



"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

CRITICISM

Elder David L. Bauer

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (Isa. 6:8, 9)

There is a nasty little word called, "criticism." I wonder how many of us have been accused of being critical. We are told that criticism is a sin and that we should never criticize. I shall never forget the first time I was accused of being critical by the leadership. It upset me greatly. That same year during campmeeting in Auburn, Washington, the Conference President arranged for a panel discussion. The members of the panel were a teacher, a minister, and a doctor who were to discuss criticism each from his professional point of view; and at the same time the congregation was allowed to make comments. Later the panel was sent out to deliberate and bring in their findings. It was all very interesting.

The concensus of the group was that there are two kinds of criticism: Destructive and Constructive. The panel went on to report that as they had considered the matter, they had had a difficult time defining what destructive and constructive criticism actually is. The best consensus the panel could come up with was when you criticize me, it is destructive; but if I criticize you, it is constructive! That decision did not satisfy anyone.

The concept of criticism is a misunderstood issue, and it usually silences a person who is accused of being critical. This misunderstanding of criticism has bothered me for years. The times I would be accused of being critical I would return home upset and wonder if I had committed a terrible sin. If I was to have any peace of mind, I decided, I would have to settle the question for myself; so I went through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to find out just what type of criticism is permissible and what type is not, and when it is a sin, and when it is not.

Ellen G. White says that Satan wants to silence the voice of reproof and rebuke in the church. And he accomplishes his purpose by labeling it "criticism." In my study of criticism I found that she says we are not to criticize the minister or our fellow church members regarding their facial expressions, their use of the

English language or grammar, and we are not to criticize their dress. We are not to criticize anything about the person. To find fault with one of God's created beings, who cannot help the way he looks, is sin.

The following quotation is an example of sinful criticism and what Satan hopes to accomplish, and many times does, through this critical spirit. It reads:

God always has men to whom He entrusts His message. His Spirit moves upon their hearts and constrains them to speak. Stimulated by holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they enter upon the performance of their duty without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord has given them. But the servant of God is soon made aware that he has risked something. He finds himself and his message made the subject of criticism. His manners, his life, his property, are all inspected and commented upon. His message is picked to pieces and rejected in the most illiberal and unsanctified spirit, as men in their finite judgment see fit. Has that message done the work that God designed it should accomplish? No; it has signally failed because the hearts of the hearers were unsanctified.

If the minister's face is not flint, if he has not indomitable faith and courage, if his heart is not made strong by constant communion with God, he will begin to shape his testimony to please the unsanctified ears and hearts of those he is addressing. In endeavoring to avoid the criticism to which he is exposed, he separates from God and loses the sense of divine favor, and his testimony becomes tame and lifeless. He finds that his courage and faith are gone and his labors powerless. The world is full of flatterers and dissemblers who have yielded to the desire to please; but the faithful men, who do not study self-interest, but love their brethren too well to suffer sin upon them, are few indeed. (5T:299, 300)

I found that there is something else we are absolutely not to criticize -- the truth. Nor are we to find fault with it, because truth is a "thus saith the Lord." Studying further, I found something that it is impossible to criticize. Error and wrong-doing cannot be criticized; for to speak against these two things is to rebuke, reprove, warn and exhort. But it is criticism when you speak against an individual, his mannerisms, his personality, or the truth. To speak against error, falsehood, unjust dealing, and deceitfulness is to rebuke and reprove; and it is not criticism according to the Spirit of Prophecy. In fact, when I was ordained to the ministry, I was given a charge which exhorted me to "Rebuke, reprove, and warn."

So we cannot reprove righteousness; that is criticism. We cannot rebuke truth, for to do this is to find fault and criticize it. Sister White divides it right there. To find fault with a person, and things about that person, is forbidden; and God does not approve of it and will not tolerate it. To find fault with the truth, with honesty, and with uprightness is criticism, which is sin. But to speak out against dishonesty, deceitfulness, deception, fraud, falsehood and error is to rebuke, reprove, and exhort; and we are commanded by God to do this.

It is important to remember the difference between criticism and reproof. In general people do not know the difference. For years I never knew the difference until I arrived at the point where I couldn't live with the constant charge of being critical the moment I spoke against error, dishonesty, partiality, etc.

When we individually or collectively speak against denominational investment policies, as an example, it is not criticism; it is reproof. When the Northern California Conference lost a substantial amount of money playing the stock market - and there is a debate as to the exact amount; the figures range from two million to six million dollars lost -- I believe that it is the laymens' duty to rebuke the leadership for such misuse of the funds entrusted to them. It is rebuke and not criticism.

