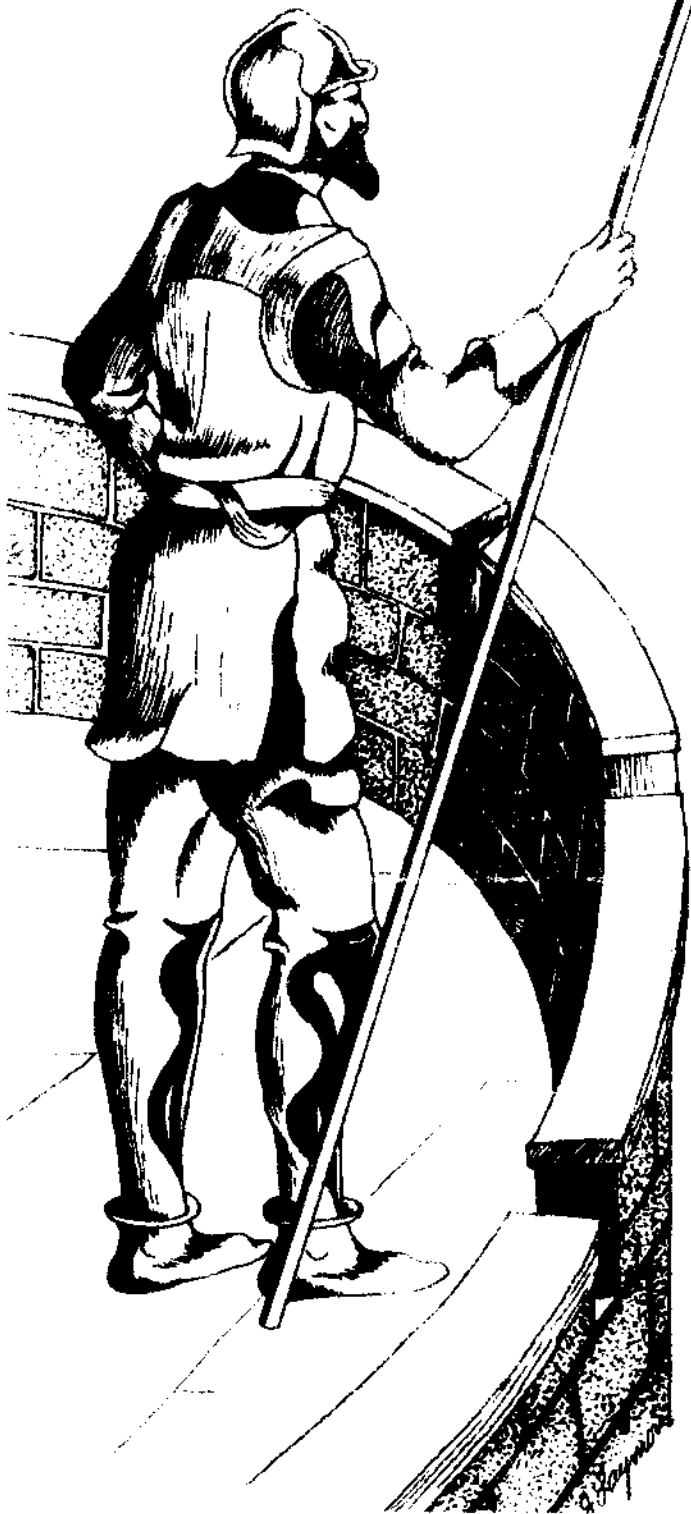


*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffat)



THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

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Editor's Preface

With this issue we begin our thirtieth year of publication. The Lord has been good to us. At our first Board meeting when we were organizing the Foundation as a vehicle for producing and distributing *"Watchman, What of the Night?"* we voted that at no time nor under any circumstances would we solicit funds for its publishing. We reasoned that if the work to which we were called was of Him, He would provide for His own program. And we can testify after these thirty years - He has done so! Through the moving of the Holy Spirit many have had a part in carrying out the sacred trust committed to us. We thank God for them, for their prayers, and for their encouragement over these years.

