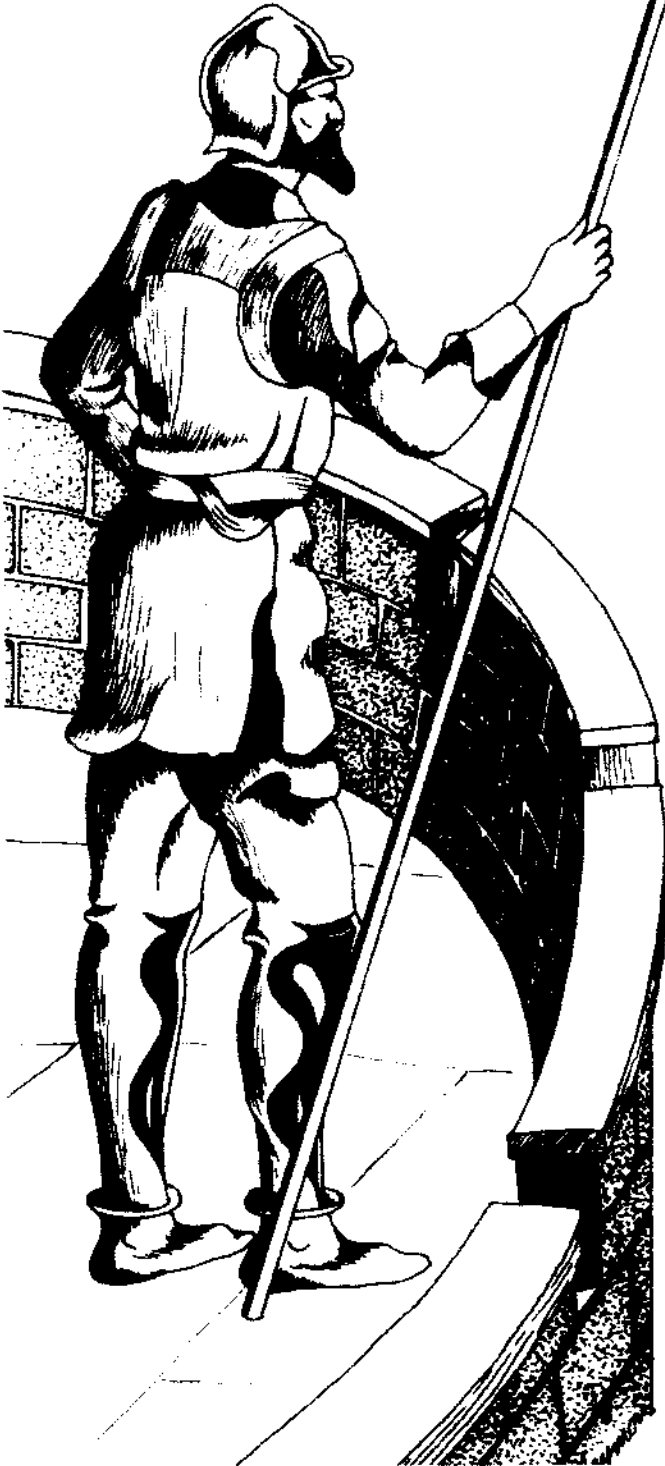


*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffat)



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Page 2

Page 3

TRENDS

HEBREWS NINE

Page 4

Editor's Preface

The first article in this issue is a summary of the introductory message given at the 1996 Annual Fellowship. The entire message is included in the taped recordings of the Seminar on the Gospel of John. See page 6.

While the issues of *WMN* for the first nine months were devoted almost exclusively to the discussion of the Accord between the Evangelicals and the Roman Catholics, with Special Issues focusing on the Adventist Hospital System of Colorado joining forces with the Roman Catholic Hospital corporation in the same state, a number of events of interest were passed by. "Trends" covers two of these.