Personally, I do not think we should play the stock market. I do not say that it is a sin; but if we own stock in a company and that company is open on the Sabbath, are we not a kind of a partner? If we read carefully what Sister White says about stock investments, and mining claims, we will find that she does not come right out and say that such investments are sin. But she advises against such investments, and says those who might not be able to take the uncertainty of such things, and who might let the losses drive them into despondency, should not invest.

Friends, we should know the difference between criticism and reproof; and when we know the difference, we should, like Isaiah, respond to the Lord's call. It is impossible to criticize falsehood, error, or deception. Any time we speak against these, it is labeled in the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible as reproof and warning -- not criticism!

There was an interesting incident in Carson City a few years ago. A minister was harshly criticizing someone in the church when a member spoke up and said, "I thought you were condemning criticism the other day in church." The minister answered, "It's all right to criticize the criticizers." Is it? It is alright to reprove wrong; but it is never right to criticize truth, right, honesty, or personal characteristics. It is never right to speak against them. So before we speak against something, we must be sure it is wrong; then we will never be criticizers. We will be reprovers at the gate. We may be unwelcome and a little lonely, and our old friends may pity our loved ones and pass up by; but we will never be criticizers in the eyes of the Lord.

The situation today in the world and in the church calls for prayer and fasting. The message also goes out to you as it went out to Isaiah, "Who will go?"

Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost. . . are those "that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done" in the church. (3T:267)

It is not enough to merely profess to believe the truth. All the soldiers of the cross of Christ virtually obligate themselves to enter the crusade against the adversary of souls, to condemn wrong and sustain righteousness. (3T:254)

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. . . The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. (5T:211, 212)

(The above article is the author's condensation of a message he gave at Silver Lake I. A tape of the full message may be obtained by writing to Arvie Seiber, Redwood Creek, Blue Lake, CA 95525.)

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DESMOND FORD ON HEBREWS

"There is only one place in the New Testament where the Day of Atonement is given a detailed explanation, and that is in Hebrews nine and ten." So stated, Dr. Desmond Ford at a meeting of the Association of Adventist Forums, October 27, 1979, on the campus of Pacific Union College. After quoting from various verses found in Hebrews 9, Ford urged - "Please note that Hebrews nine is talking about an entering of the second apartment once a year with the blood of bulls and goats."

Feeling more at home in various versions and translations of Hebrews 9 than in the actual text, Ford quoted Hebrews 9:12 from the New International version, and then commented:

In case some folks try, as Questions on Doctrine tried, and some other books have tried, to make an issue out of the Greek, the word that is here translated, "most holy place," is literally, "holy." The Septuagint uses it repeatedly in Leviticus 16 for the most holy place. The word itself can mean the sanctuary as a whole, or it can mean the first apartment, or it can mean the second apartment. You can prove nothing from the Greek, because it has these possibilities. But from the context it is obvious it is speaking about a place that the high priest alone went once every year with the blood of bulls and goats.

To underscore what he thought his observations on Hebrews nine taught, Ford declared:

Let me underline it again, because you must get this point. The book of Hebrews distinctly teaches that Christ went directly into the most holy place at His ascension. There is no way out, around, or through it. I have ransacked every nook and corner, and twisted every syllable. [This last phrase, very true!] There is no way out, or around, or through it. The book of Hebrews, chapter nine, teaches that Christ went directly into the most holy place at His ascension. (All quotes from a tape recording of the message given.)

Does Hebrews 9 give a detailed explanation of the Day of Atonement? Does the entire chapter talk about the once-a-year entering of the High Priest with the blood of bulls and goats? Did Jesus upon His assumption of the office of High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec begin His ministry in the Most Holy Place? These questions demand an answer, and on this answer, the rest of Ford's thesis

can stand or fall.

Ford rightly notes that the Septuagint uses the same word as Paul in Hebrews 9 in describing the place where the High Priest ministered on the typical Day of Atonement. Because of this, and the fact that where the Old Testament is quoted in the book of Hebrews, the Septuagint is used, it is doubly important that we understand Paul's own definitive use of the word, Hagia (Ἁγία) It is also true that this word is translated variously in the KJV as "sanctuary," "holy place," or "holiest." But does this rule out the use of the Greek? All of these factors we shall discuss in the next essay.