In this first issue of 1997, we begin a series of studies on the Everlasting Gospel. How many there will be, we know not; but we do intend to cover the ground thoroughly. We intend to distinguish clearly the Gospel given in Scripture and the version of the Tridentine gospel of Rome being urged upon the concerned in the community of Adventism by various "voices" professing to speak for "historic" or "traditional" Adventism. This first article is followed by "Helps" and we explain why in the editorial, "Lets Talk It Over."

There is much confusion over the counsel that "time and place" must be considered in the application of the Writings. This principle is applicable also in the understanding of history. Principles which govern life do not change, but factors which arise out of changed forces operating in history do change, and need to be understood. This we discuss in the second article.

The third article, which consists of two word pictures from the Gospel of John, gave us encouragement as the Seminar was presented. We review the pictures that emerge from the salient strokes of the verbal brush in this section of John. To know that one's ministry began on time with a fulfilled prophecy some thirty years ago, and to see the steady march of events as they are leading toward the final climax of the prophecies given to Daniel, is to see a picture bright with hope and expectation. Jesus soon will come. We need to be ready and waiting. The Papal countdown for the year 2000 begins in earnest this year. We need to watch the unfolding of these plans. God's count down began at a previous date when He gave the SIGN of the End of Time.

The Everlasting Gospel - 1

Over arching the ancillary messages of the Three Angels of Revelation 14 is "the everlasting gospel." John declares - "And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. (v. 6) This angel does not cease to proclaim the everlasting gospel when the second angel begins to sound his message, or the third his. Further, one must ask, from what did Babylon fall? The answer is simply "the gospel." The "beast" of which the third angel warns is "the mystery of iniquity" (II Thess. 2:7) in contrast to "the mystery of godliness" (I Tim. 3:16), "the everlasting gospel."

The word translated "everlasting" (αἰώνιον) is used elsewhere in connection with God - "the everlasting God" (Rom. 16:26) - of the Spirit, "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14), and of the salvation of which Christ is the author (Heb. 5:9). This association of the word dare not be overlooked. The gospel in its age-long essence is associated with the Godhead. It is the mystery kept secret in "times eternal" (Gr. Rom. 16:25), which God commissioned to be made known through the proclamation of the apostles.

This "gospel" proclaimed with new emphasis just prior to the coming of Christ is the criterion by which obedience is judged. For when Christ comes, He comes "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them... that obey not the gospel." Little consideration has been given to this obedience, yet those who respond to "the everlasting gospel" not only keep the commandments of God, but also keep "the faith of Jesus." (Rev. 14:12) It is righteousness through faith not "of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9).

Interchangeably in the New Testament, the gospel is called the gospel of God or the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether different aspects of this gospel are intended by the two designations, is not clear. However, Paul calls it "my gospel" (Rom. 2:16; 16:25) which he received by the direct "revelation of Jesus Christ." It is compassed in its entirety by "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24) If the gospel we proclaim is not the gospel received by Paul through direct revelation, it is an alien gospel bearing the curse of God. (Gal. 1:8) Tragically, it is this foreign gospel that is being proclaimed by many "voices" in the community of Adventism today.

Paul defined the gospel of God as "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 1:1,3) Then two foci of this revelation are noted: 1) He "was made of the seed of

David according to the flesh;" and 2) He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, ... by the resurrection from the dead." (vs. 3-4) Reduced to two words, the two focal points are the incarnation and the resurrection. The gift of God - God sent the Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that he that hath the Son hath life, which through Him - is eternal life; and verified the same to us in that He raised Him from the dead. (Rom. 6:23; 8:3; I John 5:12; Acts 17:31) The study of the gospel must begin where the necessity began for the Logos to become flesh, and that was at the Fall.

