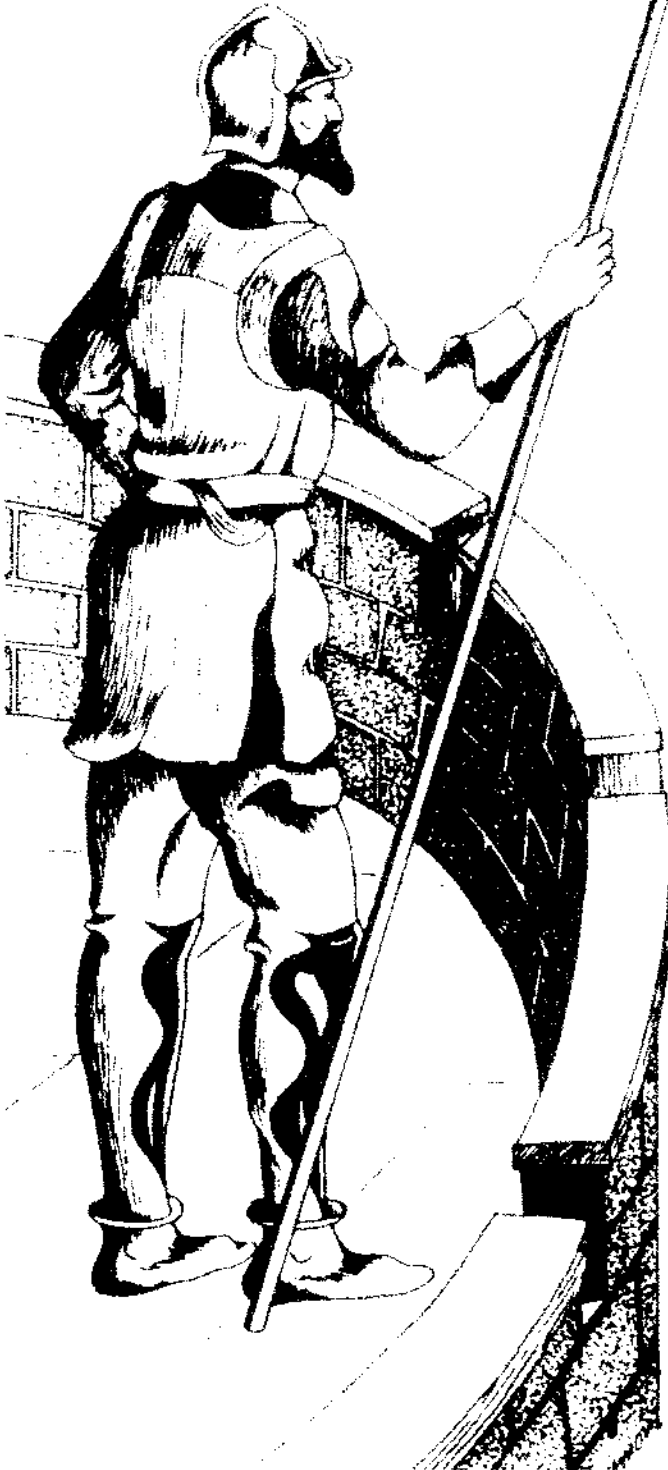


"Watchman, what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
'the hour and the end!'" *Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)*



"Thou art the Christ"

page 2

Church and/or Structure Which?

page 3

Wieland Asht -

page 7

Editor's Preface

With this issue of WVN, we complete thirty six years of continuous publication. During this year, the lead article for the September issue was captioned, "The Bible." In the article, we noted the book of Job, and singled out Eliphaz, one of Job's comforters, as having had a "séance." (4:12-15). This was an incorrect usage of the word. A séance is a consultation with a medium in an attempt to talk to the dead. Eliphaz's experience was direct communication from the devil. Satan was using every means at his disposal to break Job's integrity, even his friends.

