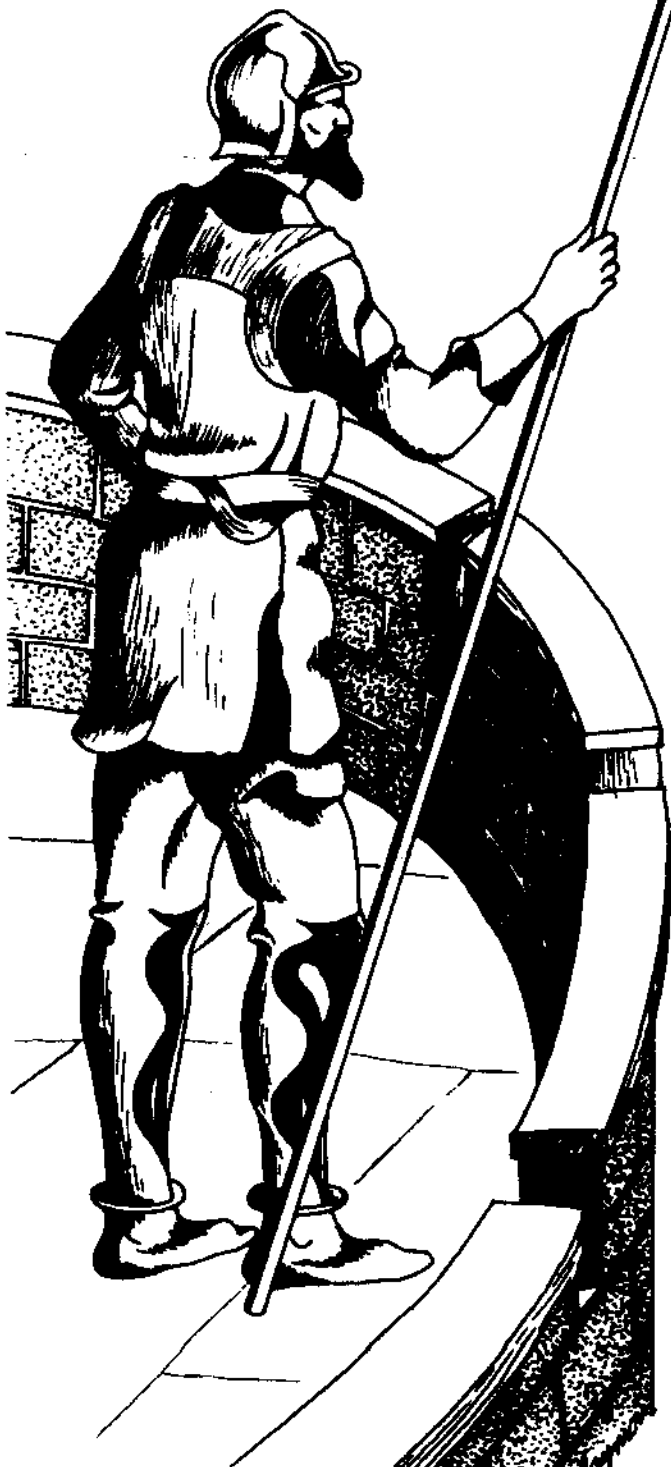


"Watchman,
what of the night?"

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM!
Come out to meet Him."

(Matt. 25:6 RSV)



AT FIRST GLANCE

Seventh-day Adventists Believe... can now be obtained through the Adventist Book Centers for the unbelievable low price of just under five dollars. The other price on our sticker read just under twenty-five dollars. It is obvious; this book has been heavily subsidized. The General Conference wants it distributed. This is the first parallel with the publication - Questions on Doctrine. Back in the late 50's, Questions on Doctrine, though first listed at \$5.00 was finally sold for \$1.00, the same ratio - five to one.

The second parallel is found as soon as one opens the book beyond the contents page. There it reads:

The present volume, Seventh-day Adventists Believe..., is based on these short summaries [27 Articles of Fundamental Beliefs]. They appear at the beginning of each chapter. In this book we present for our members, friends, and other interested persons, in an expanded, readable, and practical manner, these doctrinal convictions and their significance for Adventist Christians in today's society. While this volume is not an officially voted statement - only a General Conference in session could provide that - it may be viewed as representative of "the truth...in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21) that Seventh-day Adventists around the globe cherish and proclaim. (p. iv.)