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OBSERVATIONS ON HEBREWS

One becomes aware at the beginning of any study of the book of Hebrews that he is faced with the problem of authorship. Did the Apostle Paul write this book or did he not? Throughout the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, there is consistent reference to the book of Hebrews as the work of Paul. The book is directed to the Hebrew Christians, and, as such, was probably written in the Hebrew of the time. Only one who understood the extreme devotion manifest by "converted Jews" to the temple and its services (Acts 21:20-24), and who sensed what would happen to their "faith" when Christ's prophecy concerning the temple would be fulfilled (Matt. 24:2), could formulate the theology set forth in Hebrews. Paul alone sensed this crisis, and in a very real manner felt the ostracism of the Jerusalem Christian hierarchy because he did not regard the temple and its services as did they. (See Sketches from the Life of Paul, pp. 206-207). As to who might have translated this treatise into the Greek, thus leaving his style of writing upon the book, and his understanding of the meaning of what Paul had written in Hebrew, is an open guess. The theology of Hebrews is Pauline, and to this we must address ourselves.

The single word - Hagia (Ἁγία) - upon which the Ford assertion either stands or falls is used eight times in the book of Hebrews, and is translated five different ways in the KJV. It is translated "sanctuary" in Heb. 8:2; 9:2, and 13:11; "holiest of all" in Heb. 9:8; "holy place" in Heb. 9:12, 25; "holy places" in Heb. 9:24; and "holiest" in Heb. 10:19. Because of this variation in translation, Ford uses this as an argument that "you can prove nothing from the Greek." It is obvious that the translators have placed their own interpretation on the word, instead of letting Paul define his own use of the word. It might be argued that the translators of the different versions sought to state in English the meaning of the word as they perceived its use in the context of each statement where the word occurred. Surely Paul would not be so misleading as to use the same word to mean a variety of thoughts without so indicating, and this in the light that Paul did define how he was going to use that word.

Unique to this book, the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary pitched by Moses is declared to be "the first tabernacle." (Heb. 9:2) To this first apartment, the word, Hagia (Ἁγία) is given. (The KJV translates it - "sanctuary.") The second apartment is also called a "tabernacle" (Heb. 9:3) and named - "Holiest of all" - Hagia Hagiōn (Ἁγία Ἁγίων) This is the only place in the entire book of Hebrews where this compound use of the word is to be found. And Paul uses it to refer

to the second apartment of the sanctuary. Further he plainly states concerning this second apartment - "of which we cannot now speak particularly." (Heb. 9:5) In other words it was not the "opportune" time to discuss this apartment of the sanctuary. The problem we now face is very simple. Can each use of the word - Hagia ('Αγία) which is found in the book, and which Paul defined as the first tabernacle or apartment (Heb. 9:2) be so understood to apply either to the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary or its heavenly antitype?

Let us now note the eight times which the word Hagia ('Αγία) is used in Hebrews:

Hebrews 8:2 - "A minister of the sanctuary (τῶν ἁγίων - genitive of Hagia) and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

By definition in Hebrews 9:2, this word as used means the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. The context in Hebrews 8 indicates that the earthly was but the shadow of the heavenly (8:5). Thus we can conclude that Christ as "High Priest" when He ascended on high began His ministry in the first apartment of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. These verses - Hebrews 8:1-5 - which serve as a preface to the ninth chapter indicate a present situation at the time of writing. "If He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." (8:4) The particular ministry of Christ being noted at that time is compared to the ministry of the "priests" who were confined to the first apartment.

Hebrews 9:2 - "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread which is called the sanctuary (Hagia + 'Αγία).

This is the definition text which controls the use of phrases and words concerning the priestly ministry of Christ. Note again carefully, the Hagia is the term used to designate the "first tabernacle" or apartment. Thus also when the phrase "first tabernacle" is used, it must be understood to be "the first apartment."

Hebrews 9:8 - "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all (τῶν ἁγίων - genitive of Hagia) was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing." (standing = "retaining its divinely appointed status.")

Paul had already defined "the first tabernacle" as the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary (Heb. 9:2, 6), and then states that this "was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices." (9:9). Thus the way into the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary would not be manifest until the earthly lost its divine status, and the designated High Priest of the heavenly appeared with "somewhat also to offer." (Heb. 8:3)

Hebrews 9:11-12 - "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place (the hagia - τὰ ἅγια), having obtained eternal redemption for us."

This is a continuation of the concepts of the previous verses. Paul is now spelling

out "the way into the Hagia" which Christ has entered with His own blood. Again keep in mind that according to Paul's own use of the word, the "Hagia" is the first apartment of the sanctuary on earth, and thus in "figure" (9:9) would be the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary.