In the same article, we quoted Elder Kenneth Richards' comments in Adventist Today regarding Statements #1 and #17 of the 1980 Statements of Belief. He was concerned about a missing word, "only" which had occurred in all previous statements of belief in reference to the Bible as the "only unerring rule of faith and practice." He wondered if the Church was adopting a "two-tiered" basis for faith and doctrine. In the next issue of Adventist Today, (11:3, p. 5), Dr. Mike Schofield of LL University responded to Elder Richard's concern. He indicated that "popular behavior" within Adventism over the previous fifty years was finally being reflected in their stated beliefs in 1980. He documented his conclusion naming the names of some who enthusiastically promoted the concept. While his observation has merit, there were at the same time, other factors at play which must also be considered. These were lurching the Church to the "left." Other major doctrines were being altered in the same Statement of Beliefs. The question must be considered as to whether the omission of "only" was a "sop" to the right so as to get the changes the left wanted.

"Thou art the Christ"

Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός

Alone with His disciples near the source of the Jordan River within the shadows of Mt. Hermon, Jesus asked His disciples a question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matt. 16:13). The answers gathered from their mingling with the multitudes covered a broad spectrum, none of which were correct. Then Jesus turned the question to them, "But who say ye that I am?" To this question, Peter quickly replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (vs. 15-16). ["Christ" is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew "Messiah" – John 1:41] The Messiah was not only the hope of Israel, but is also the hope of the human race.

Until we get the Biblical relationship between the "Messiah" and His designation as "the Son of God" correct and in context, we can never perceive who the Son of man really was. He who came in the "flesh" was the Word (John 1:14), and that "Word was God" [θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος] (1:1) even as Θεὸς was God, in other words, Divine.

The Messianic second Psalm places in context the relationship between the "Messiah" and the designation "Son of God." In the setting of a "controversy" between "the Lord and His anointed" (מָשִׁיחַ - Messiah), with "the kings of the earth" (vs. 2), the Kingship and the Son-ship of the "anointed One" is declared. Observe carefully these verses:

I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (vs. 6-7)

In the New Testament, this decree of Son-ship is applied to both the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5); however, in Hebrews, Paul links the second Psalm with the promise given to David concerning the kingship of Solomon, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (II Sam. 7:14), and applies both the promise and decree to the incarnate Word. Then in the Book of Revelation, He whose

"name is called The Word of God" rides forth as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" to "smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (19:13,15-16), as prophesied in the second Psalm (v. 9).

When Jesus appeared to a group of His disciples after His resurrection, He "opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). In the days that followed the Messiah's ascension, as the study of the Old Testament prophecies began in earnest, it is interesting to observe the unfolding of that understanding.

Apparently, they first read carefully the third section of the Hebrew canon. Psalms, its first book, is cited as the reason for the first business meeting presided over by Peter (Acts 1:15-20). On the day of Pentecost, Peter quotes freely from the same hymnal (2:25, 34-35); besides declaring that a prophecy of Joel had been fulfilled before their eyes (2:16). With what wonder they read – "The sun shall be turned into darkness" (Acts 2:20; Joel 2:31), as they recalled the terrible day of the crucifixion that "when the sixth hour (noon) was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Mark 15:33). Did they also note the prophecy of Amos where God said He would "cause the sun to go down at noon"? (8:9).

As they continued their study, (it appears to have been backward through the canon) they called the attention of the throng gathered together on Solomon's porch, to the promise given Moses that God would raise up a prophet like him to speak to the people (Acts 3:22). They emphasized God's pronouncement, that failure to hear the words of this prophet would bring serious consequences (v. 23). It is likewise applicable to the words of Jesus directed to this hour of time.

Finally, when confronting the very leaders who had plotted the death of the Messiah of Israel, the decreed Son of God, Peter boldly proclaimed:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.

"CHURCH" and/or "STRUCTURE" WHICH or BOTH?