Now observe the parallel statement as it is found in Questions on Doctrine: (Compare the words we have underscored in both quotations.)

Because of the very nature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization it is impossible to consider this book a denominationally official statement of doctrine, as the term "official" is understood in many church circles. No statement of Seventh-day Adventist belief can be considered official unless it is adopted by the General Conference in quadrennial session, when accredited delegates from the world field are present. The statement of Fundamental Beliefs as mentioned above [The 1931 Statement] is our only official statement. The answers in this volume are an expansion of doctrinal positions contained in that official statement of Fundamental Beliefs. Hence this volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (p. 9)

It should be noted that both books were and are considered an "expansion" of the Statement upon

which each was based. Thus a statement when explained can be modified or altered all in the name of being expanded.

For example, while studiously avoiding the use of "only" in the discussion of the first Article of Belief on the Bible - a word that appeared in all previous "official" statements in regard to the primacy of the Scriptures, but which had been voted out at Dallas, the author of this new book works around this voted change. He writes that "the Scriptures become the absolute authority in matters of doctrine..." (p. 13, emphasis supplied) Then in another section, he emphasizes - "Seventh-day Adventists fully support the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, the Bible as its own interpreter and the Bible alone as the basis of all doctrines." (p. 227) The Dallas Statement does not so teach. The new book has "expanded" - or would it be better stated, "corrected" - the Dallas Statement? But remember, the book is not official! The official statement omits the word - "only".

This new, though unofficial, publication replaces for the hierarchy, the book - Questions on Doctrine. It was done through the Ministerial Association. However, the "Acknowledgment" gives the recognition of the "official" blessing. It begins - "With the authorization and encouragement of President Neal C. Wilson and the other officers of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists ..." (p. v) It must also be kept in mind that Elder Wilson, through a vice-president of the General Conference, assured Walter Martin of the Evangelicals that the Church still endorses Questions on Doctrine as they did in 1957. In response to a letter from Martin, Dr. Leshner, then a GC vice-president, and now President of Andrews University replied. Here is Martin's statement of the exchange:

Since I have always stressed the importance of doctrinal integrity in my evaluations of religious movements, the doctrinal upheaval in Adventism is of special concern. Consequently, on February 16, 1983, I wrote the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington D.C.), calling for the Conference's public and official statement reaffirming or denying the authority of the Adventist book, Questions on Doctrine, which was the representative Adventist publication on which I based my earlier evaluation and book. On April 29, 1983, W. Richard Leshner, vice-president of the General Conference, responded in a personal letter. His reply read in part:

"You ask first if Seventh-day Adventists still stand

behind the answers given to your questions in Questions on Doctrine as they did in 1957. The answer is yes. You have noted in your letter that some opposed the answers given then, and, to some extent, the same situation exists today. But certainly the great majority of Seventh-day Adventists are in harmony with the views expressed in Questions on Doctrine." (The Kingdom of the Cults, p. 410; emphasis supplied)

[What will be interesting is to read any Book Reviews of Seventh-day Adventists Believe... in the Evangelical press.]

What can we expect, therefore, to find in this new volume produced under the authorization of Neal C. Wilson? The same basic deviations from truth which were found in Questions on Doctrine, except perhaps in a more disguised form to deceive the laity of the Church. For example, near the close of the book, in an area of doctrine [The Millennium] least expected to contain the concept, we read:

Similarly, Christ, in the heavenly sanctuary, has been ministering the benefits of His completed atonement to His people. (p. 365, emphasis supplied)

Questions on Doctrine read:

Christ is now at God's right hand, applying to our lives the benefits of His perfect atoning sacrifice. (p. 375)

Now it is bluntly stated - the expression, "perfect atoning sacrifice," means a "completed atonement."

In the section of "Acknowledgments" the parallel between the two books takes a break. While Questions on Doctrine gave no names as to authors or editors, the new volume does. Furthermore, there is a list of "Who's Who" in Adventism of those who reviewed the contents prior to publication. This list includes - Division Presidents, some North American Union Presidents, plus departmental men, some theologians from Andrews, some College Bible Teachers, including Norman Gulley, who is singled out as having contributed "A Christ-centered manuscript on Adventist doctrines." There are names missing from the list which raises questions as well as some of the names included. Have certain individuals fallen from "grace"? Have others been "converted" so as to be acceptable to preview such a book? What a game when truth is involved!