Just prior to the Annual Fellowship, a telephone contact in Indiana alerted me to a statement in the adult Sabbath School lesson quarterlies for the third quarter. The principle author of these lessons was Dr. Norman Gulley of Southern College's religion faculty. His position on basic Adventist theology has been questionable since his departure from Madison College. He was on line while teaching there. This I know as I followed him as head of Madison's Bible Department, and had access to study materials he developed while there. In the Sabbath School lesson on "Christ's Ministry of Forgiveness," Gulley makes a summation regarding Hebrews Chapter 9 and the ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary. It is a two-pronged assertion denying the position of Desmond Ford on the chapter, and yet at the same time muting the position of basic Adventism which teaches that Christ began a heavenly ministry in the first apartment of the Heavenly Sanctuary. Back in 1980, we devoted a large part of an issue to Ford's allegations. From that material, we have adapted the article on Hebrews 9, and then added comments on the use of *hagia* in three other places found in the book of Hebrews. It is not light reading, but essential data.

The material in "Notes and Comments" should be of interest to all as it reveals the thinking of the recognized ecumenist who heads the World Council of Churches. It represents a radical departure from the previous attempt at church unity and appears to have Roman Catholic approval.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The last books of the New Testament to be written were written by John. Of these, the Gospel may have been the last. It is a fitting capstone to the Apostolic age. All the leading lights of that age had passed from the scene of action. John alone remained. He speaks freely of people and events in a very forthright manner. For example, the other Gospels picture the "brethren of Jesus" coming with Mary to see Him. It could be inferred that they were concerned about Him. John reveals their real attitude. He writes:

"His brethren... said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. ... For neither did His brethren believe in Him. (John 7:3, 5)

John, along with the other Gospel writers, tells of Peter's denial of Jesus, but he alone reveals the restoration of Peter by Jesus Himself. (John 21:15-17) These brief insights give added light to some of the unexplained details as are recorded in the book of Acts. To illustrate: why was Peter the unquestioned spokesman on the Day of Pentecost just fifty days after his base denial of his Lord?

The objective of the gospel of John is clearly stated:

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah], the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31)

The Gospel of John is noted as didactic rather than synoptic as the other three gospels. That is, the Gospel of John emphasizes the teachings of Jesus rather than listing events and series of experiences from His life. In this formation of His gospel, we are challenged by a unique revelation. This gospel was written some sixty years after the words recorded were spoken, and John was well advanced in age. Many chapters of the book are recorded as direct quotes. (Note John 14-16) Some of the conversations are detailed exchanges at which John was not present. (See John 18:33-38)

How are these to be explained? Here is an example of verbal inspiration. The Gospel of John is a Spirit-dictated book. Herein lies its power as a gospel - the good news - of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Its simplicity both in its Greek, and English translation speaks to the heart of every reader from the scholar to common man. The mind of John was controlled by the Spirit of truth who dictated the teachings of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To each who

believes in Him who speaks is granted the privilege to become the sons of God. (John 1:12)

The theme of the book is found in the very heart of the gospel itself. In the midst of controversy, and even name-calling on the part of the Jewish leadership, Jesus proclaimed Himself as the "I AM." (John 8:58) This was the core of His self-revelation.

To those who were seeking a higher standard of living, He said, "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35)

To those groping in the darkness of Phariseeism, He declared of Himself - "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) Then He demonstrated His power to give light to those so darkened by creating eyes for the man born blind. (John 9:5-7)

To those seeking the right way in the midst of confusing voices, Jesus declared - "I am the door." (John 10:7) [The Greek word for "door" is *thura*, from which comes "The Through Way" or "thoroughfare"]

To those who accept the one provision for sin - through Christ alone - He says - "I am the Good Shepherd" who "giveth His life for the sheep." (John 10:11)

To those facing the hour of death; to those standing at the open grave of a loved one, with comforting assurance He speaks - "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25)

To those seeking to return to their Father's house, He opens His arms and declares - "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

To those desiring true growth in grace, He presents Himself - "I am the vine.... Abide in Me." (John 15:1, 4)