In an undated pamphlet published by the 1888 Message Study Committee, and written by Elder R. J. Wieland, the question is asked, "Start a Home Church?" Then a challenge is made – "Think It Through First!" In the pamphlet, Wieland takes issue with the position set forth by John Grosboll in an article published in the May 1994 issue of *Historic Adventist Landmarks*. He is bothered by the fact that both Grosboll and Trefz refer to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination as a "structure" while he perceives the denomination to be the "church," the body of Christ. Not having available the article as written by Grosboll, I must rely on Wieland's analysis of the same.

The issue turns on the single question, is the Church in apostasy, or is there only apostasy in the Church? If the Church is in apostasy, then there is only one answer, Come out of the apostasy, and meet as "home churches." Interestingly, there is in the very body of the literature of the 1888 Message and its aftermath, the criterion by which we can determine whether to do so or not.

Ellen White wrote of the condition resulting from the attitude taken in regard to the message of 1888. She declared:

I was confirmed in all that I had stated in Minneapolis, that a reformation must go through the churches. Reforms must be made, for spiritual weakness and blindness were upon the people who had been blessed with great light and precious opportunities and privileges. As reformers they had come out of the denominational churches, but they now act a part similar to that which the churches acted. We hoped that there would not be the necessity for another coming out. (Ms. Rel. 1216, pp. 5-6).

Here is stated a criterion by which a "second" coming out is validated. When the Adventist Church becomes as apostate as the church from which one came out of to be an Adventist, a second coming out is the stated solution.

In fact, the parable prophecy of Jesus of the Ten Virgins clearly teaches two coming outs. The

parable begins with the first coming out which constituted them as "the ten virgins." It reads:

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth (εξηλθον) to meet the bridegroom. (Matt. 25:1).

Time passed, and they "all slumbered and slept." But at midnight – the darkest hour – a "cry" was heard a *second* time – "Go ye out (εξερχεσθε) to meet him" (25:6). The same Greek word is used in both verses, the first is in the aorist (past) tense, while the second is in the present tense. Reporting the first Tasmanian camp meeting, Ellen White wrote:

My mind was carried to the future, when the signal will be given, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go yet out to meet Him." (R&H, Feb. 11, 1896)

The "future" was not left nebulous, it was to be defined by a "signal." How much study and time has been given to the determination of what this "signal" was? On the other hand, there have been repeated attempts to deny the evidence of what constituted the "signal." Until this signal was given, there was no Biblical justification for coming out a "second" time. Instead, confusion has reigned because of the "many voices" that have been sounding, each professing to have been sent "with great light" (R&H, Dec. 13, 1892), rather than acting in harmony with the "signal" of the Lord's devising.

Other warnings concerning God's intent in regard to the Church need to be carefully considered. Between the time that the 1903 General Conference adjourned in Oakland, California, April 13, and it reconvened in Battle Creek, Michigan, April 22, a remarkable testimony was written. It warned that "in the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 247). This is not a "perhaps" statement. It "is to be." The corporate church is to be judged. "She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had." Further, "If" she does not measure up, "on her will be pronounced the sentence, 'Found wanting.' By the light bestowed, and the opportunities given, will she be judged" (*ibid.*).

Observe carefully, the criteria upon which the judgment will be based – “light bestowed” and “opportunities given.” Has Wieland forgotten 1950, when he and D. K. Short presented to the leadership of the Church their call for a re-examination of the 1888 Message? Was this an “opportunity given”? Has he forgotten the letter he wrote to Short after the final meeting at the General Conference offices concerning the Manuscript, *1888 Re-Examined?* He would do well to read it again, noting the last paragraph of that letter. He wrote:

To sum it all up, as I see the meeting in retrospect: the 1951 report said the MS was unworthy of serious consideration because it was “critical;” the 1958 report said it was unworthy of such consideration because it used EGW statements out of context; the 1967 hearing concludes it is likewise unworthy because its fruitage is evil. When we are not able to say anything effective to clarify misunderstandings, I do not think that the last charge is really fair; but I believe the time has come to “let go and let God,” and to keep still. The Lord Jesus gave everybody, good and bad, an excellent example – as sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Whether I am right or wrong, I believe I must from hereon be “dumb.” (*A Warning and Its Reception*; Buff Sec., p. 8)