There are some breaks(?), at least now on paper, with doctrinal positions taken in Questions on Doctrine. That book stated with emphasis - "Adventists do not hold any

NONE DARE CALL IT A CONSPIRACY

In the previous article - "At First Glance" - we noted that the author of Seventh-day Adventists Believe... studiously avoided the use of "only" in discussing the Dallas Statement on "The Word of God" because the statement as voted had deleted it. (See p. 2, col. 1) Nevertheless in the discussion of another statement, the concept of sola scriptura was considered sound Adventism. (With this concept, we fully agree.) But when the article of belief - "God the Son" - is discussed in the book, the concept of sola scriptura is dropped, and in its place is adopted a position which could be called "a la Henry Melvill". Who is this Henry Melvill whose concept on the human nature which Christ assumed in the Incarnation is now set forth as Adventist teaching?

Henry Melvill was born in 1798. He attended St Johns and St Peter's Colleges, Cambridge, where he graduated at the top of his class. He was retained as a teacher until accepting a call as minister of Camden Chapel in a London suburb. A brilliant preacher, he attracted large crowds. When he spoke the 2,000 seats of Camden Chapel were filled with four to five hundred standing. Later he joined the pastoral staff of St. Paul's Cathedral and served as one of the chaplains to Queen Victoria. He died in 1871, and is buried in the Cathedral. His sermons were carefully and studiously prepared. These were published and made their way to the United States. The Third Edition was printed in New York in 1844. This edition was a part of Ellen G. White's personal library. Here is where Melvill's connection with Adventism begins. (Summary taken from Henry Melvill and Ellen G. White: A Study in Literary and Theological Relationships, Ellen G. White Estate, May 1982)

Why has this connection now become an issue? First, the Dallas Statement on "God the Son" does not define the human nature that Christ took upon Himself in the incarnation as did previous statements. Previous statements had clearly declared - Christ "took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race." (Yearbook, 1914, p. 293) The failure of the Dallas

Statement to so state was the result of the compromise made with the Evangelicals in 1955-1956, and the ensuing controversy within Adventism as to whether Christ took the pre-Fall or post-Fall nature of Adam. The attempt to have both positions acceptable in Adventism has not been exactly successful. So what was to be done?

This year being the centennial year of the 1888 General Conference, Jones and Waggoner along with the message God gave them for the Church has been projected to center stage. A part of that message involved the teaching of the nature which Christ assumed in the incarnation. Since Jones emphasized the truth that Christ took the fallen nature of Adam with all that that implies, he had to be exhumed and villified. The evidence indicates that this task was assigned to Dr. George Knight who dutifully produced the "historical novel" - From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones. How did he deal with Jones' teaching on the incarnation? He sought to separate what Jones taught and what Ellen G. White wrote on the subject. Here are Knight's words:

Both Jones and Ellen White believed that Christ had "sinful nature," but Jones tried to include more in "sinful" than she did. In that he failed in 1895, but that did not convince him to change his position. He continued to teach that Christ had sinful tendencies in His flesh, a position that Ellen White had never explicitly stated, even though people could interpret many of her statements on the subject that way if they left out or redefined other of her comments. (p. 143)

Then he continues:

Perhaps the best avenue to understanding Mrs. White's meaning of "propensities" is by seeing how one of the authors she used to prepare some of her material on the Incarnation employed the word. Henry Melvill was one of Ellen White's favorite writers. Several of her works indicate their mutual agreement on various points. The Ellen G. White Estate has her marked copy of Melvill's Sermons. Tim Poirier, of the White Estate, has analyzed her use of him. His sermon "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus," Poirier points out, is especially helpful in enabling us to understand and reconcile the apparent conflict in Ellen White's statements on the humanity of Christ. (Ibid.)

Thus Melvill is introduced as the source of what is assumed to be the Ellen G. White position on the incarnation. Note Knight's conclusion:

In other words, Melvill held that the incarnate Christ was neither just like Adam before the Fall or just like fallen humanity since the Fall. That appears to

be the position Ellen White held,...