There is an unique use of the "I Am" in John 6:20-21. It reads: - *He saith unto them, I am; be not afraid. Then they willingly received Him into the ship; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

The Greek translated in the KJV, "It is I," is the same as the "I am's" quoted above - *ego eimi*. The evening before, Jesus had dismissed the thousands He had fed, and left for a time to be alone in a nearby mountain. The disciples waited till dark, and then embarked for Capernaum. A great wind arose against which they made little progress. In the midst of their fear of the elements, they see a figure walking on the billows which only compounded their terror. However, after "willingly" accepting Him into the ship as the "I AM," they were immediately at their objective - the home port.

This experience dare not be lost on us. In the encounter during which Jesus declared - "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58) - He had warned, "I said therefore unto you,

that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24) [The word, "he" is supplied in the KJV] It is at this point that many today need to pause and do some serious thinking. The self chosen designation of Himself as the I AM is not an accident nor incidental. He is the I am - the self-existent One - and the I AM - the ever-existent One. Moffatt well translates this sacred name simply as the Eternal. And so He is!

Only God could provide the price of redemption. Through Isaiah, He declared - "There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; 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) Jesus was noting what Isaiah had written, and declared that unless one believed in Him as that Saviour-God, there was no hope, one would die in his sins. John makes it crystal clear in his gospel that the I AM is the Logos who was "God" and was with "the God" (Gr). Beside these Two, "there is no Elohim." (Isa. 44:6) To deny to the Logos this position is to deny Him as the Saviour thus leaving one to die in his sins. ‡

TRENDS

At the 1903 General Conference Session a warning was sounded before the vote was taken which jettisoned the reform Constitution of 1901. Dr. P. T. Magan, who had signed a minority report charging the newly proposed Constitution to "be subversive of the principles of organization" given at the General Conferences of 1897 and 1901, declared:

It may be stated there is nothing in this new constitution which is not abundantly safeguarded by the provisions of it; but I want to say to you that any man who has ever read Neander's History of the Christian Church, Mosheim's, or any of the other of the great church historians - any man who has ever read those histories can come to no other conclusion but that the principles which are to be brought in through this proposed constitution, and in the way in which they are brought in, are the same principles, and introduced in precisely the same way, as they were hundreds of years ago when the Papacy was made. (1903, GCB, p. 150)

We have called attention to this perceptive statement of Magan's several times previously through the columns of WMM, as recently as the last issue, and asked two serious questions: 1) "Can I be in fellowship with [an] hierarchical system structured as Rome is structured, and not find an affinity with Rome which could ultimately lead me into communion with Rome?" and 2) "Where does affinity to, lead?"

With Magan's warning, must also be placed what Ellen G

White wrote concerning the adoption of this 1903 Constitution immediately following the session in San Francisco. It reads:

Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. (8T:250; emphasis supplied)

That leaven has been working steadily, and at times almost imperceptibly. We have documented some of the trends to Rome in the Manuscript - Steps to Rome. A Federal Judge of a United States District Court in an opinion of a case involving the Church wrote:

Church documents that prescribe the Church's structure and governance confirm that all parts of the Church are parts of a single entity. Next to the Roman Catholic Church, the Adventist Church is the most centralized of all major christian denominations in this country. (Case 81 C 4938, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, "Findings of Fact," ¶77, p. 22)

Affinity in structure, leads to affinity of expression as the "model" expresses itself. A friend on the West Coast sent us an article from the Gleaner, the voice of the North Pacific Union Conference. The article (June 3, 1996, p. 8) concerned "the grand opening of the new \$600,000 sanctuary" of the Anchorage Seventh-day Adventist Church. The picture included speaks a thousand words. We reproduce it here:



Pastor Edson Joseph addresses the congregation, flanked by James Stevens, Conference president, and Roscoe Howard, North Pacific Union Conference assistant to the president for regional affairs.

