we need to keep before us the time element, and the warnings and dangers which the child of God faces in the light of the times to which one has come. At the turn of the Century, the Church faced the "alpha of deadly heresies" in the publication by Kellogg of the book - Living Temple.

(Special Testimonies, Series B, #2, p. 50) At that time we were warned of two things: 1) It was absolutely certain that the apostasy which developed under the "alpha" would increase and grow stronger, and continue "until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout." (Ibid., #7, pp. 56-57) And 2) The ultimate of this apostasy was termed the "omega." This was revealed to the servant of the Lord to be of such a nature that she "trembled for our people." (Ibid., #2, p. 53)

Evidence is too strong to deny that we have indeed reached the end-time of human history, and are thus in the time of the omega of apostasy. Certain specific warnings given concerning the "alpha" apply with equal - if not greater - force to us who are now living amid the perils of the omega apostasy. The servant of the Lord called attention to the fact that -

The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error. (Ibid., #2, p. 52)

In Great Controversy, we are warned:

So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. (p. 593)

Wallenkampf in his book - New by the Spirit (p. 90) - indicates that as we approach the end, it will be imperative that we be guided by the Holy Spirit, because - quoting Sr. White - he writes - "Falsehood will be so mingled with truth, that only those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to distinguish truth from error." (Ms. 43, 1893)

Because of the very nature of the issues involved in the final conflict, we can make either one of two errors, or possibly both. We can fail to discern "the difference between truth and error," or we can, having discerned the teacher of error, reject the truth which such a teacher has mingled with error to give it plausibility, and in thus opposing such a teacher, find ourselves fighting truth itself. May we then with minds "worked by the Holy Spirit" - our eyes anointed with divine discernment - see the track of truth in its simplicity and beauty.

Justification

On the morning of the resurrection, Jesus refused the homage of His people until He had received the assurance from the Father that His sacrifice on Calvary - the sacrificial atonement - "had been ample" for the sins of men. (DA, p. 790) This preliminary acknowledgment on the part of the Father of the sufficiency of the atonement so that He "would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son," was proclaimed at the inauguration of Jesus as the High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedec. "Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds," the Father declared Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth "accepted in the Beloved" and "justified." (DA, p. 834)

Now what does this "justification" - proclaimed over nineteen hundred years ago - mean to me? This provision was typified in the sacrificial system of the Levitical ministrations of the "sin offering." We must not forget that this ministry of the Levitical priests "served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." (Heb. 8:5) The sinner brought "a kid of the goats, a female without blemish." (Lev. 4:28) Placing his hand upon the head of the animal, he confessed his sin, and slew the victim. That was all that he did. The resulting forgiveness was achieved by the priest - the sinner was accepted in him, who represented "the Beloved." (Lev. 4:29-31)

I, too, must come to the Altar of Burnt Offering - the Cross. "Kneeling in faith at the cross," I have reached the highest place to which I can attain. (AA, p. 210) On that mysterious Victim, I place my sins by confession, and I see as I look up to that bruised form, that I drove the nails, pierced that holy brow, and thrust Him through with the spear. But He who died with my sins upon Him, arose and ascended up on High to become my High Priest and to obtain my acceptance in Him before the Father.

Rising from the transaction of the Cross, how do I stand? What does forgiveness mean?

If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned. (Steps to Christ, p. 67, 1940 ed.)

Again:

We are not to serve God as if we were not human, but we are to serve Him in the nature we have, that has been redeemed by the Son of God; through the righteousness of Christ we shall stand before God pardoned, and as though we had never sinned. (Ms. 1, 1892, R & H, June 17, 1976)

Further:

It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. (Steps to Christ, p. 56, 1940 ed.)

This glorious provision, and standing before God, we are missing in the hassle concerning justification and righteousness by faith. How can we call sin by its right name, and name the sinner, even as Nathan (PK, p. 141), if we ourselves have not been first justified? How can we point the fallen and vile to the hope of Calvary, unless we ourselves have knelt there in faith?