THE FALL OF MAN

God created man in His own "image" after His "likeness." (Gen. 1:26). With this high existence came the power of choice. In the confrontation with the "evil one" through the serpent, man chose to distrust God and disobey His word. In so doing, three things resulted: 1) He came under the dominion of death (Gen. 3:19); 2) He lost his home (3:24); and 3) His nature was changed. He had held daily communion with his Maker. (3:8) Now that which had once been a loving and welcome communion with God became a response of fear arising from guilt. The words of Scripture read - "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I am naked; and I hid myself". (3:10) Not only was he homeless, under the sentence of death, and guilt ridden, but he also lacked the power to remove the death sentence, to regain his lost home, and to once again reflect the image in which he was created. Further, not only could he not attain to his original image, but he also passed to his children that which resulted through sin to himself. The record reads simply - "Adam... begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." (Gen. 5:3)

This we term, "the fallen nature" from which none of the children of Adam have been exempt. This means simply, and never should it be forgotten, that we do not possess the power to reflect the image of our Creator, nor to remove the death sentence, nor to regain our lost homeland. All must come as a free gift. This is the heart of the gospel, "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24) This was plainly inferred in the first gospel promise - the *proto-euangelion* - of Genesis 3:15. This promise bears careful reading. God stated to the serpent:

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This verse says much and we need to carefully consider what it says. God will act: "I will put enmity." The "Seed" that would bruise the head of the serpent would be "the seed of the woman" not the seed of Adam. Again, there is

the promise of Divine intervention. God would empower the woman to conceive, and the resulting child would be a God-man. He would not have an earthly father. Further, the "man" contribution from the woman would be the only nature that woman could contribute, the fallen. This promise was not made in the presence of Eve before the Fall for there was no need; but after the Fall. This promise in its fulfillment would also cost God - the serpent would "bruise His heel."

The action that God would take was further illustrated. To cover the nakedness of the guilty pair, He made "coats of skin and clothed them." (3:21) This is echoed in the test to Abraham, when his faith reached out and he declared, "God will provide Himself a lamb." (22:8) Man can only look in amazement and wonderment. However, he can humble his pride (self) and accept.

THE RECORD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The emphasis of man's inability to contribute anything to the redemption which God initiated, and his lack of power to regain the lost "image" of the original creation, is sustained in the record of the Old Testament. In one of the oldest books of the Bible, if not the oldest, its leading character, Job, asks - "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" And the answer follows - "Not one." (14:4) Job, who was declared by God to be "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil" (1:8), confessed - "Behold, I am vile" (40:4) - and stopped his mouth. He had heard of God, but when his blindness was removed, and he saw God, he could only confess - "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." (42:6)

Abraham, father of the faithful, related to the promises of God with a simple, "Amen," and it was accounted to him "for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6) The KJV translates the Hebrew word, *amin*, as "believed." In the Gospels, *αμην*, is almost always translated, "verily." In English, we say, "Amen" - so be it. While Abraham accepted the finality of the decision that one born in his house would not be his heir, he did not grasp the full intent of the promise that the heir would be his by Sarah. When Sarah passed the point of possibility in child bearing, she advised taking the fulfillment into their own hands. Ishmael was born of Hagar. This did not illustrate the gospel from God's viewpoint; it was of human devising. When it was fully recognized as impossible by human initiative, then God intervened, and Isaac was born. The question was answered - "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14) What God promises, He is able to perform to those who by faith say, with meaning, "Amen, Lord."

In the ceremonies of the sanctuary given to Israel, the

gospel is revealed. The sinner makes confession over the substitute provided. It is the priest who makes the atonement assuring forgiveness. (Lev. 4:25-26) On the Day of Atonement, it was the high priest alone who entered the most holy and secured the cleansing of Israel. (16:17) Only two things were required of the recipients: 1) They were to afflict their souls, and 2) Cease from their work(s). (23:29-30) They could not cleanse themselves; no amount of work on their part could contribute to God's initiative. The soul affliction would but reveal to them their desperate situation, and their need for Divine mercy and cleansing.

Isaiah, known as the gospel prophet, pictures God as asking - "Is there a God beside me?" - and the answer is given, "Yea, there is no God; I know not any." (44:8) Isaiah had just written - "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first and the last; and beside Me there is no Elohim." (v. 6) This unique oneness in duality is linked with God as the only Savior. Quoting God, Isaiah writes - "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (45:21-22) Only God can save. Turning from God's power to save, Isaiah focuses on man's inability to save himself, or to contribute to his salvation. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (64:6) Even the elementary things we do which are right are as "filthy rags." With the Psalmist, Isaiah is but confessing that our goodness attaineth not unto God. (See Ps. 16:2)

In the pantomime of the book of Zechariah with its eschatological implications, the high priest is pictured as robed in "filthy garments." The command is given - "Take away the filthy garments from him." Then to the high priest, the Lord declares - "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I have clothed thee with a change of raiment." (3:3-4) It is God acting; man but surrendering to the Divine mandate. What does he lose? - only his own "righteousnesses" which have no merit, and his "iniquities" arising from his corrupted fallen nature.