Melville's typology certainly seems to fit Ellen White's use of similar concepts. It may well prove to be the answer to the apparent conflict between many of her statements on the subject. (pp. 143-144)

Now with Jones out of the way, and Melville's teaching, the supposed teaching of Ellen G. White, thus via Ellen White as assumed, and not via sola scriptura as proclaimed, we can place in the new "representative" but not quite "official" explanation of what Adventists believe, the concepts of Melville on the human nature that Christ assumed in the incarnation. This is exactly what has been done. Observe a concluding quotation from the book - Seventh-day Adventists Believe...:

Thus "Christ's humanity was not the Adamic humanity, that is, the humanity of Adam before the fall; nor fallen humanity, that is, in every respect the humanity of Adam after the fall. It was not the Adamic, because it had the innocent infirmities of the fallen. It was not the fallen, because it had never descended into moral impurity. It was, therefore, most literally our humanity, but without sin." ¹³ (p. 47)

What does Footnote #13 say? Note:

13. Henry Melville, in Sermons by Henry Melville, B.D., ed., C. P. McIlvaine (New York, N.Y.: Standard & Swords, 1844), p. 47. By "innocent infirmities" he meant hunger, pain, sorrow, etc. He called this view of the pre- and post-Fall nature of Christ "the orthodox doctrine" (ibid.). (p. 57)

Now we have it, we can reconcile the divergent views in Adventism "a la Henry Melville". Melville calls his explanation "the orthodox doctrine" and since Ellen White paraphrased liberally from Melville, this authenticates it as "representative" Adventist teaching. And none dare call this a conspiracy?

What did Ellen White teach on the nature Christ assumed in the incarnation? Read again carefully the quotes above from the book - Seventh-day Adventists Believe... (p. 47), and then compare it with the following quotations from Ellen G. White:

Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. (4BC:1147)

In Christ were united the divine and the human - the Creator and the creature. The nature of God, whose law had been transgressed, and the nature of Adam, the transgressor, meet in Jesus - the Son of God and the Son of man. (7BC:926)

It should be obvious that Ellen White is not saying the same thing that Melville said in regard to the human nature Christ assumed in

humanity. Yet Melville's "orthodox doctrine" is now the "representative" belief of Adventism. But worse yet, Melville's "orthodox doctrine" is set forth as having been approved by Ellen G. White. It is true as the White Estate has documented in a prepared paper that Ellen G. White paraphrased extensively from Henry Melville's sermons, including the sermon - "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus" - from which the book, Seventh-day Adventists Believe... quoted as noted above. The evidence cannot be gainsaid. BUT where in the Writings of Ellen G. White is a single paraphrase from p. 47 in Melville's book of sermons, where the new book quotes from, on its p. 47? Or where is there any language parallel between what Ellen G. White has written on the incarnation, and the now "representative" position based on Henry Melville? The documented evidence does support the contention of the White Estate that Ellen G. White did paraphrase from pages 43, 44, 48, 49, 50, 51, but not p. 47 of Melville's published sermons. She evidently did not agree with Melville's conclusions as set forth on that page. But this is the page quoted from, to set forth the new "representative" position of the Church under the guise that Ellen G. White took her position from Melville. And none dare call it a conspiracy?

All of this controversy stems from the one simple fact. We cannot seem to accept the fact that Jesus Christ pre-existed. That pre-Existent One - the Word - became flesh. God was manifest in the flesh. That God in His very Identity was holy, full of grace and truth. But the nature He took upon His Identity - the body He received from Mary - was "degraded and defiled by sin." That body, unless you want to go the "immaculate conception" route, possessed all that every other human body since the Fall possessed. In that fallen nature, Jesus conquered. He did not sin. It was a glorious victory. Why do we seek to rob Him of that victory? A loud Voice in heaven was heard declaring -

Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ." (Rev. 12:10)

Why not join our voices with that Voice rather than conspiring to rob Christ of His power and victory over the flesh and the devil "who abode not in the truth." Would He say of the modern conspirators as He did to the conspirators of His day - "Ye are of your father the devil"? (John 8:44)

CONFUSION

In Article #4 of the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief, it is stated of Jesus - "Forever truly God, He became also truly man." (See Adult Sabbath School Lessons, 3rd Qrt., 1988, p. 27) The book - Seventh-day Adventists Believe... - takes this same position. (pp. 43-44) But the Sabbath School lesson quarterly does not. It states: "Jesus - Fully God and Fully Man." (op. cit., p. 29)

Under the auspices of the Ellen G. White Memorial Chair, Southern College is publishing, Adventist Perspectives. In it, the Chairman of the Religion Department affirms, commenting on Article #4 of the Fundamental Beliefs, and in contradiction to the Statement, that "the Son of God" is both fully God and fully man. (Vol. 2, #1, p. 8) To make matters worse, on the Board of Trustees of this Memorial Chair to Ellen White is Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel, dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. But he is also listed as one of the auditors of the new book - Seventh-day Adventists Believe... which harmonizes with the Dallas Statement. In other words, confusion reigns among Adventist theologians as to whom Jesus was when He became incarnate. The Bible has another name for such confusion, but it is a "naughty" word in Adventist circles.