This experience and provision is not "cheap grace" nor can it ever be. It is amazing grace - divine mercy - an expression of everlasting love - purchased at an infinite cost. BUT recognizing this magnitude of divine love, does this warrant the conclusion drawn by Paxton, and supported by Desmond Ford and Heppenstall? Paxton writes: - "From Brinsmead's writings it is supremely evident that the doctrine of justification by faith alone is that which casts out any notion of perfection in this life." (Shaking of Adventism, p. 145) Here is the track of error

which lies close beside the track of truth. Instead of negating the concept of the perfecting of the saints, it is merely the first step toward its realization. The same faith that is exercised in justification will be the same faith that one must exercise in the realization of the gift of the final atonement.

To deny the perfecting of the saints - as Paxton, Brinsmead, Ford, and Heppenstall have done - leads to only one experience - the commission of the unpardonable sin. In denying the perfecting of the saints in the final generation, is to reject the final work of the Holy Spirit, by which "the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ." (Test. to Min., p. 506) Yes, 144,000 little christs, if you please! HOWEVER, to mitigate justification by faith alone, because it has been mingled with the errors of Ford and Heppenstall, can also lead to disastrous consequences. A salvation by works syndrome takes over, and we start to interpret the cosmetics of sanctification as righteousness itself. Therefore, we need to address ourselves to the subject of sanctification.

Sanctification

Paxton summarizing Luther (The Shaking of Adventism, p. 45), and backed by Ford (Spectrum, Vol. 9, #3, p. 39) states that "righteousness by faith" is passive inasmuch as we have nothing to do with it. It is the righteousness of Christ, and therefore, perfect. On the other hand, there is what Luther termed "active righteousness" which results from faith, but is imperfect, for it is the work of sinful man. The former is termed justification, and the latter sanctification. Herein lies truth, but derailed to the track of error, becomes falsehood. To separate the two tracks, and re-establish truth on the track of truth, we need to take another look at the "man" of Romans 7.

There is no question but that the message of Romans 7 lies in the heart of the chapters in the book of Romans which present sanctification. It follows immediately the illustration of the marriage wherein the conclusion is drawn "that we should bring forth fruit unto God," because of our new relationship to Jesus Christ. (Rom. 7:4) Desmond Ford is correct in calling attention to the change in tense of the verbs from Romans 7:9 to Romans 7:14. The "I" was alive without the law once; but that same "I" recognizes that he still is [am] carnal, sold under sin. Ford is also correct in pointing out that the "man" of Romans 7 has his will directed always to the good. (Rom. 7:19) (Ford, Taped Message, LLU Week of Prayer, April 21, 1978) This "man" of Romans 7 "delights in the law of God." (Rom. 7:22) The Psalmist declares - "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord. . . The ungodly are not so." (Ps. 1:1-2, 4) It is most difficult to draw any other conclusion but that the "man" of Romans 7 is the Christian in his struggles - the defeats and victories - of sanctification. Well has the servant of the Lord written:

At every advance step in our Christian experience [sanctification], our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone, and we shall make the apostle's confession our own: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." [Rom. 7:18] (AA., p. 561)

We are surely aware of the statement which reads: -

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned. (Ms. 50, 1900 See SM, bk i, p. 344)

What then is the answer, and wherein is truth? Take your Bibles, and check carefully two things. How often is the word "I" found in Romans 7:9-25, and in the same verses - How often is the "Holy Spirit" to be found? Do the same for Romans 8:1-27. Note the outline which follows:

	"I"	"Holy Spirit"
Romans 7: 9 -----	2	0
10 -----	1	0
14 -----	1	0
15 -----	6	0
16 -----	3	0
17 -----	1	0
18 -----	2	0
19 -----	4	0
20 -----	3	0
21 -----	2	0
22 -----	1	0
23 -----	1	0
24 -----	1	0
25 -----	2	0
	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>
Romans 8: 1 -----	0	1
2 -----	0	1
4 -----	0	1
5 -----	0	2
9 -----	0	3
10 -----	0	1
11 -----	0	2
13 -----	0	1
14 -----	0	1
15 -----	0	1
16 -----	0	1

18	-----	1*	0
23	-----	0	1
26	-----	0	2
27	-----	0	1
		<u>1</u>	<u>19</u>

* Personal comment and observation by Paul

Herein is the secret of the final victory - not the mighty "I", but the Almighty Holy Spirit. We dare not overlook the fact that the verses in Romans 8:19-27 have eschatological implications - the whole creation waiteth for "the manifestation of the sons of God" - those "sons" who are conformed to the image of the Son! And how are the "infirmities" of the flesh - the fallen nature aided? "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities" (8:26; See also Heb. 4:15)

We must never forget, or overlook the statement which plainly states -

Divine grace is needed at the beginning [justification], divine grace is needed at every step of advance [sanctification], and divine grace alone can complete the work. (Test. to Min. p. 508)

And what is the completed work?