Truth needs no outward display of its authority. The representative of truth does not project self, but remains but a channel of communication. Of the Church which Christ established, He declared - "All ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:8) It is Romanism which seeks to exalt its clergy, thus separating them from the people. In 1903, we initiated the beginnings of the structure of Rome, now the paraphernalia appears.

For several decades, ministers and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have worked in active fellowship with the Billy Graham Crusades when they "came to town." If my memory serves me correctly, in Russia some of the ministers of the Church attended the training school of evangelism which Graham conducted there in recent months. This trend continues. We received a clipping from the Canadian Union Messenger (June, 1996), which told of a campaign by Graham's son, Franklin, in Saskatoon. The Church participated in this Province-wide crusade. Then the report read - "Members were privileged to receive some excellent training by the Graham Evangelistic organization which prepared them for a series conducted by Pastor Ron Johnson immediately following." (p. 18) All of this raises some serious questions which should be addressed.

How many "gospels" are there? If I read the Bible correctly, there is but one gospel, and that "everlasting gospel" was committed in sacred trust to a people whom God raised up following the Great Disappointment of 1844. Is it not incumbent upon those to whom this "Everlasting Gospel" was entrusted to seek in every way possible to distinguish between the true and false gospel? If the Graham Evangelistic organization has the true "gospel," why should we seek to follow its endeavors in any locality with a "series" of our own presentations? Is there no God in Israel, that we need to seek to the god of Ekron for help in presenting what God has committed in sacred trust? Or have we betrayed this trust to such an extent that we are no longer able to distinguish the true from the false?

In the Golden Age of Adventist evangelism, men were not trained by attendance at evangelistic crusades conducted by Graham or men of his thinking. Adventists had their own evangelists who had the gift - Detamore, Shuler, and others of that period - and young ministers were placed in "on-the-job" training as a part of the Evangelistic teams.

The "messages" which the Evangelists preached during this "Golden Age" were the full and complete messages as given by the Three Angels of Revelation 14. It is true that after the SDA-Evangelical Conferences, which followed the Golden Age, that the compromised version of Adventism led to a large church growth. Today, the majority of the membership of the North American Division of the Church is composed of those who were so introduced to, or instructed in, Adventism.

Step by step the departure from truth, pure and unadulterated has been made. As the trend continues, and there is no reversing of what has become a "tide," there needs to be some deep heart-searching on the part of those who knew the truth as it was once presented so as to rescue souls who are being overwhelmed in the sea of the resultant confusion. Merely claiming a label, such as "historic" Adventism, is not the answer. ‡

Hebrews Nine

In the third quarter's Adult Sabbath School Lessons for the regular church was a lesson captioned "Christ's Ministry of Forgiveness." The part of the lesson for Friday - "Further Study" - is interesting for two things: It reads: 1) "The purposes of the ministries in the two apartments of the earthly sanctuary was to point to the ministries of Christ in the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary;" and 2) "It cannot be proved from Hebrews 9 that Christ entered only one apartment of the heavenly sanctuary at His ascension, nor can it be proved that His antitypical Day of Atonement ministry began at that time." (p. 28)

In regard to the #1 statement, this is the first time in a decade that an official publication of the Church has stated that Christ's ministry was divided between a two apartment Heavenly Sanctuary. The official Statement of Beliefs voted at Dallas in 1980 spoke of Christ's heavenly ministry as "phases." (See #23 of Statement) Further, this admission of truth if honestly and accurately applied could also enlighten and enlarge our perceptions of the sanctuary doctrine freeing it from traditional concepts which cannot be supported from the Biblical typology of the earthly sanctuary.

It is the #2 statement quoted above which is open to question stating both truth and error. Being a compound sentence, the second clause is in line with truth, while the first clause - "It cannot be proved from Hebrews 9 that Christ entered only one apartment of the heavenly sanctuary at His ascension" - is a false conclusion. This conclusion is drawn based on a faulty interpretation of the Greek which is cited.