The events of our Church history from 1950 need to be kept in mind. Following the presentation of the appeal to re-examine 1888, the 1952 Bible Conference was held which sought to blunt the challenge of that appeal. This was followed soon after by the SDA-Evangelical Conferences in 1955-56, and from that day to this the Church has been in steady spiritual decline. See, *The Hour and the End*. And keep in mind that Wieland’s final hearing in 1967 coincided with the “signal” given.

There is a connection between the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Laodicean message. We were told - “The state of the Church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state” (*R&H*, August 19, 1890). On the foolish virgins, “the door was shut” (Matt. 25:10). The message to Laodicea is plain. Said Jesus: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16). In meaning, the thoughts conveyed by “the door was shut” and “I will spue thee out” are the same. Wieland counters, that the Greek verb, *μελλω*, translated “I will”

should read instead, “I am about to do so,” and then he (not the True Witness) adds, “but He doesn’t.” While it is true that *μελλω* does carry the meaning of “about to do,” it does not convey the meaning that it will not take place.

The Greek word, *μελλω*, occurs 13x in the book of Revelation in different tense and verbal forms. It is always connected with an infinitive. Accepting, the meaning of “about” for *μελλω*, Revelation 3:16 would read (literally translated) – “I am about thee to vomit out of the mouth of Me.” Does this include the thought, that He doesn’t or won’t do it? The infinitive is in the aorist or past tense. This combination of *μελλω*, with the aorist (past) tense of the infinitive, is used four times in Revelation. Let us check one of these uses. Revelation 12:4 reads literally:

The dragon stood before the woman, the one who is about (participle form of *μελλω*) to bring forth (*τεκειν* - aorist infinitive).

Did the woman give birth to the “man-child” or didn’t she? Does the True Witness vomit out Laodicea, or doesn’t He? Arndt and Gingrich in their lexicon of the Greek New Testament state that *μελλω* used with an infinitive in the aorist (past) tense can have two meanings: 1) “to be on the point of, be about to” and cites both Revelation 3:16, and 12:4 as examples; and 2) “be destined, inevitable” (p. 502).

Apostolic Example

The Christian Church was born in a time of Divine change. The Divine plan called for a new Israel of God. The priestly and religious leadership of Israel had coerced Pilate to crucify the Messiah sent by God. God responded, and the inner temple veil was cut asunder (Matt. 27:51). A new and living way was opened through the rent flesh on Calvary (Heb. 10:20). From the moment the Holy Spirit came from the presence of the glorified Messiah, corporate involvement was charged against the individual Israelite (Acts 2:22-23), and the solution given. When “pricked in their heart” by the charge of being the murderers of Him who was “both Lord and Messiah,” they asked, “What shall we do?” Peter responded. Besides calling for repentance,

he exhorted them to "Save (themselves) from this untoward generation." (See Acts 2:36-40).

Peter was quoting from the LXX, the words of Moses in Deut. 32:5. The word, "untoward" in Acts 2:40 is the adjective, σκολιός, the same as is used in Deuteronomy, and refers to Israel as a "crooked generation," who are not His children. Long had God in mercy borne with Israel, sending prophet after prophet, and finally His Son. Now the time of reckoning had come. See Jesus' parable in Matthew 21:33-43. Israel of the flesh was to be replaced by Israel of the Spirit. Each one had a decision to make. Would he condone the action of their supreme Council in the crucifixion of Jesus, or would he accept Jesus of Nazareth for what He was, the long looked for Messiah. The only difference in the equation today is the substitution of "the truth as it is in Jesus" for Jesus, the truth and the life.

