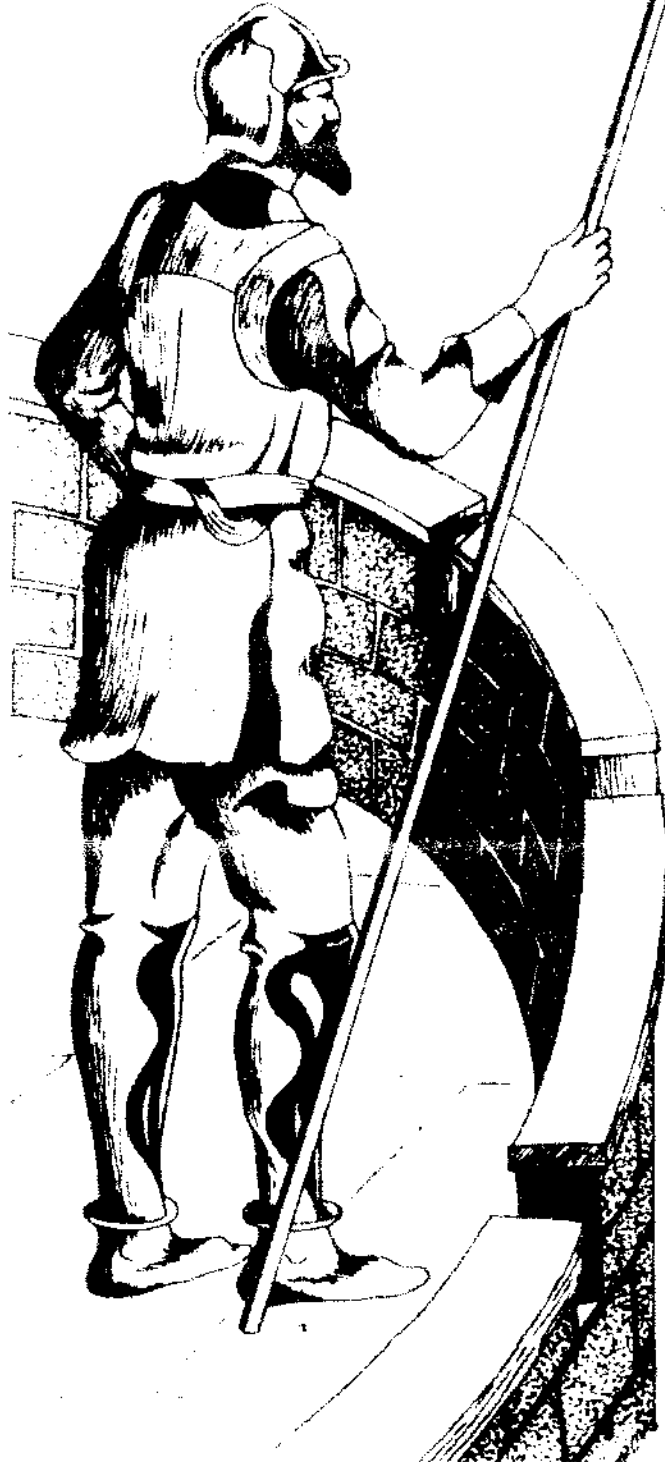


"Watchman, what of the night?"

XXXVI - 1(03)

*The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"*

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



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Editor's Preface

One of the most critical and sensitive issues facing the Adventist Community at the present is the religious-political agenda of the Religious Right. Already a committee has been formed to be chaired by a Jesuit priest for the purpose of formulating legislation to create a National Day of Rest. The committee will also include an Adventist minister. It was back in March of last year that an Action Alert was sent from the Christian Coalition indicating that they planned to make such a law a part of their legislative agenda for 2002. Then, there was a turn around; and when inquiry was made about this planned agenda, the announcement was denied and they charged an unidentified individual with fraud and forgery. Note carefully the article - "They Lied." Observe, the legislation will be termed simply, "A National Day of Rest." It will be promoted as a "Family" day; however, the Alert emphasized the religious thinking behind the proposed legislation. Further, the connection between the Coalition and Orthodox Jewry is not without significance.