As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ. (Test. to Min., p. 506)

In the light of this, then what is the objective of sanctification? Is it to perfect the cosmetics of the flesh in multiplied adherence to reforms, and outward works of human righteousness and attainments? The answer is clear - yet simple - "If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self, and the reception of the mind of Christ." (MB, pp. 205-206, 1943 ed.) We conquer through surrender. We win by accepting that which is so alien to human nature - the crucifixion of self - the "I" of Romans 7. We read:

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. (Ibid., p. 203)

Only the "mind of Christ" which caused Him to make Himself void (Phil. 2:7), can bring us to the point where we are willing to be crucified with Him, thus permitting the Holy Spirit to have absolute sway in our beings. Thus the incarnation enters into the over-all picture of righteousness by faith; it cannot be divorced from it. And because those who are advocating justification by faith alone - true as this is - do not accept the truth of the Incarnation that Christ took upon Himself our fallen, sinful nature, they cannot perceive the truth of the perfecting

of the saints. And because those who wish to get "works" into the picture, charge justification by faith alone to be "cheap grace", yet give lip service to the historic teaching of the church in regard to the incarnation, will also come up missing, because "divine grace alone can complete the work." Our only hope is to be found in this call to prayer:

Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed. (5T:267)

The Perfecting of the Saints

In the book of Revelation, the concept of the perfecting of the saints in the final generation of earth's history is clearly taught. The book itself is declared to reveal "things which must" come to pass. (Rev. 1:1) Among those "must" or necessary things is the revelation of a "remnant. . . which keep the commandments of God." (Rev. 12:17) Further, in contrast to those who receive the mark of the beast and who worship the image erected to the beast, there will be a people to whom Heaven will point and say - Here are the saints; "here are they which keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." (Rev. 14:12) Nowhere in the book is it suggested that these saints of the final generation are marked by merely "trying" to observe the commandments of God; nor is it suggested that these only "delight in the law of God after the inward man." (Rom. 7:22) No, the "righteousness of the law" is filled full in them - they keep the commandments of God, because "they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:4) The same faith that will enable these of the final generation to have fulfilled in them the "righteousness of the law" is the faith of Jesus, who declared - "I can of my own self do nothing." (John 5:30) Lest we conclude that the perfecting of the saints is synonymous with being "at ease in Zion," the faith of Jesus included the use of His senses "to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14), which produced right judgment in all the issues He faced because He did not seek His own will, "but the will of the Father" which sent Him. (John 5:30). This will also be the experience of those who in turn "keep" the faith of Jesus. They will have "this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God" and not of themselves. (II Cor. 4:7) They will have the "mind" of Jesus. (Phil 2:5)

This experience is referred to in the Spirit of Prophecy as "partaking of the divine nature;" "perfecting of the moral image of God in the character;" and "reflecting the image of Jesus fully." In using this last conceptual wording, the servant of the Lord wrote:

Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully. (EW, p. 71)

Now who is Jesus, and when did He become Jesus? The reference does not say - "the

image of Christ, or Michael, or even of God." Now Michael became "Jesus" at the incarnation. (Matt. 1:21) Jesus is the name of the One of the Godhead who became flesh. Here again the doctrine of the Incarnation enters the picture of the "perfecting of the saints." While the moral image of God is revealed in the characters of the saints, they are still in the flesh, even as Jesus was made flesh. But as in Jesus in the flesh - the glory of God, grace and truth, was revealed - so that same glory will be revealed in them. Then will the whole creation behold "the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19)

Here we are confronted with a theological choice. If Christ, in becoming man did not partake of our fallen nature, but had a nature in the flesh different from our nature, then to reflect His image "fully" there will have to be the eradication of the fallen nature prior to the close of probation to enable the saints to keep the commandments of God. This was the error of the "holy flesh" men of Indiana; this was the error of the Brinsmead teachings of Decade-I. But now, those who will not accept the historic teaching of the Advent Movement in regard to the Incarnation, to be consistent, must deny the perfecting of the saints, because we can never reflect the image of the Jesus they have created in their doctrine of the Incarnation. Their ladder of salvation does not reach from heaven to earth - it stops short a rung or two!