Other illustrations and references could be drawn from the Old Testament which picture God as the only Savior. From the moment that God came into the Garden of Eden calling to the man - "Where art thou?" - He has never ceased His initiative. Finally, He was to come where man was and tabernacle with man in the slave form of sin. And all through this period of time, what had been man's response? With few exceptions, that response has taken one of two forms. Either, man has openly continued in his re-

bellion against God, or he has offered his righteousnesses as a contribution to the saving work of God, thus exalting himself as one with God.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There is an interesting "bridge" text in the prologue of the Gospel of John which unites the Old and New Testaments. It reads:

For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (1:17)

The text literally reads in the Greek - "The law through {δία with the genitive} Moses was given, the grace and the truth through {δία with the genitive} Jesus Christ came to be {εγενετο}. This same word, εγενετο, is used in John 1:14 - "And the Logos flesh came to be." (lit.) While Moses was the instrument through which the Law was given; grace and truth was a reality in Jesus Christ. He was the embodiment of this revelation not merely its instrument. He "was full of grace and truth." Herein is the crucial difference between the old and the new covenants - the Old and New Testaments.

The only revelation of God's will in the OT - spoken by God Himself, written by God with His own finger in stone - was the Law of God which He uttered from Sinai. The grace of God which bringeth salvation was yet to be revealed. It existed in promise and was manifest in direct interventions by God. (Gen. 6:8) The dominion of this earth had not been wrested from Satan. Israel to whom the Law was committed in sacred trust and who followed after the law of righteousness did not attain to it. "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." (Rom. 9:31-32)

This is pointedly illustrated in the experience of the Rich Young Ruler. He came to Jesus asking - "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18) Jesus responded - "If thou wilt enter into [eternal] life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17) We tend to overlook Jesus' answer to the Ruler's question, "Which?" Jesus in replying enumerated only the ones which pertained to man's duty to his fellowmen, and omitted the final one of the six - "Thou shalt not covet." To this the Ruler responded - "All these have I kept from my youth up." Keep in mind that Jesus did not challenge His integrity; He challenged his heart - "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." (Jer. 17:9) He said to the young man - "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast...; and come, follow Me." (Luke 18:22) Here was revealed the plague spot of his heart - lust (Rom. 7:7) - let alone his relationship to God - following God as manifest

in the flesh. Christ did not deny the necessity to keep the commandments, but He revealed that man can not have eternal life except they believe in Him. This is the message which Christ - "full of grace and truth" - brought to man. It is the Everlasting Gospel.

On another occasion, Jesus made the condition of eternal life painfully simple. When asked - "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" (John 6:28) {Note the plural, "works"} Observe carefully the singular in Jesus' reply - "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." (v. 29) The designed "works" came through Moses; but man could not attain to them. Grace and truth came to be in Christ Jesus. Meeting man's desperate need, God said - "There is one work - believe in Jesus." "Ye are complete in Him." (Col. 2:10)

To Be Continued

Helps

What is justification by faith? — It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day long, then by beholding they are becoming changed into the same image.

What is regeneration? — It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless.

E. G. White, Adelaide, Oct 12, 1890

Human nature could not keep the law, even if it would. Apart from Christ, without union with Him, we can do nothing. ...

There is but one way of escape for the sinner. There is but one agency whereby he may be cleansed from sin. He must accept the propitiation that has been made by the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. The shed blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. ...

Christ reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. O, what compassion and love are here revealed! How is humanity exalted through the merits of Christ! His sacrifice is ample and complete. The Holy One died instead of the ungodly. He clothed Himself in our filthy garments, that we might wear the spotless robe of His righteousness, which was woven in the loom of heaven. ...

We are not to do something in order to purchase our entrance into heaven; for the Lord gives us heaven through the merits of Jesus Christ, and not through any merit of our own. ..