I am sure that the first response to all this evident contradiction is that it is matter of semantics, and that this editor is nit-picking. Not so. Take a look at Article #2 (Adult Quarterly, 3rd Qrt., 1988, p. 13). There in the "trinity" setting, the Son of God is declared to be "immortal." If then, that Son in the incarnation retained immortality - fully God - He could not have died. Yet the Bible plainly teaches - "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (I Cor. 15:3) Paul here uses the term, "Christ", not Jesus, thus meaning the divine-human Messiah. But if, fully God, and thus immortal, only the human died, and therefore, a human sacrifice **only** was offered for the sins of the world. Or worse yet, if Christ was fully God, and thus not able to die, was Calvary then only a charade?

Let us consider the other aspect - "fully man" as taught in the Sabbath School lessons and by the Ellen G. White Chair at Southern College. The "representative" but not quite

"official" book - Seventh-day Adventists Believe... - states of man - "The universal sinfulness of humanity is evidence that by nature we tend toward evil, not good." (p. 91, emphasis supplied) And Jesus in the incarnation became "fully man"! On this point, we had better settle, and settle quickly, for the Statement as voted at Dallas, and not adopt the error of the Quarterly, nor the heresy coming out of Southern College.

The irony of the heresy being projected by the Ellen G. White Chair of Southern College is that it is not supported in her Writings. For example, consider the concept - "fully God". Ellen G. White wrote:

Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity...that dying in humanity He might by His death destroy him who had the power of death. He could not have done this as God, but by coming as man Christ could die. (7BC:925)

And in regard to "fully man" note:

Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. (5BC:1128)

[This new chair at Southern College - the Ellen G. White Chair - comes through as a facade to cover the rehabilitated theologians whom Dr. Gordon M. Hyde was able to salvage from the Religion Department of a few years back. It is now apparent through this new publication - Adventist Perspectives - that the rehabilitation process was little more than cosmetic. Some heads rolled from the Hyde "guillotine"; while Gulley and Springett enrolled in the alternative - Hyde's re-orientation course. For Gulley the payola was substantial. He was able to make a major contribution to the new book - Seventh-day Adventists Believe... (p. v.)]

"Fully" or "Truly" God

John tells us that the Word which was God from the beginning became flesh, and the glory of God which He brought with Him as the fullness of the Godhead bodily was "grace and truth." (John 1:1-2, 14; Col. 2:9) Paul informs us that Jesus had existed in "the form of God" - fully God both in character and the manifestations of Deity. Laying aside the manifestations - omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and immortality, He brought that which He essentially and ever was in character - truly God

- His Self-identity, and came in the likeness of man. (Phil. 2:6-7)

A little thought will tell you why this was the Divine Plan. Lucifer had no questions over the outward manifestations of Deity. He wanted to be God and possess these powers. The question was over the character of God - His truth and His love. It was over these that the battle was fought, and has been raging during these long millenniums of time. The devil "abode not in the truth." (John 8:44) God's truthfulness was called into question, and He used in and through Jesus Christ only that which was consistent with His character, not the manifestations of Deity in the conflict. This same issue is still being fought, and in Adventist theological circles: - what is the truth about Jesus?

"Fully" or "Truly" Man

The matter of the "truly man" side of Jesus can be answered quickly from the Bible. In the same reference where Paul noted Jesus as having existed in "the form of God", he also stated that He - the same One - took on the "slave form" of man in the incarnation. (Phil. 2:7 Gr.; KJV - "the form of a servant.") While "in all things, it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren," yet it could be prophesied of Him that He would "delight to do" the will of God. (Ps. 40:10) He was not inclined toward evil for He had **pre-existed** as God. He became truly man, but not fully man. He was God manifest in the flesh.

The new publication - Seventh-day Adventists Believe... - is correct in taking the position that Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man as enunciated in the Dallas Statement. This leaves the deviate theology that Jesus was fully God and fully man to the theologians of Southern College and to the authors of the Sabbath School lessons - Leo Van Dolsen; E. R. Gane and Robert Spangler. This does give the laity of the Church a clear example of the confusion reigning in Adventism today.