Certain facts need to be first noted. The Bible of the Apostolic Church was the Septuagint (LXX). Every reference in the Book of Hebrews from the Old Testament is quoted from that Greek translation. The key Greek word in Hebrews 9, raised by the assertion in the Sabbath School lesson, as well as the same word in chapters 8, 10 and 13, is *hagios*, a Greek adjective meaning "holy." The lesson quarterly indicates that this word when used in the LXX "usually refers to the sanctuary as a whole." This is open to question, and especially so when referring to the typical Day of Atonement ministry of the High Priest. In Leviticus 16, the word, *to hagion*, neuter singular of *hagios*, is used to denote the Most Holy Place [KJV - "holy" with the word "place" supplied] This very word used in Leviticus 16 is used in Hebrews 9 (ver.1) [KJV - translated, "sanctuary"] Were the readers of Hebrews, whose Bible was the LXX, to conclude that Hebrews 9:1 was to be understood as stating - "Then verily the first [covenant] had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly most holy place"? If this conclusion were to be drawn, then the assumption that

Christ entered upon "His antitypical Day of Atonement ministry" at His ascension would have validity. Not so, for immediately some definitions are given.

For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. (9:2)

The word translated, "sanctuary," in the KJV is the Greek word, *Hagia* (nominative, neuter plural). Paul chooses this word, to define the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. Then he continues:

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all." (9:3)

The phrase "Holiest of all" in the Greek is *Hagia Hagion*. This phrase never appears again in the book of Hebrews. All other references to the priestly ministry of Christ following the definitive verses, use a form of the word, *Hagia*. Prior to the definitive verses in Chapter 9, the word, in its plural genitive form, is used in Hebrews 8:2, and the verse could be rendered that Christ is "a minister of the holy things (*tōn hagiōn*), and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

Apart from its use in Hebrews 8, and the definitive verse in Chapter 9, *hagios* occurs six other times in the Book of Hebrews. The first is Hebrews 9:8, which reads:

*The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all [*tōn hagiōn* - genitive neuter plural] was not yet made manifest, while as yet the first tabernacle was yet standing. (KJV)*

The sense of the Greek word translated "standing" is "retaining its divinely appointed status" or as the Lesson Quarterly states "still had significance." This ended when Christ's sacrifice was completed on the cross and the Divine Presence no longer had regard for the Temple. The judgment of God was manifest in the rending of the veil from top to bottom by an unseen hand. (Matt. 27:51)

The error of interpretation in regard to this verse can be made by failing to note the emphasis placed on, "first," in regard to the tabernacle. Paul had just declared in his definitive verses that the "first" tabernacle was the *Hagia*. (See 9:2) What right do we have to interpret this same designation as referring to the sanctuary as a whole?

Further, by letting the Word give its own exegesis, it is plainly indicated that Christ did enter into His ministry in the first apartment following His ascension. The Holy Spirit attests to this significance of the type. After confirming the figurative nature of the

types, the declaration in Hebrews continues:

*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come... by His own blood, he entered in once into the holy place (ta *hagia*) thus obtaining eternal redemption for us" (9:11-12)*

In these verses there is another point of contention which needs to be carefully noted. Within the Church, as a part of the present controversy over the sanctuary teaching, there is the issue concerning the Cross. Was the Cross, "the Act of the Atonement", and thus the work completed on the Cross (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 500); or was the Cross, "the condition of the Atonement" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 29), and thus Christ would enter the Heavenly Sanctuary "to complete His work." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 790) In these divergent concepts, basic fundamental Adventism is involved. To formulate the basic Adventist concept on this point would be to state that Christ "by His death began that work which after His resurrection, He ascended to complete in heaven." (*The Great Controversy*, p. 498) A correct understanding of these verses will clearly set forth the truth, and thus establish the basic teaching of the Church prior to the compromise with the Evangelicals in 1955-56. It is my understanding, though without documentation, that these verses were the verses which tipped the scale at the time of the conferences. 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 others words, on the Cross? To put it another way as revealed in the type - Did the sinner by transferring his sin to the substitutionary victim and then slaying the animal receive forgiveness, or was forgiveness conferred when the priest taking the blood made atonement for the sinner? (See Lev. 4:32-35)