In this issue we note the dialogue which has been taking place between the Adventist Biblical Research Institute scholars and Papal theologians for the past several years. The Adventist News Network indicated that "in the most recent meeting, (May, 2002), several other topics for possible conversations were identified." This means more dialogue. While papers on the Sabbath and the 27 Fundamental Statements of Beliefs have already been presented - we comment in this issue on a bemusing observation made in the paper on the Fundamental Beliefs. - there is more that can be said and, as space permits, will be said regarding the Statements of Belief paper.

The Hand of God - 1

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush at Mt. Horeb on "the backside of the desert," He announced His intention, declaring: "I have come down to deliver (my people) out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Ex. 3:8). He warned Moses that He was "sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go," but that He would "stretch out [His] hand, and smite Egypt with all [His] wonders which [He would] do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go" (vs. 19-20). True to Divine foresight, Pharaoh refused to let Israel go. The plagues began - streams, ponds, and pools of water turned to blood; frogs, and lice followed in quick succession. Unable to duplicate the lice, the magicians informed the king, "This is the finger of God" (8:19).

Centuries later, another king defied the God of heaven. Making a great feast "to a thousand of his lords," he brought forth "the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem." The record reads:

The king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. (Dan. 5:3-4).

Then - - -

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. (v. 5).

The probation of another nation was closing. The seventy years, which Jeremiah prophesied would be the duration of the servitude of Judah to the empire of Babylon, was nearing its end (Jer. 29:10); and on the horizon was the king who would permit the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem (Isa. 44:28). Again the hand of God intervened in the affairs of earth for the accomplishment of His purposes. The fateful judgment on Babylon was written - "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:27).

Again after the passing of centuries, the One who came down to deliver Israel out of Egypt, the One whose hand had written the words on the palace wall, stood in the Temple precincts. In scathing rebukes He denounced the religious leadership of Israel and declared, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38). Within three years, the destiny of a nation had been sealed. From "my Father's house" (John 2:16) it had become, "your house" and was to become a desolation. Another nation was reaching its end times, a nation that as "My people" He had brought out of Egypt.

As Jesus left the Temple precincts, one of His disciples called His attention to the massive stones used in the construction (Mk. 13:1). To this Jesus replied: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2). When they reached Olivet, four of the disciples questioned Jesus, asking: "When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and the end of the world?" (v. 3). The first question involved the destruction of the Temple; the second the end of the age. In this study, we shall consider the first question and its fulfillment.

Both Matthew and Mark report Jesus' reference to the prophecy of Daniel:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, ... then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains (Mt. 24:15-16; Mk. 13:14).

Luke interprets, for his patron Theophilus, these words of Jesus referring to the prophecy of Daniel, writing, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (21:20). Those in Judea were to flee, and those "which are in the midst of it depart out" (v. 21). It is this last aspect of the prophecy - instruction to leave the surrounded city - which introduces some factors, the significance of which we have not considered fully.

In the summer of AD 66, the Jews revolted against the Roman rule. They captured from the Romans the fortress of Masada. This meant war. After repeated massacres by Jews of Gentiles, and Gentiles of Jews in the areas of Samaria and

Galilee, the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius took a hand. At the head of a large force of Roman soldiers, he marched down the Mediterranean coast in pursuit of the Jewish insurrectionists who fled before him. He arrived at Jerusalem in the Fall of the Year at the time of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. "Although it was Sabbath, the Jews abandoned their religious rites, and rushed out to attack Cestius' troops. To the amazement of both Romans and Jews, they broke the Roman ranks." At this, an attempt at negotiation followed and failed. Because of the Jewish reaction, and having received a promise from the royalist party in Jerusalem to open to him the gates of the city, Cestius resumed his attack on the city. Then an astounding thing happened. Josephus tells us that "he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having any disgrace, he retired from the city, *without any reason in the world*" (Wars of the Jews, Bk. II, Chap. XIX, #7; emphasis supplied). Was this the "hand of God," a Divine intervention? For what purpose?