The same Holy Spirit who spoke through Peter on the Day of Pentecost, is the same Spirit who instructed the *pneumatikoi* of Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"(Acts. 13:2). These men soon thereafter began their first missionary trip which took them into the heart of Asia Minor, as far as Derbe. On their return trip through the towns in which they had ministered, the record reads:

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (Acts 14:23)

This verse is interesting. There is no record of any building program for the erection of a "Christian church," neither has any archaeological research unearthed any ruins designated as a Christian church in that early period. Where were they meeting and over what assembly were these elders ordained? Not the synagogues from which Paul and Barnabas had turned "to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). What would one call the assemblies to which Paul would later note in his Epistles, as "the church in thy house"? (See Rom. 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Col. 4:15; and Philemon 2)

There are two interesting experiences left on record which occurred during Paul's second

missionary journey which we would do well to consider. The first was at Corinth. As was Paul's custom, his initial place of witness was to the Jews in the synagogues on the Sabbath. The issue was over whether Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:5). The resultant blasphemy on the part of the Jews in the synagogue, led Paul to take those who believed to "a certain man's house named Justus, one who worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue" (18:7). What must have ensued is interesting to contemplate, as well as to wonder what the sound insulation factor was between the walls of house and synagogue. Regardless, the first elder of the synagogue soon became an attendant at the "home church" if not in the first group who transferred.

The second incident occurred in Ephesus when after three months of witnessing in the synagogue, Paul found it necessary to depart and "separated the disciples" taking them to one of the classrooms in "the school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9). Would one call this classroom a "School Church?" He didn't wait for the believers to gather warmth from the coldness of those who spoke evil of "the way." He took them out of that "coldness." The result was that in two years "all they that dwelt in (the province) of Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (ver. 10). The point is simple. It is not the place where one worships, it is "the word" which one receives where he worships. Is it the truth as it is in Jesus?

The Contention

The question which disturbed Wieland was the terminology which Grosboll and Trefz used to designate the present Seventh-day Adventist Church, calling it a "structure." This matter of "church" and "structure" is more than a mere surface contention. The issue involves the "alpha" and "omega" apostasies. Ellen White described what would have taken place had the alpha been accepted. (*Special Testimonies, Series B, #2, pp. 54-55*). She also said that the omega "will be received" (*ibid.*, p. 50). If we were to conclude that what didn't take place under the alpha would take place under the

omega, then a different church, both in doctrine and practice, would be the result. Of such a "church" divine judgment would permit "storm and tempest to sweep away the structure" (*ibid.*, p. 54). The issue is not "church" nor "structure," nor where we assemble to worship, because there can be as much apostasy in "home churches" as in "dedicated" edifices.

Wieland could have better devoted his writing skills by calling attention to the doctrinal errors of Grosboll and Trefz rather than to have spent his time on the "no-win" home church question because that was the meeting place of many of the apostolic church units and will be the meeting places of "the remnant of her seed," as well as other secluded places.

The real issue is basically whether salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, or is it faith plus works. A few months ago, I attended as an observer a Friday evening service of a gathering that was advertised as Grosboll's Arkansas Camp Meeting. The speaker's subject was "Beyond Belief" an obviously borrowed title. One of the first statements he made after some introductory remarks was that you cannot find in the Bible anywhere where it says, "Just believe." I gathered from some of his illustrations that he was connected with the Steps to Life Bible School. This challenge and his misquotation of other Scriptures during his sermon caused me to question his knowledge of the Bible that would qualify him to be so positioned. He also evidently did not know that "just" has as one of its meanings in the dictionary, "only." It was Jesus Himself who said to Jairus, "Fear not: believe only" (Luke 8:50). True, this was in relationship to a resurrection from physical death, but this same experience must come to those who "dead in sins" desire life, "for by grace are ye saved through faith [believing]" (Eph. 2:8).