These verses in Hebrews 9 constitute one sentence in the Greek text. There is one main clause in the past tense - "He entered in" - with two subordinate participial clauses in the same Greek past tense (aorist). While the past (aorist) participle is most frequently used to denote an action prior to the time of the main verb, which in this case would then mean that Jesus obtained redemption prior to His entering in. However, there is a use of the past participle called "identical action" which means that the action, as indicated by the participle, is identical with the time of the main verb. This, then, permits the translation to read that Jesus having entered in obtained eternal redemption for us. (See the RSV) When "identical action" is intended, the main verb as in these verses is also in the past tense rather than the present. The conclusion is, therefore, warranted as stated in basic Adventism that Christ appeared in the presence of God for us in the first apartment of the Heavenly Sanctuary and by 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.

Two more verses remain in Hebrews 9 in which the word, *hagia* is used. These read:

For Christ is not entered into the holy places (hagia) 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 in the holy places (ta hagia) every year with blood of others. (24-25)

Paul is here writing in the "now" time. He declares plainly that Christ is not entered into the "hagia," defined as the first apartment, of the earthly, but into its antitype in the heavens above. However, the second use of *hagia* raises some questions. Is Paul speaking of the Most Holy place, thus referring to the ministry of the high priest on the Day of Atonement? If this be true, then it can be affirmed that Christ upon His ascension - "now" - entered immediately into the work of the Most Holy Place of Heaven.

Two factors argue against this conclusion: 1) Paul's definitions in Hebrews 9:2-3. Let it be underscored that he designates "a tabernacle...the first" as the *Hagia*. Then after the second veil comes "the tabernacle which is called the *Hagia Hagion*. If, therefore, Paul was referring to the ministry in the Most Holy Place, he would have used the term, *Hagia Hagion*, rather than *Hagia*. 2) Paul's use of "every year" in verse 25 is not the same as in verse 7 where without question he describes the work of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The phrase in 9:7 is - *Hapax tou eniautou monos* - which literally reads - "once the year alone." In 9:25, the phrase is - *kat' eniautou*. The preposition, *kata*, when used with the accusative means, "during." Also, *eniauton* - year - denoted the year as the ceremonial cycle of time. In 9:7, the work of the high priest in his Day of Atonement ministry was designated as "once" in that yearly cycle, while in 9:25 the work was designated as *kat' eniauton* - during the yearly cycle.

It is also interesting to observe that it was "the priest that is anointed," 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 blood into the most holy place. (Lev. 16:14-15) Paul was not speaking of that day, as the antitypical day had not come. He was dealing with the "now" time - a time when priests were still offering gifts according to the law. (Heb. 8:4) Further, the phrase - *kat' eniauton* - is unique to the book of Hebrews being found in three different places - 9:25, 10:1, 3. In each of these latter references, the concept of the yearly cycle of ceremonial services fits the demand of the context instead of considering it as an allusion to the Day of

Atonement besides harmonizing with the definitions of terms as given in 9:2-3.

Beyond Chapter 9, two other references use the word, *hagia*. Hebrews 10:19-20 reads:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (ton hagian) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh: ...

Again the text is speaking to the Christian of that time frame. How Paul had defined the term would still be applicable. They were to follow Jesus by faith "within the veil." (Heb. 6:19-20) Some would have us believe that the "veil" in Hebrew 6:19 refers to the second veil which separated the two apartments. However, when Paul meant the second veil, he called it the "second veil." (Heb. 9:3)

Hebrews 13:11, the final verse to use *hagia* reads:

"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary (ta hagia) by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