Excerpts from The Signs of the Times, May 20, 1893 (Read the whole article)

Confusing Time & Place

We are in the final decade of the 20th Century. While there are similarities between this decade and the final decade of the 19th Century, there are also distinct differences. These differences as well as the similarities need to be carefully differentiated.

The period from 1888 through 1900 witnessed a strong agitation in America for a Sunday Law. Not so in this decade. In 1895, J. F. Snyder in a letter to Cardinal Gibbons, suggesting the words of the reply, received the response that "the act" of changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday "is the mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (See *Facts of Faith*, pp. 292-293) Not so in this decade. The Catholic Church through a Cardinal, who heads Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, declared that sharing the Eucharist is the "ultimate sign and seal of church unity." (EPS 91.02.74) This contrasts with a letter written by a Cardinal's secretary after having the words formulated by the inquirer. It is direct from the highest voice in the Roman Catholic ecumenical Pontificate.

At a recent gathering of Adventist retirees, the Roman Catholic trained Adventist lawyer from the West Coast appealed to the craving for the sensational by citing a parish newsletter, in which the local priest defined as "the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the church ever did," that of changing the Sabbath "not from any directions noted in the Scriptures, but from the Church's sense of its own power." This observation of the parish priest in Algonac, Michigan fits well into the Catholic boasts and positions stated in their catechisms published during the final decade of the 19th century and first decades of this century. Not so now. The latest Roman Catholic catechism, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, carrying the *imprimi potest* of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger carries no such boast nor alludes to any such change but rather defends the observance of Sunday setting forth a Biblical rationale. The arguments follow closely the reasoning of the Lord's Day Alliance using the same approach and application of Biblical texts. (pp. 580-586) However, there is in this section of the *Catechism* a joining of Sunday observance with the new "sign" chosen by the Roman Church, the Eucharist. Paragraph 2181 reads in part - "The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice." Paragraph 2182 follows by stating - "Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and his Church."

In the last decade of the 19th century, there was no such emphasis for a one world order as we hear today. It is obvious from the Pope's Encyclical, *Tertio Millemio Adveniente*, that he has in mind a working relationship between the three monotheistic religions of earth - Christian, Jewish and Islamic, all of which have different weekly holy days - Friday, Saturday, and Sunday - a long week-end! We need also to keep in mind that "the image to the beast" is set up in the

"earth" a symbol used of where the second beast of Revelation 13 arose. (vs. 11, 14) This involves differentiation of place for a confrontation between truth and error.

Against this backdrop of contrast, is the "time and place" counsel of the Writings, and its application to the Writings themselves. There is a statement in *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. V which speaks of a "decree enforcing the papal Sabbath" serving as a warning "to leave the large cities preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains." (pp. 464-465) This was written in the 1880s, in an eschatological setting. Now a century later, where are the "secluded places" that would be free from government intrusion? Today modern tracking devices make what few wilderness areas that may still exist as open as the cities themselves.

Please take the time to re-read page 5 of the previous WVN [12(96)]. Then note the statement from *TM*, p. 62. It reads that when "anti-christ will appear as the true Christ" then "the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world." The antichrist, from context, is "Satan clothed as an angel of light." Further "the apostate churches" who join in the exaltation and deification of Satan will be awakened by the outpouring of the wrath of God. This is to take place in "the last remnant of time." (See *The Great Controversy*, pp. 561-562) It should be obvious that the making void of God's law is associated not with a national "decree," but with a law involving "nations" initiated by Satan himself. Add to this the comment - "The Lord will judge according to their works those who are seeking to establish a law of the nations that will cause men to violate the law of God. (Letter 90, 1908; emphasis supplied) If we do not keep our thinking straight now, and are still holding a 19th century mentality, refusing to honestly deal with time and place, what are we going to do when suddenly the final deception descends on the inhabitants of the world as an "overwhelming surprise"?