The Jewish forces followed and fell upon the retreating Romans to the point of producing a near rout. This defeat and withdrawal of Cestius permitted the Christians in the city to flee and find refuge at Pella in Peraea. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 73-75.) There are questions which arise? Why did not the Christians leave before this time? True, Jesus had given a specific sign which had not occurred prior to Cestius' siege. Yet, "before the war began," according to Eusebius, prophets had warned them that they should leave the doomed city (*ibid*). Why didn't they heed the warning?

To note a probable answer, we will need to observe certain facts given in Scripture and history for the years immediately prior to AD 66. When Paul completed his third missionary tour, a decade earlier, he reported to the elders at Jerusalem. (Acts 21:18-19) They replied to him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law" (ver. 20). This implies more than the mere observance of the Ten Commandments. Their suggestion to Paul involved taking part in a purification ceremony in the Temple so that he could show that he also

"walkest orderly, and keepest the law" (v. 24). Keep in mind that this "Temple" was the house which Jesus said was "desolate." This is the "Church" which with its leadership had cried out to Pilate with a deafening roar, "Crucify Him!" (Mark. 15:14). This position they never retracted. The "thousands of Jews" who professed to believe the truth were still mingling with the apostates in their Temple rites and services. This was in direct contrast to Paul who "separated the disciples" from the Jews who "believed not" (Acts 19:9).

Besides the Temple with its services, there were synagogues in the city of Jerusalem, some dedicated to accommodate various groups of Jews with differing nationalities. See Acts 6:9. It is even possible that there could have been a Synagogue of the Nazarenes. Tertullus in his accusation of Paul before Felix, referred to "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 2:5). James, who advised Paul to take part in the Temple rites with Jewish Christians, in his Epistle advised those to whom he was writing, "For if there come unto your synagogue (*συναγωγή*)" (2:2 margin). He did not say, "church" (*εκκλησία*), as Paul did in directing his Epistles. See, for example, I Cor. 1:2. While *συναγωγή* means a gathering together with others, an assembly, *εκκλησία* means a called out group. The first Jewish Christians did not perceive this separation but continued to worship in the temple with smaller gatherings "from house to house." (Acts 2:46) A crisis was inevitable as the gospel would be preached beyond the confines of Jerusalem and Judea. A summary of the situation reads:

It was inevitable that, as soon, as the church engaged in worldwide missionary work, a serious difficulty and misunderstanding should arise within its membership. The first Christians were Jews. They knew the Jewish faith as the only true faith, and the God it worshiped as the only true God. They believed thoroughly in the inspiration and spiritual authority of the Scriptures that had come down to them from their fathers. They knew of proselyting, but that meant bringing Gentiles into the Jewish church, with the understanding that such converts should observe all things required of the Jews.

Jesus had based His program and teachings upon the Scriptures. While He had criticized the traditional

accretions, formalities, externalities, and hypocrisies of the religious leaders He met, Jesus insisted that He had not come to change the Law or the Prophets, but rather to make their teachings successful as a spiritual fact in the experience of the people. The Jews who followed Christ mistakenly concluded that those who were brought in line with Jesus' teachings would also follow the practices of the Jewish church. If they were to become members of the Christian sect, they must also become members of the great body of Judaism. (*SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, pp. 30-31)

The sign that Jesus gave - Jerusalem surrounded by Roman armies produced a "shaking time" in Jewish Christian community. That which could have been done in times of peace and prosperity had to be done under the most trying of circumstances. See Luke 21:22-23. The professed Christians in Jerusalem had to choose between their "Temple," their "synagogue," and the fulfilled prophecy of Jesus. They had to accept a previously rejected fact that the Temple was "desolate." If they did not leave, they would demonstrate that they did not truly believe in the words of Jesus. They were not Christians. #

They Lied

In the September issue of WWN last year, we carried an article captioned, "A National Day of Rest?" Earlier in the year we had received from several sources a copy of an "action alert," dated March 26, 2002, allegedly sent out by the Christian Coalition of America. In the "alert," it indicated that "many of us here at Christian coalition believe that it is time to legislate a National Day of Rest" stating that "The observance of Sunday is essential to the welfare of the Nation." The intent of the "Alert" was to inform the members of the Coalition that it was to be a part of the legislative Agenda which would be presented at the meeting scheduled for Washington DC in October.