WHG

A Warning and its Reception

This documentary includes the 1950 ed. of 1888 Re-Examined. Read and decide for yourself why Elder Wieland has been opposed to it being reprinted. \$7.50 postage paid.

WITNESSING

By the time you read this, Lori may be sleeping in Jesus. Until recently, Lori was a happy, seemingly healthy young Christian wife and mother of three small children. A few weeks ago it was discovered that Lori had five malignant brain tumors. A visit to the Cleveland Clinic proved of no use to stop the deadly growths. Recently, Lori called her small children to her hospital bed side to tell them, "Mommy is dying." Today Lori is comatose; tomorrow?

What a tragedy is Lori's story. What an on going tragedy will her husband and three small children have to face in the time ahead. But Lori's experience is not an isolated case. Everyday, the watchful eye of Jesus sees millions who are sick. Everyday, Jesus witnesses thousands of funerals, most of whom will not be with Him in His kingdom of glory. The heartbreak of sickness and death will be with us until Jesus returns "the second time without sin unto salvation." Concerning Christ's return, Peter said:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.... (2 Peter 3:10-12 NKJV)

Ellen G. White used 2 Peter 3:12 Margin as the reference for the now often quoted statement: "It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (COL, p. 69) When I think of the sickness and sufferings of this world I want Jesus to come soon! I want to exercise my privilege of hastening the second coming of Jesus.

In Vol. 3 p. 266, we read about the "closing work for the church" which will be done before Jesus comes. What a wonderful opportunity God has given us to be involved in the closing work for the church during the 3rd and 4th quarters of this year. As most are now aware, the Sabbath School lessons for the last half of the year deal with the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief. What a wonderful chance to go into the modern day synagogue and give a testimony for the truth. As announced in the last issue of Commentary, the Adventist Laymen's Foundation is

"First Glance" - From p. 2, col. 2

theory of a dual atonement." (p. 390; emphasis theirs) Now the statement is made:

This chapter (9) focuses on the atonement as it relates to the death of Christ. The atonement associated with His High Priestly ministry will be discussed later (see Chapter 23 of this book). (p. 110)

The question haunts us as to how there can be a "second atonement" if as this same book reads (see above) that Christ "completed" the atonement on Calvary. What are we doing - double-talking?

Not only is there this glaring contradiction, but there is presented a fuzzy explanation of the incarnation. (See next article) Thus again in two major areas of the faith, the same heresies appear as when the compromises were first made with the Evangelicals.

WHG

"Witnessing" - From p. 6, col. 2

preparing comments on the Sabbath School lessons that will be discussed in Sabbath School the next two quarters. These comments will be helpful to all as they witness to the truth in the Sabbath School.

If ever there was a time to witness for the Lord, it is now. Let us be like the Apostle Paul who said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." (Romans 1:16) Witnessing is more than an elective course for the Christian. Jesus said:

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32, 33)

Paul stated: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Rom. 10:8-11) A reading of 2 Cor. 11:24-28 will show that Paul meant exactly what he said when he stated that he was "not ashamed."

Paul was not ashamed to present the gospel to those who hated him. In writing to Timothy, Paul told why he could present the gospel so fearlessly: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love

and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7) Paul was among those who made the supreme sacrifice, he loved not his life unto death. Of Paul, and those like him, it is written: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." (Rev. 12:11)

Today many quote what Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 6:14-17 to justify a position of having nothing to do with the church. In doing this they are not in harmony with the way that it is to be interpreted. Paul would have never given credence to such a position. The book of Acts records Paul as always going to his Jewish brethren first to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. If they rejected the message, then he turned to the Gentiles, but he always gave them a chance. Today many would "cop out" of their responsibility to witness in the synagogues. The cry "SEPARATION" is raised. Yet how can one participate in the closing work for the church, if he/she is not willing to "get their hands dirty" and do the work that God has given them to do?

Often times we quote part of Matthew 28:20 - "And lo, I am with you always" to assure one another of the abiding presence of Christ. However, we fail to read the verse before which commands, "Go ye therefore..." In the words of one preacher: "Go, and lo, I am with you; but NO GO, NO LO!" It is far past the time when Jesus should come. Let us do the work that He has given us. Let us exercise the privilege that is ours. Let us not be ashamed of Him who died for us. Let us pray that God will not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

A. S.

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 20:21; 1:11)

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