

# "Watchman, what of the night?"

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

## THE FIRST "1888" CONFRONTATION

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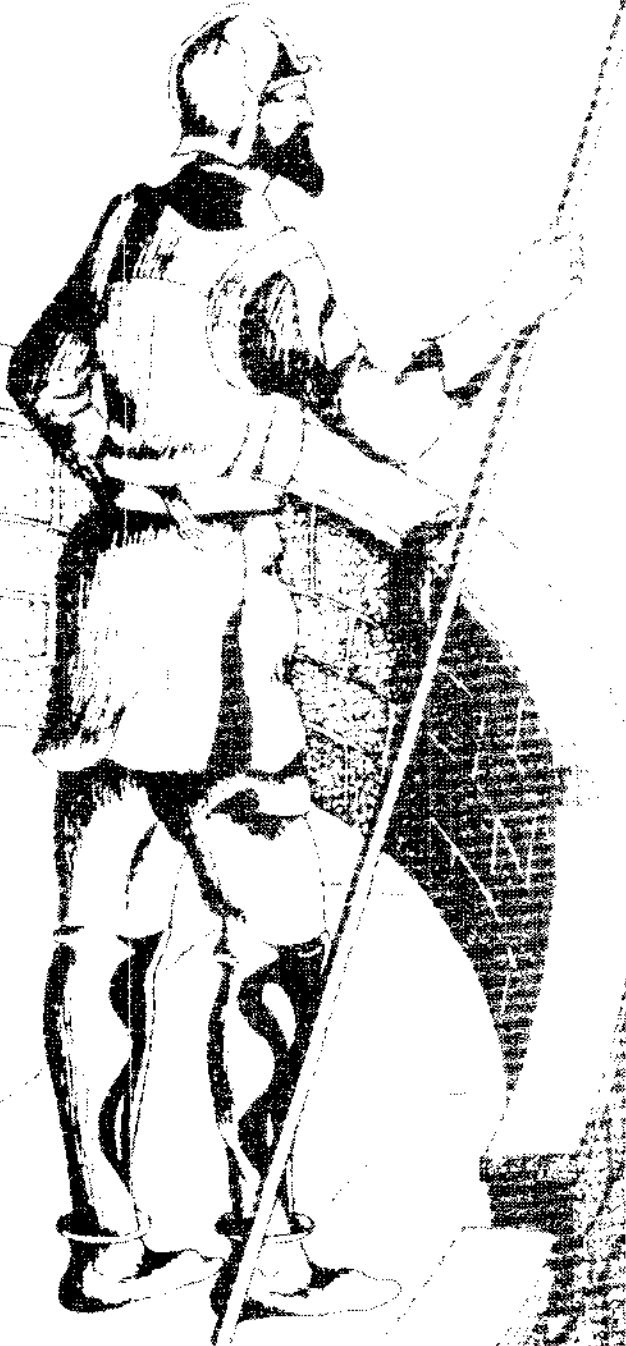
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AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
INCARNATION AS TAUGHT BY THE SDA CHURCH - I

### *Editor's Preface*

With the republication of *Questions on Doctrine* as the second book in a proposed "Adventist Classic Library" series, the Church has been taken back some forty years in its history. One person in a telephone conversation reacted, "What do I care about what happened in the Church forty years ago?" Well did Ellen White counsel in her *Life Sketches*— "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (p. 196). While we do not consider the SDA-Evangelical Conferences, which dominated our history forty years ago to be the leading of the Lord, the immediate fallout caused study and research on the Incarnation by many, including this editor, such as had not been done for years. A review of some of that study is in order. Beginning with this issue of WWN, we will "republish" chapter by chapter our first manuscript released in 1972— *An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. The recently published "Annotated Edition" admitted that the Adventist conferees lied to the Evangelicals in regard to the Adventist teaching on the Incarnation. The members of the Church today, which means almost all, need to know how greatly the Church leadership did lie.

We hope to correct all typographical errors of the original edition, as well as to include "annotations" as the historical data may require. We recognize that there was a similar research released some fifteen years later in 1986, as well as attempts since then, to find a compromise under the guise of "an alternate view." This view but reflected the teaching of the men who were leaders of the aberrant Holy Flesh Movement within Adventism.



AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF THE  
DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION AS TAUGHT  
BY THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH -  
# 1

## Preface

As a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I had always taught and sincerely believed that Christ took upon Himself the fallen nature of man when He condescended to become the Son of man. However, since 1957, I have given intensive study to the doctrine of the Incarnation, both in the Scriptures and in the Writings, as well as other Church publications such as the Senior Sabbath School Lesson Quarterlies. In 1964, as a result of obtaining a copy of a term paper prepared for the Department of Church History at Andrews University, my interest was stimulated to begin a research in depth on the history of this doctrine in the Church. This manuscript is the result. It is not claimed to be exhaustive, especially in the final chapter that surveys the period of 1952 to the present. (If possible we will seek in this reprint and revision to enlarge the documentation of that period so as to make the historical record more complete.) The documentation presented in the original printing was, however, representative and authoritative for each period of our history as a church.