At this point there are some interesting word usages in the above two texts that we do well to consider. Luke quotes Jesus as not only saying, "believe only," but also adding, "and she shall be saved (σωθησεται)." Jesus by the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus was illustrating salvation. The word translated

"saved" in Ephesians is σωσωμενοι, a perfect passive participle of the same Greek word used by Luke in quoting Jesus. It is saying that what God has provided "by grace," salvation, is extended to the one who exercises faith. It is "through faith." "It is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." The two verses together are telling us that even as Jairus' daughter could not resurrect herself, so no man can contribute to his resurrection from spiritual death. It is the gift of God: not of works!

Tragically, it is the Tridentine Doctrine of Rome that Grosboll and his cohorts are teaching. Canon XII of the Council of Trent on "Justification" pronounces this anathema:

If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema.

To escape being classified with this "anathema" of Rome, the "voice" representing Grosboll could have said that he was talking about sanctification as being the step "beyond belief." But does the works which God "before ordained that we should walk" therein (Eph. 2:10) contribute to the "salvation" provided in "the gift of God"? We need to keep in mind that justification, as well as regeneration, is doing for man that which he cannot do for himself. We need to come to the foot of the cross – "the highest place to which man can attain" – and there accept by faith alone the salvation God provided from the foundation of the world.

CONSIDER

Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth. If any man can merit salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned by wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly grace, received by a man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy. And all this controversy is ended, as soon as the matter is settled that the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him - Ms. 36, 1890

Wieland Asks

In the *1888 Message Newsletter* for August 2003, Elder R. J. Wieland asks two questions:

What was the initial, rock-bottom, foundational idea that permeates "1888"? What makes the message so unique in its claim for the attention of Seventh-day Adventists today? (p. 2).

There are some further questions that need to be asked: Did the 1888 Message proclaim "the everlasting gospel" or was it a new and different gospel never proclaimed before? Paul declared plainly:

Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Gal. 1:8-9).

There is only one gospel. Jones and Waggoner did not preach a different gospel in 1888 A.D. than Paul preached in 50 A. D. While Paul preached Jesus as the "great high priest" at the right hand of God exalted, interceding at "the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:14-16), God raised up a people in 1844 to proclaim the ministry of the same High Priest who alone in the final atonement would cleanse a people for translation.

For years, the church had been proclaiming the law of God until their message was as dry as the hills of Gilboa which had neither dew nor rain. Was there anything amiss in declaring the Law of God still binding? No! The "everlasting gospel" was to produce a people who will "keep (not trying to keep) the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). What was the problem? The objective was not being realized. Human merit was extolled rather than divine grace. Jones and Waggoner's message in its simplest form was saying that even as man cannot forgive himself nor provide an atonement for his past sins; neither can he cleanse himself so as to stop sinning. It was the "high priest" alone who accomplished the work. The message of 1888 was to proclaim that in the same way a man is justified – by grace alone through faith – he will be cleansed and fitted for

translation. There is no new gospel. God had, and still has, only one way to save a man, and that is by grace alone through faith in the Priest and Divine Victim.

What the religions of Babylon do not see is the High Priestly ministry of Christ in the final atonement. They perceive His ministry as a common priest at the Altar of the Cross in a blurred or false light, and have no perception of His ministry as the great High Priest after the Order of Melchizedec. The proclamation of this ministry of Christ was committed to the Advent Movement. The 1888 Message was given to enable us to understand how the final atonement is to be realized "in us." In other words, God has provided for our regeneration. It is ours to relate to it. "What is regeneration? – It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless." (EGW, Nov. 22, 1896).

+ + + + +

WEBSITES

<http://ourworld.cs.com/adventistaler1>

<http://www.adventistlaymen.com>

E-MAIL

Editor – grotheer@adventistlaymen.com
 Webmaster – webmaster@adventistlaymen.com
 Webmaster-JO – adventistaler1@cs.com

+++++

"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854, USA.

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

Any portion of the Thought Paper may be reproduced without further permission by adding the credit line - "Reprinted from WWN, Ozone, Arkansas, USA."

Current copy free upon request; previous and duplicate copies - 50c.

800-4-LAYMEN (800-452-9636)
 FAX - (479) 292-3745; Regular Calls - (479) 292-3721