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

In all of these verses whether in Hebrews 9, or in the two other chapters where *hagia* or *hagion* is used, depending upon which case is required in the Greek, no violence is done to the context or its meaning by applying the definition as is set forth for that word. The teaching of Hebrews 9 is simply that Jesus having made the sacrifice of Himself - meeting the condition of the Atonement - entered into the presence of God in the first apartment of the Heavenly Sanctuary at the Throne of Grace (Heb. 4:14-16) in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah - "He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (6:13) In the sanctuary above, He shall pursue His work of atonement until completed before the Throne of Judgment in the Most Holy Place. #

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News and Comments

In the February issue of *WMN*, [XXIX-2(96)], page 7, we commented regarding an Ode to Mary appearing in the 1888 *Message Newsletter*. Since that time we have been in correspondence with Elder R. J. Wieland. He sent us a letter written to Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd Rosenvold because they also had expressed an adverse reaction to the Ode. Wieland claimed in the letter that his poem is written as an apostrophe - "a time honored literary form...especially prevalent in poetry." He cites several examples of its use, one from the Bible, and others from the hymns we sing. We will grant Wieland his literary license, but are still under the conviction that it was ill-timed for publication in view of the present heavy emphasis on Mary by the Roman Catholic Church. It left a wrong impression on many readers.

We had hoped that by renewed correspondence with Wieland, there could be a closer meeting of minds over the Message of Righteousness by Faith as given in 1888 in contrast to the modified Tridentine Gospel being taught by many so-called "historic voices" in Adventism. The message as given in 1888 was set forth by the Lord's messenger as "advancing truth" with the counsel - "We must walk in the increasing light." (*R&H*, March 25, 1890) A. T. Jones honored this counsel and applied it to his study of Bible prophecy and the sanctuary question. The result was that he perceived the "daily" in relationship "to the continual service in the sanctuary." (*The Consecrated Way*, p. 99) It was very disappointing to read of a recent 1888 Message Conference held at Union College in which the erroneous pagan application to the "daily" was set forth. (*Newsletter*, July-August, 1996) If the message of Christ's righteousness is truth, "pure and unadulterated" (*TM*, p. 65), the Committee on 1888 has much work to do before they can truly claim, as it is inferred in their masthead, that they are bearing "a special testimony, a special message of truth appropriate for this time." At present it is mingled with error.

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Konrad Raiser, not only the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, but also a recognized leading authority on ecumenism, recommended at a major ecumenical symposium at Trier, Germany, this past April that "a universal Christian Council to resolve the issue dividing the church" be convened. This proposal was set forth in the presence of Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It asks that the main church families - Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal - begin now toward the preparation necessary for such a Council to convene as soon as possible after the year 2000.

The road to the goal includes a binding process which

Raiser describes as a "conciliar process" to prepare for the universal council. "The proposal holds fast to the belief that a council in the full sense can only meet if the participating churches can together confess the faith and celebrate the Eucharist together." The proposal for this Council takes its inspiration from the universal Church Councils which were held in the first centuries which brought bishops together to settle doctrinal differences. One of these doctrinal differences which Raiser perceives as a "central" issue is the question of "the primacy of the Pope." (ENI-#12-96-0317)

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"In little over a year's time, hundreds of delegates from all Europe's main churches will descend on the Austrian city of Graz for a second European Ecumenical Assembly. The gathering - from 23 to 29 June 1997 - will be only the second such meeting since the time of the Reformation." The organizers of this Assembly are the Conference of European Churches [CEC] and the Council of European (RC) Bishops' Conferences [CCEE]. The CEC brings together 118 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches from all European countries. CCEE incorporates 33 national and regional Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences. The theme for the assembly is "Reconciliation - gift of God and source for new life." Rudiger Noll, assembly secretary for the CEC, stated that the churches involved need to discover for themselves what "reconciliation" meant rather than draw up prescriptions for the rest of the world. The last such assembly in Basle produced a mammoth document on "peace with justice. The organizers of Graz "want an action plan in which participating churches in the assembly commit themselves to specific actions of reconciliation." (ENI #12-96-0339)

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

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