There is in these verses (Heb. 9:11-12) another point which should be carefully explored. Within the Church, as a part of the present controversy over its sanctuary teaching, is the issue as to whether the Cross is "the Act of the Atonement" and thus the work would be completed on the Cross (Movement of Destiny, p. 500); or was the Cross, "the condition of the atonement" (AA, p. 29), and thus Christ would enter the heavenly sanctuary "to complete His work." (DA, p. 790) In these divergent concepts, basic, historic Adventist teaching is involved. To formulate our historic teaching on this point would be to state that Christ "by His death began that work which after His ascension, He ascended to complete in heaven." (GC, p. 489) A correct understanding of these verses will clear the issue, and establish the basic, historic teaching of the Church. The question, therefore, is - Did Christ when "He entered in" obtain eternal redemption, or had He obtained it for us prior to His entering in, in other words, on the Cross?

These verses in Hebrews (11,12) constitute one sentence in the Greek text. There is one main clause - "He entered in" (εισηλθεν - eisēlthen), with two subordinate past (aorist) participial clauses. One of these past (aorist) participial clauses is connected with "being come" (παραγενομενος), while the second is governed by "having obtained" (ευραμενος). While the past (aorist) participle is most frequently used to denote action prior to the time of the main verb, there is, however, a use of the past (aorist) participle called, "identical action," in which case the action is identical with the time of the main verb. In such cases the past (aorist) participle most frequently accompanies a verb in the past (aorist) indicative as in the verses here in Hebrews 9:11-12. Thus when Christ appeared in the presence of God for us in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary through the acceptance of the sacrifice - His own blood - a redemption eternal in quality was secured so that all who come unto God by Him, might be saved to the uttermost. (Heb. 7:25)

Hebrews 9:24-25 - "For Christ is not entered into holy places (Hagia - ἁγία) made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place (the Hagia - τὰ ἁγία) every year with the blood of others."

Again Paul is writing of the "now" time. He declares plainly that Christ is not entered into the "hagia" of the earthly which he has defined as the first apartment, but into its antitype. But the second use of the word, hagia, raises some questions. Is Paul speaking of the Most Holy place, or the second apartment of the earthly sanctuary, thus referring to the ministry of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement? If this be true, then it can be construed that Christ upon His ascension - in other words, "now" - entered immediately into the work of the Most Holy place.

Two factors argue against this conclusion. 1) Paul's definitions in verses two and three of this ninth chapter. Let me underline it again, Paul calls the first

apartment of the earthly sanctuary, which he designates "a tabernacle. . . the first," as the "hagia." Then after the second veil comes "the tabernacle which is called the Hagia Hagiōn." If therefore, Paul was referring to the ministry of the high priest in the Most Holy Place, he would have used the term - Hagia Hagiōn - in verse 25 rather than "Hagia." 2) Paul's use of "every year" in this verse is not the same, though the same word for "year" is used, as in Hebrews 9:7 when without question, he describes the work of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. The phrase in 9:7 is - ἀπαξ του ενιαυτου μους - which literally translated reads - "once the year alone." In 9:25 the phrase is - κατ' ενιαυτου. The preposition - κατα (kata) - when used with the accusative means, during. Also ενιαυτου - year - originally denoted a year viewed as a cycle or period of time. Thus Paul in talking about the work of the High Priest in the second apartment designated it as "once" in the yearly cycle, and denoted the contrast he was making in Hebrew 9:24-25, as kata eniauton - during the yearly cycle itself.

It is also interesting to note it was "the priest that is annointed," in other words, the high priest who brought the blood of the sin offerings into the Holy Place when such was required. (See Lev. 4:5, 16) Not until the Day of Atonement did the high priest bring the blood into the Most Holy Place. Paul was not speaking of that day as that antitypical day was not yet come. He was dealing with the "now" time - a time when priests were still offering gifts according to the law. Further, the phrase - κατ' ενιαυτου (kat' eniauton) - is unique to the book of Hebrews being found in three different places in the book - 9:25; 10:1, 3. In each of these latter references, the concept of the yearly cycle of the ceremonial services fits the demand instead of considering it as an allusion to the Day of Atonement, and coincides with Paul's own definitions of the terms he uses.

Hebrews 10:19 - "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (των ἁγίων) by the blood of Jesus."

Again Paul was speaking to the Jewish Christians of that very time. How he defined his term previously would still apply. They were to follow Jesus "within the veil" as He ministered in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. (Heb. 6:19-20) Some would have us believe that the "veil" in Heb. 6:19 is the second veil which separated the two apartments. But when Paul referred to this veil, he called it the "second veil." Heb. 9:3.