There is another contrast between the two decades that dare not be overlooked. While the close of the 19th century saw the Church debating the message of justification by faith, and not having reached the proverbial 144,000 in membership, the final decade of the 20th century sees the Church splintered, and the main body far afield from the basic teachings which once were the hallmark of Adventism. Basically the Adventism of the final decade of the 19th century is not the Adventism that marks the last decade of the 20th century. Even the splintered groups of Adventism who profess to be holding to the "historic" faith cannot seem to grasp the meaning of the counsel given by the Lord's messenger during the final decade of the 1800s:

The truth is an advancing truth, and we must walk in the increasing light. (R&H, August 7, 1894)

Lessons from Pen Pictures in John's Gospel John the Baptist

Following the prologue in his Gospel in which he wrote - "There was a man sent by God" - John reveals that the ministry of that man, John the Baptist, was an "independent" ministry. The Jewish leadership in Jerusalem sent "priests and Levites," the clergy of Israel, to find out what he was up to. (John 1:6, 19) By birth, John the Baptist was a member of that clergy, but he had not stopped by the Temple to pick up his credentials nor his assignment before beginning his ministry. To various questions he responded in the negative. Finally the inquiring priests in exasperation asked - "Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" (v. 22) His reply was simple - he came in fulfillment of prophecy - "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" as said the prophet Isaiah. The point of interest in this pen picture is the fact that John the Baptist was the herald of Christ's first advent. Certain factors from this experience need to be carefully considered.

The Jewish Church with its leadership had failed God. A voice was needed to herald the soon appearing Redeemer. God raised this voice from among the clergy of the Jewish Church, placed him in an "independent" ministry and timed his message with the fulfillment of prophecy. These criteria dare not be overlooked in an hour when many "voices" are confusing the concerned people in the community of Adventism.

When Jesus gave the parable of the Ten Virgins, he indicated that a "voice" outside the virgins would be heard at midnight calling, "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." (Matt. 25:6) This "voice" was not one of the "virgins;" they were all slumbering and sleeping. Would the credentials of this voice parallel the credentials of John the Baptist - A man sent from God; called from among the clergy of the Church; placed in an "independent" ministry; and on time in harmony with a fulfilled prophecy?

If the single criterion of the "voice at midnight" parallels that of John the Baptist - taken from among the clergy of the Church - this would in one clean sweep eliminate most of the "voices" sounding today as "independents." Perhaps this is why there was such urgency, awhile ago, to get certain "voices" ordained to give outward validity to their ministries. But they were not ordained by the Church, hence they do not meet the Biblical criterion of John the Baptist's "independent" ministry. God does not leave any sincere soul in confusion if such a one is willing to walk in the light coming from the pen pictures found in the Word of God.

Nathaniel

Another pen picture from the first chapter of John is the call of Nathaniel. He is appraised by Christ as "an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." (1:47) Interestingly, the word, "guile" is not from the same Greek word for "guile" as is found in Rev.

14:5. It is, δολος, rather than ψευδος. The word is from the verb, δελω, meaning to catch with a bait. Thus perceived the word stands for a lure, snare, and signifies craft, deceit and guile. Nathaniel was open and above board; forthright and honest. He said what he meant; and meant what he said without malice or intrigue. This type of person is a part of the great want of the world and the Church - men who in their inmost souls are true and honest. It leaves little doubt about Nathaniel's popularity in his home community of Cana of Galilee, or elsewhere.

We do not like unvarnished verbalizing. We prefer what the world calls diplomacy. Jesus said, "Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. 5:37) We should be as open and as transparent as the sunbeam at noonday.

We might ask ourselves, why did John include this call of Nathaniel and detail it. In the Gospels, he does not come across as a prominent apostle as do Peter, James and John. We hear little before and nothing of him after his being in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:13: Bartholomew = Nathaniel) The Gospel of John is about one thing - truth. He uses this word (αληθεια in the Greek) 25x while in the other three Gospels, it is used only 7x. It is also found 20x in his three Epistles. John is not primarily interested in truth in the abstract but in the reality of life, and the call of Nathaniel illustrated this kind of truth. It is the kind of truth that Jesus is, and the type of truth He desires to see in his followers.

Truth in the abstract is essential for unless we know the truth, we cannot live the truth. "There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind." (The *Desire of Ages*, p. 671) It is essential to understand this for at least two reasons: 1) This element is a vital factor in the issue of "historic" Adventism. Another name by which it can be called is "traditional" Adventism. Only as we advance in our understanding of truth can we free ourselves from traditions which are as "tares" grown up around the wheat. And 2) The very gospel concerns the righteousness of Christ "which is pure, unadulterated truth," not just truth in the abstract but truth revealed in the daily life as we communicate, not with guile and deceit, but in sincerity. There is a dirth of this kind of fellowship.