Interestingly, the men of Indiana who taught the doctrine of "holy flesh" taught the same doctrine of the Incarnation as Ford, Heppenstall, Brinsmead (now), and Paxton, but they took the road of "eradication" while Ford and Heppenstall deny the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish in the flesh that which the Spirit accomplished in the flesh-life of Christ. For in the union of "humanity with divinity: a divine Spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh." (YI Dec. 20, 1900; 4BC:1147) And that flesh which Christ took upon Himself was "fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin." (*ibid.*) And so again, what Ford's wife, Gillian, writes remains true - "What you believe about Christ's humanity will have a strong influence on what you believe about Christ's righteousness, and both in turn will influence your view of Christian perfection." (Ford, *op. cit.* See page 4)

So we can have reported time after time on "The Back Page" of the Adventist Review, that certain leading theologians, and some not so leading theologians of the church have gotten together for a "consultation" on the subject of "Righteousness by Faith" but unless they are willing to come to grips with the doctrine of the Incarnation, they will only be able to agree to disagree. The unity for which Christ prayed should characterize His saints will continue to be elusive. This should tell the rank and file of the laity something. When the hierarchy of the Church continue to permit open heresy to be presented in the pulpits of the Church and to be taught to the students in our colleges and Seminary, the Spirit of God is not leading. It is only human leadership.

The Spirit of God leads only according to the Word of God. That word is clear. It reads:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
(Rom. 16:17)

And we are told why this inspired counsel should be followed - "Know ye not that

a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (I Cor. 5:6) We are also told that in the "last days" men will come "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (II Tim. 3:1, 5) The power of the "everlasting gospel" produces saints which "keep the commandments of God." And concerning those who deny the power of the everlasting gospel, the word is clear - "From such turn away."

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"IF WE HAVE TAKEN CHRIST TO BE OUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, WE ARE BORN AGAIN. WE ARE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD, MEMBERS BY ADOPTION OF THE ROYAL FAMILY." (Signs of the Times, September 15, 1898)

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WHY OUR PROBLEM OVER RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH?

OUR real problem is that we do not wish to see ourselves as we really are. In the morning, we look in the mirror and what we see we do not like. So we comb our hair, brush our teeth, and apply certain exterior cosmetics to appear to be what we wish others to see, and to be acceptable to them in our contacts during the day. In this daily routine, WE have done something to make ourselves acceptable to ourselves and others. This gives us a personal satisfaction and a bolstering of our ego - all attained by our works!

To look at ourselves through the "mirror" of the Word becomes very painful. We do not want to recognize that our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. (Jer. 17:9) We do not want to acknowledge that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. (Isa. 64:6) We do not want to see that from the sole of the foot to the top of the head, we have but wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores. (Isa. 1:6)

If by chance we do look long enough at the "mirror" of the Word to see that this is our real spiritual condition, too often we attempt a cosmetic approach through meticulous adherence to mere outward reforms - forgetting that even as the leopard cannot change his spots, nor the Blacks their skin pigmentation, so also we can not do good who have become accustomed to do evil. (Jer. 13:23) And to do evil, we cannot escape - for there is in every man's nature "a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist." (Ed., p. 29)

But we rationalize - this is true, BUT. Even though this was once my condition, I am no longer in that situation. The mirror is wrong. I have made a profession of Christianity. I have been baptized. I have been converted. Why then are we told - "The church needs to be converted, . . ." (TM, p. 64) - if we are really already converted? Why are we told that when "a soul is truly reconverted, let him be rebaptized." (Letter 63, 1903; Ev., p. 375) Would this be too humiliating to our proud hearts - to thus confess publicly that all these pretentious years could be summed up in the confession - "The good that I would have liked to have done, I did not, but the evil which I didn't want to do, that I did." (See Rom. 7:19) There is only one answer, and only one position to take, and that is the place and the prayer of the publican - "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13-14)