While preparing the September issue for publication, we received from a reader in Tennessee a copy of an E-Mail communication he had received from the Christian Coalition as the result of an inquiry he made concerning the "Alert." The letter was sent by Robert Deason

who declared the March 26 letter "fraudulent" and that Michael Brown's signature had been "forged on the document." Then a few days prior to the October meeting, we received a call from a retired minister who is a member of the Christian Coalition telling us that indeed he had received the letter via Fax (dated 03/26/02) from the office of the president of the Coalition, Roberta Combs, noting Pastor Mike Brown as the author. The "Alert" was valid; however, there was no signed signature. Thus the accusation of a forged signature as indicated in the E-mail letter of denial as well as the denial itself was a lie.

During the week-end meeting of October 11-13 in Washington DC, Deason was asked why there was the denial of what was originally sent out in regard to the legislative agenda that had been anticipated. His reply was - "the Jews." Friday was marked by a pro-Israel rally as well as a videotaped message from President Bush assuring the delegates that his administration would advocate the Coalition's key agenda items. The mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert spoke saluting "the great believers and lovers of Zion." He received several standing ovations from the coalition members waving Israeli flags. Pat Robertson, president emeritus, of the Coalition declared that "we should not ask Israel to withdraw from the so called occupied territories, we should stand with them and fight. Jerusalem is the eternal and indivisible capital of the State of Israel, and it must not be divided."

The Coalition press release from which the above data was taken, also focused on the issue of separation of church and state calling the policies advocated to assure such a separation, "a deception of Satan." One who attended the conference as an observer was impressed with the emphasis on the Ten Commandments. This is interesting in the light of the commandment which says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," and the denial of the "Action Alert" sent by a member of the staff of the Coalition calling for a National Sunday Law.

Truth does not need to garb itself in a cloak of falsehood. To promote the Ten Commandments and then to advocate a National Sunday Law is incongruous. To seek to promote a pro-Israel

stand so as to receive the accolade as a "lover of Zion," and then to lie to cover one of their real legislative objectives tells one, who is not blind, what power is behind the Christian Coalition of America. Jesus would say, "Ye are of your father the devil," who "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Tragically, this is not limited to the Christian Coalition of America. There are those who advocate following the so-called old paths of Adventism who stoop to the same level to promote their deceptions. We need to remember the counsel that has been given. "The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will loose anything by close investigation" (*R&H*, Dec. 20, 1892).

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Divine Intervention

In the December issue of *WWN*, giving an historical review of the doctrine of the Incarnation as has been taught in Adventism, we observed that the leaders of the Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana based their aberrant view on an interpretation of Hebrews 2:11: "For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." R. S. Donnell, president of the Indiana Conference and titular head of what has been dubbed, the Holy Flesh Movement, in a series of articles in the *Indiana Reporter*, wrote:

Now, Christ stood where Adam stood, and Adam stood without a taint of sin. So Christ must have stood where Adam stood before his fall - that is, without a taint of sin. This must be so, for Paul continues the subject, and in verse 11 he says: "For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified (not those He is going to sanctify, but they who are sanctified) are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Notice that it is the sanctified who He is not ashamed to call brethren. Further, it is the sanctified ones of whose flesh He partakes. "Forasmuch, then, as the children (or brethren,

sanctified ones) are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise (just as the sanctified ones are partakers) took part of the same: that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." Heb. 2:14. (*What I Taught in Indiana*, art. 1, pp. 4, 5)