Hebrews 13:11 - "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary (τα ἅγια) by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp."

While this verse could be alluding to the "cleaning" up following the services on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:27), it can also find its source in the daily sin offerings wherein the blood was brought into the first apartment of the sanctuary. See Lev. 4:11-12, 21.

In all of these verses where ἅγια or ἁγίων, depending upon the case required in the Greek, are used, no violence is done to the context, or meaning of Paul by applying the definition which he himself set forth for the use of the word. The teaching of the book of Hebrews is simply that Jesus having made the sacrifice - meeting the condition of the atonement - entered into the presence of God in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to continue the work of the atonement to its completion.

Of the work of Christ in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary which was typified in the services of the Day of Atonement, from Paul's viewpoint, it was not opportune to discuss it - that Antitypical Day had not come. Therefore, only an allusion here and there was made. Christ would appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. 9:28. The cleansing work would then have been completed.

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In our reading of the phrase in the book of Hebrews - "the blood of bulls and calves" (Hebrew 9:12; 10:4) - we have concluded that Paul must be speaking of the Day of Atonement. It is true that these were the sacrifices which on the Day of Atonement were used in a special way, but goats, bulls, and calves were also used on other occasions. A kid of the goats was equally acceptable as was a lamb for the Passover feast. Ex. 12:5. Goats could be used in the following offerings:

Burnt Offerings - Lev. 1:10
Peace Offerings - Numb. 7:12-17
Sin offerings - Lev. 4:22-26

We have too often overlooked the fact that a kid of the goats was a part of the offerings prescribed in the services connected with the Annual Feasts:

The Feast of the New Moon - Numbers 28:11-15
The Feast of Unleavened Bread - Numbers 28:16-22
Day of First Fruits or Pentecost - Numbers 28:
26-30. See also Lev. 23:19
The Blowing of the Trumpets - Numbers 29:1-5
The Feast of Tabernacles - Numbers 29:12-16
Octave of the Feast of Tabernacles - Numbers 29:
35-38
The Day of Atonement - Numbers 29:7-11

The prescribed sacrifice for the Day of Atonement is most interesting. Besides the "sin offering of atonement," a kid of the goats was also to offered for "a sin offering." Numbers 29:11. Thus after the formal service was completed, and the sanctuary "cleansed," the round of ceremonies began all over again. On the very day that the Lord's goat was offered, a daily form of a sin offering was again presented. The blood of bulls and goats as specified for the Day of Atonement could never take away sin. Even though Israel was in "soul affliction" on that day, nevertheless a sin offering was presented at the close of the day's activities.

In Leviticus 9:15, we are told that this kid of the goats was "the sin offering for the people." As such only the High Priest of Israel could officiate and would bring the blood into the Holy Place of the sanctuary. Thus the High Priest was not just a one day a year employee to minister on the Day of Atonement, but was the officiating priest at all the services connected with the Annual Feasts, and on each of these occasions entered the Holy Place ministering "the blood of others."

Hebrews 9:25. He was the central figure in the final act of each celebration.

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XIII-5 (May, 1980)

MORMON LEADER ON SUBJECT OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT

Speaking before the student body of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, Ezra Taft Benson, former US Secretary of Agriculture and next in line to head the Mormon church as its president and prophet, declared that "as world conditions continue to deteriorate, only those who look to a living prophet for guidance will be able to avoid apostasy and spiritual decline." He counseled the students of this Mormon affiliated university that "if there is ever a conflict between earthly knowledge and the words of the prophet, you stand with the prophet and you'll be blessed and time will vindicate you." He noted that "the calling of the prophet . . . to tell God's people what they need to know, not always what they want to know," leads to a test of faithfulness. "How people respond to a prophet's statements on things they would rather not hear is a test of faithfulness. Temporal matters and those of a spiritual nature are inseparable in God's sight, and the prophet may speak on either. Many find it easier to ignore the prophet than repent of their sins. Popularity is never a test of truth," concluded the Mormon elder. (RNS, March 6, 1980, p. 16)

Comment - While we no longer have a "living prophet" and are engulfed in a devilish conspiracy to undermine the confidence of God's professed people in the counsels of God's Messenger to the Remnant Church, the comments of this Mormon leader are very apropos in principle. We dare not forget that "a line of truth extending from" 1844 "to the time when we shall enter the city of God was made plain" to God's servant, and she in turn gave to us "the instruction that the Lord had given" to her. Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 57

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