SIGNS OF THE TRENDS

"We Be Brethren" - The Sabbath Sentinel, official monthly publication of the Bible Sabbath Association, in its January, 1978, issue carried across its center spread the caption - "BSA OFFICIALS VISIT LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE HEADQUARTERS IN ATLANTA." A picture at the bottom of the spread shows Dr. James P. Wesberry, executive director of the Lord's Day Alliance, which his arms over the shoulders of Bishop Terril D. Littrell, President of the BSA, and Eugene Lincoln, Editor of The Sabbath Sentinel. (Lincoln is a Seventh-day Adventist associated with the Southern Publishing Association at Nashville, TN.) The opening paragraph of the article reads:

Bible Sabbath Association President Terril D. Littrell and The Sabbath Sentinel editor visited Dr. James P. Wesberry, executive director of the Lord's Day Alliance at the LDA headquarters in Atlanta, GA., on November 28. The meeting was the culmination of correspondence between the Sentinel editor and the LDA officials which began about five years ago. (pp. 12-13)

Is this not reminiscent of correspondence between Unruh and Barnhouse which preceded the fatal dialogues which led to the publication of the book - Questions on Doctrine? And what has resulted from Editor Lincoln's letters to the officials of the Lord's Day Alliance?

The March, 1978, issue of The Sabbath Sentinel was devoted for the most part to a report of the Lord's Day Alliance Convention in Atlanta, GA, February 15-16, 1978. It was attended by Editor Lincoln, and President Littrell of the Bible Sabbath Association. The opening session began at St Jude's Roman Catholic Church in Atlanta. The delegates were welcomed by Monsignor R. Donald Kiernan, pastor of the church. A Catholic priest, Richard Lopez, lectured on the Roman Catholic position on the Sabbath. The evening session was closed by "a prayer for ecumenical unity" by the President of the Lord's Day Alliance, Dr. Charles A. Platt. To this convention, Archbishop Thomas A. Donnellan brought "fraternal greetings from Rome." And the president of the Bible Sabbath Association, Bishop Terril D. Littrell gave the "Keynote Address."

Reciprocating this fraternization, the Magazine of the Lord's Day Alliance, Sunday, carried in its January/March, 1978, issue a report of the visit of the BSA officials to its Atlanta headquarters with the same picture carried by The Sabbath Sentinel. Further, an article by Editor Lincoln was also run. AND the title was - "We Be Brethren." Enough written? Let those who have been supporting the BSA take second thoughts!

Private Property - The late Pope John Paul I in the weekly general audience of September 27, reminded Catholics of their obligations to the poor and recalled the limits his predecessor, Paul VI, insisted should be placed on private property when poverty is prevalent. To the need of poverty, one must respond "with justice" stated the pope because "as Pope Paul said (in his encyclical On the Development of Peoples): 'Private property does not constitute for

anyone an absolute and unconditional right. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities." (RNS, September 27, 1978, p. 7) Guess whose private property will go first when the Catholic hierarchy convince the governments of earth of the need to enforce the Encyclical of Pope Paul VI?

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XI - 11 (Nov. 1978)

Monthly Convocation - Sabbath, November 4, 1978

Sabbath School - 9:30 a.m. - Lesson Study - "The Promise Fulfilled"

Worship & Study - 11 a.m. - What Can I Believe About Law? - II

Health Study - 2:30 p. m. - The Process of Digestion

A REPRINT - The Special Report of the Audience of an Official Representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the late Pope Paul VI was depleted. We have now run a new printing of this report. These may be obtained on a donation basis. In making this donation, please keep in mind that they must be sent "Third Class" which is a higher postal rate than the "Special Fourth Class."

Special Issue - We have brought together a limited number in a plastic cover for preservation, three key publications from the 1978 thought papers.

These are:

1. The Special Report (noted above)
2. Roots of the Ecumenical Movement
3. Now It Can Be Told in Part (A Background on the book, Questions on Doctrine)

These are obtainable for \$1.00 postage paid from the Adventist Laymen's Foundation.

Limited Availability - We have the following Bibles and Bible Help in limited supply:

Giant Print Study Bible (KJV) Red Letter Edition; Hand carrying - - \$12.50

Analytical Study Bible (KJV) Leather Bound (Blue only) - - - - - 15.00

(If interested in the Bibles, please write first for information sheet giving full details.)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance with Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries 12.50

(Postage prepaid, and they will be sent as long as available. If supply depleted when order received, your check will be returned.)

"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 178, Lamar, AR 72846