In his second article, Donnell returns to these verses. He wrote:

When we closed [the first article] we were considering the fact that Christ Himself took part of flesh and blood, just as the children did. That is, He took part of the same flesh that the children possessed. We found, also, that the children are the sanctified ones. Now the sanctified ones are surely those upon whom the truth of God and power of His Holy Spirit has wrought - the ones who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, those who have been created unto good works, the same which God hath before ordained that they should walk in. (*ibid.*, p. 5)

Simply stated, the advocates of the Holy Flesh teaching believed that Christ partook of the flesh of those who have been "born again." The question would follow, wherein then does the flesh of a "born again" person differ from the flesh of a "sinner"? This would lead to a discussion beyond the scope of this study.

Observe that Donnell bases his concept of the Incarnation squarely on Hebrews 2. In spite of the fact that Ellen G. White told the constituency meeting of the Indiana Conference at the time of its restructuring in 1901 that "none are to pick up any points of this doctrine and call it truth," yet in 1979, Thomas A. Davis, serving in the book department of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, authored a book which questioned, *Was Jesus Really Like Us?* Citing a reference which reads - "The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and ever will remain a mystery. That which is revealed, is for us and for our children. . ." - Davis asks, "Now, what has been revealed?" and suggests, "Let us turn to the book of Hebrews." (p. 21). He directs the reader to the same chapter and verses that Donnell used giving them the same identical interpretation.

In the next chapter of his book, "Light from the Book of Hebrews," Davis summarizes:

The point that presents itself so forcefully here is that

Jesus was not incarnated with a nature common to all men. He did not come to this world to be in all respects like all men. The human nature He was endowed with was not like that of unregenerate sinners. His human nature was common only with those who have experienced a spiritual rebirth. (Emphasis his)

Let us express this another way. Of Mary, Jesus was born "born again." (p. 30).

As noted in the previous issue of WWN, another added his voice to this teaching. In 1981, Ron Spear published a 2nd Edition of his *Waymarks of Adventism* in which he wrote - Christ "was born with the nature that becomes ours when we are born again." (p. 39). This position demands, on the part of God, a divine intervention. Either Mary was so vitalized that she could pass on to Christ what no other mother can convey to her offspring, or Christ was preserved free from any element of the fallen nature of Adam which is the common heritage of all the other sons and daughters of the human race.

At the evening meeting of the 1901 General Conference Session prior to the break-up of the Holy Flesh movement, E. J. Wagoner addressed the issue of the Incarnation. He asked:

Was Christ, that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary, born in sinful flesh? Did you ever hear of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception? And do you know what it is? Some of you possibly have supposed in hearing of it, that it meant that Jesus Christ was born sinless. That is not the Catholic dogma at all. The doctrine of the immaculate conception is that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born sinless . . .

We need to settle, everyone of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not. There are a great many that have got the marks yet . . .

Do you not see that the idea that the flesh of Jesus was not like ours (because we know ours is sinful) necessarily involves the idea of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary? Mind you, in Him was no sin, but the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, the marvel of the ages, the wonder of the angels, that thing which even now they desire to understand, and which they can form no just idea of, only as they are taught it by the church, is the perfect manifestation of

the life of God in its spotless purity in the midst of sinful flesh. O that is a marvel, is it not? (1901 GC *Bulletin*, p. 404)

How then are we to understand Hebrews 2:11?

Back in 1986, a group of "leading lights" in the community of Adventism assembled at Hartland Institute in Virginia with the objective of arriving at a consensus on certain key doctrines, one of which was the Incarnation. The one chosen to lead the presentation on the Incarnation was Thomas Davis. I was given a list of those invited, one of whom was Dr. Ralph Larson. In writing up Davis' position in the 1987 February issue of WWN, I listed those in attendance from information given to me. I received a letter from Dr. Larson. In it he stated that while he had been invited, he declined the invitation, and gave his reason for so doing:

My reason for not attending the conference was that I had received an advance copy of Tom Davis' paper and did not feel comfortable with all of the views expressed in it. (Letter dated, March 1, 1987)

With a request asking that I correct my factual error, he enclosed a copy of his written response to Davis' position. From that response, we shall answer the question, How shall we understand Hebrews 2:11?