#

Lets Talk It Over

In spite of the fact that Ellen G. White plainly wrote that "God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines" (The *Great Controversy*, p. 595), there are those who will not consider the truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures unless it is bolstered by direct quotes from the Writings. Some who hold the Writings to be on a par with or above the Scriptures actually want certain portions of the Bible set aside in their consideration of doctrine. This is especially true in the present confrontation over righteousness by faith. Since in this issue of WNW we are beginning a series on the Gospel, and plan to base our conclusions solely on the Word of God, the norm by which all gifts are to be tested, we have provided a section following the first

article called, "Helps." These are from published articles and letters which reflect the same conclusions we have drawn in the article from Scripture alone as counseled to do. To follow this counsel is not to deny the gift of the Spirit as one is often accused of doing if he follows this specific counsel; but to fail to follow the counsel given is tantamount to denying the gift itself. It is sad that one has to belabor this point so often, or constantly defend himself for following this counsel, when those who are at "ease in Zion" will not put forth the study and effort necessary to discover truth from "the Bible only" on such an important matter as the Gospel. Do the Writings present a new gospel from that which Jesus Christ gave to Paul? (See Gal. 1:12) Yet the tragedy of this whole picture is the fact that those who do this are by this avenue deceiving sincere concerned Adventists. Instead of urging concerned Adventist to study the Word for themselves, and providing the tools essential to study the word, these false "voices" content themselves with articles composed of "quotations." How shall professed "guardians of the flock" answer in the day of final accounts, and how will the people be ready to answer for their faith when questioned during the final controversy "between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition"?

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Follow Up

In the October issue of WWN (10[96], p. 3), we reproduced a picture from the *Gleaner*, official organ of the North Pacific Union, showing three ministers in clerical robes. Reaction to the editor of the *Gleaner* was swift. One sister nearing 80, born into an Adventist family, baptized when 14, wrote - "Our Lord must hang His head in shame as angels weep." A brother responded - "I am not sure I am a member of the remnant church anymore." Another sister commented - "Our ministers look like they are trying to look like priests of some kind." Then one questioned - "Is the garb they are wearing any indication of who our leader really is, or just who is influencing the leadership of my church?" So acute was the response that the editor reproduced the picture and had a feature article in the August 5, 1996 issue of the *Gleaner* (p. 3) captioned - 'Defrock These Men?' While this title is a play on words, the answer in the affirmative would be very apropos.

The editor asked one of the men pictured to respond to this reaction from the field. Roscoe Howard, assistant to the Union President for regional affairs quoted Paul in II Thess 2:15 - "Therefore brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or by epistle." He then applied this to what he called "a rich and beautiful heritage of the black community when it comes to worship and praise." He claimed that "robes were very much a part of the cultural heritage of Africa, with reference to royalty and nobility." This is not the "tradition" of which Paul is writing. Howard has per-

verted the Scriptures. You cannot assess pagan culture as Christian teachings. A follower of the Lord Jesus Christ lays aside all pagan culture of his ancestry. Paul stated clearly - "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ {not his pagan inheritance}. There is neither Jew nor Greek {They had their different cultures}, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:27-28 God's true church is not a multicultural church. There is to be only one culture - "the divine culture" the development of which brings perfection of character. (7B:926)

Howard further commented - "I am told that I am a child of the King, and that makes me a prince, praise God!" The context is in reference to "royalty and nobility." So he can wear robes! Are not the members of the Church also "children of the King"? Perhaps all as they enter the Church on Sabbath should be furnished a robe to wear even as the clergy. All are to have robes, even now, but robes in which there is not a single thread of human devising, the robe of Christ's righteousness. The picture reflected such a lack with men covering themselves with robes of human devising.

A New Ministry Planned

For those whose eyesight may be failing, or for those who are blind, yet wish to keep informed of events within the community of Adventism and the religious world as reported each month in WWN, we plan to tape each issue and mail to those so requesting. The service will be available through each foundation office.

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