The text reads - "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." One what? Davis and the "holy flesh" men of Indiana respond - "one flesh." The Greek text does not so state, but rather ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντες (out of one all). Now if the text had read only "all of one" (ἑνὸς πάντες), Davis' position could be validated. But it doesn't. Paul added the Greek preposition, ἐκ (ἐξ - before a vowel), which means, "out of," changing the thought. Instead of being "all of one" it becomes "all out of one."

In line with the Greek construction, there are two possible answers. The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* supplied the word, "Father," making it read "all out of one Father," meaning Father-God. This would be in line with the context of verse 10 - "many sons" and the "Captain of their salvation;" however,

there is another name that can be supplied, which is also within the context of verses 14 and 17 of chapter two. A. T. Jones at the 1895 GC Session introduced his 13th study on "The Three Angel's Messages" with Hebrew 2:11. He commented:

In His human nature, Christ came from the man whom we all have come; so that the expression in this verse, "all of one," is the same as "all from one," - as all coming forth from one. And the genealogy of Christ, as one of us, runs to Adam. Luke 3:38. (p. 231).

Dr. Larson summarized his response to Thomas Davis as well as to the others - Colin Standish and Ron Spear - who have adopted the teaching of "Holy Flesh" men of Indiana as follows:

These two views, that the one is a reference to the Father-God; or that the one is a reference to the common ancestor, Adam, are equally possible and legitimate insofar as the Greek text is concerned. The context, however, would incline me to the opinion that Jones' view is the more correct.

But it must be emphasized that both these views are faithful to the Greek text, which states that the sanctifier and the sanctified are all out of one (Father-God or father Adam). I see no way that we can be faithful to the text and read it all of one (nature). That is not what the writer {of Hebrews} stated.

And it would be equally difficult to interpret all out of one to indicate a similarity between the nature of Christ and the natures of His brethren. If the two entities are described as having a common source and origin, then surely neither of these two entities can be that source or origin. This would be like requiring a son to be the father of himself. (Emphasis his).

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Dialogue with Rome

According to the Adventist News Network, in a release dated, July 30, 2002, Adventist theologians connected with the Biblical Research Institute have had three informal conversations with Roman Catholic theologians at the request of the papal scholars. The discussions began in

2000, and the third one was in May of last year. Two of the topics involved an in-depth presentation of the Sabbath and the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of the Adventist Church.

Some of the observations made by Dr. George W. Reid in his presentation of the Fundamental Beliefs are interesting and a bit bemusing. In discussing #23, Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary, Reid stated: "It is possible this statement articulates the single doctrine most nearly unique to Adventists." This is true. Then, after giving a brief historical background in the historical development of this doctrine, he told the Catholic theologians that "the complexity of this teaching, which requires knowledge of both historical events and the prescribed ritual of the Hebrew sanctuary, makes it difficult to grasp without considerable study." The doctrine which marks Seventh-day Adventism's uniqueness so complex that it is difficult to grasp! Or was this Reid's cover so as to avoid the current controversy in Adventism over this teaching?

We have known since 1890 one problem, and have done nothing about it. Or would the necessary changes to conform the type and antitype be too traumatic? But is not pure unadulterated truth basic to the righteousness of Christ? See *TM*, p. 65.

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Evil on evil! Says the Lord the Eternal - it is coming, the hour has come, the hour is striking and striking at you, the hour and the end! (Ezekiel 7:5-6; Moffatt)

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Editor, Publications & Research

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

Regional Contacts:

Australia - P. O. Box 5023, Wodonga Plaza, VIC 3690

Canada - P. O. Box 117, Thorne, ON POH 2J0

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800-4-LAYMEN (800-452-9636)

FAX - (479) 292-3745; Regular Calls - (479) 292-3721