The chapter on the Holy Flesh Movement is a brief summary of the research which was begun when serving as a pastor-evangelist in the Indiana Conference from 1955-62. Continued investigation was made with the help of a senior student while I was head of the Bible Department at Madison College from 1962-64. All of this investigation was organized into a paper to meet the requirements of the course - Research in Theology - at Andrews University when doing graduate work in 1964-65. Further study has been made since then, which will be incorporated into the chapter on the Holy Flesh Movement of this revised manuscript.

In pursuing this study and writing, I had the constant encouragement and help of my wife, Dorothea, now deceased. We searched together to eliminate errors of typing and spelling. We

sought to see that each quotation was correctly documented and accurately transcribed in context. We wanted the publication to be letter perfect. We did not succeed. Letters received from friends called our attention to a number of typographical errors. It is my intent this time to reach the goal.

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the fulfilment of the precious promise which reads:

**When you arise in the morning, do you feel your helplessness, and your need of strength from God? And do you humbly, heartily make known your wants to your Heavenly Father? If so, angels mark your prayers, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong, and exerting an influence which will lead others to do wrong, your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you, and influencing your actions (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, pp. 363-364).**

What applies to deeds and actions, applies equally to our thoughts and words, whether written or spoken. In the early morning hours, when much of the writing of the original manuscript was done, I was many times conscious of the presence of my unseen Guardian.

This research was published and is being republished because - "The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us" - and since it is, we need to understand the historic position of the Church, which emphasized the tremendous victory which Christ achieved in our nature, so that we may by faith overcome as He overcame.

## The Purpose

The purpose of this manuscript is to present an interpretive history of the doctrine of the Incarnation as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The time span extends from the origins of the Church in the Great Second Advent Movement in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the present.

In presenting the teachings of the Church as to the nature Christ assumed in becoming man, no attempt is being made to detract from the dignity of His pre-existence as One with the Father from all eternity, nor in any way to disassociate Him from the oneness with the Father during His earthly sojourn. At Bethlehem, the Word who was in the beginning with God "came to be" (ἐγένετο) flesh (John 1:1, 14). This same God who was manifest in the flesh was received up into glory, where at the throne of the Eternal, He continues to minister as the Son of man (I Timothy 3:16; 2:5; Heb. 9:24).

The sources which document the teachings of the Church are: 1) the writings of "the messenger of the Lord," Ellen G. White; 2) books and publications produced by the Church's publishing houses; and 3) articles appearing in the journals of the Church. One important source apart from the writings of Ellen G. White are the Senior *Sabbath School Lesson Quarterlies* dating from 1888-89. Inasmuch as the composition of the Sabbath School lessons represent the combined thinking of many leaders and scholars of the Church, and since these lessons received universal acceptance and use by the Church, the teachings contained in these quarterlies on any given subject would reflect the official position of the Church.

The one exception to the teaching on the Incarnation as found in the above guidelines was the introduction of a contrary teaching which the leaders of the Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana promoted from 1898 to 1901. While this Movement did receive the official endorsement of the local conference committee and administration, its work and teachings did not represent the viewpoint of the Church as a whole at that time. It is being introduced into this research because the teaching of the leaders of the Holy Flesh Movement on the doctrine of the Incarnation has been presented as an acceptable "alternate view" in the current Christological controversy within the community of Adventism.

In the use made of the Writings of Ellen G. White, the same hermeneutical (interpretive)

principles are invoked as would be used in the study of the Scriptures on any given subject (See *Selected Messages - I*, p. 42). It is assumed that the inspired testimonies on the Incarnation are not contradictory as the Adventist conferees of the SDA-Evangelical Conferences concluded (see *Annotated Edition*, pp. 522).

The letter which appears to be at variance with the general tenor of the testimonies in the published sources prior to the death of Ellen G. White in 1915 will be discussed in an Appendix. Even as Adventist scholars do not begin with the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus to establish the doctrine of the non-immortality of the wicked, neither is it a valid approach to underwrite the doctrine of the Incarnation as taught in the Writings with a single isolated letter to an individual, counselling moderation not condemnation, of a statement when there is no record of what that individual said or wrote for comparison.

The editor does not claim a conviction-less objectivity in presenting this historical data. For this reason the title reads - *An interpretive History of the Doctrine . . .*

[To be continued in the December issue of WWN]

## The first "1888" Confrontation

To understand the significance and import of this confrontation as recorded in the chapters of the apostolic record of church history, one must realize the claims made by Paul for the Gospel he taught and what that Gospel was. These claims preface the polemic Epistle he sent to the churches of Galatia, which itself records incidents that marked the path to the confrontation.

Paul told the believers in Galatia that there were two gospels being preached. But one of these was not the true gospel but rather was a perversion of the true (Gal. 1:6-7). He used the clause, so liberally used centuries later in the

canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, "Let him be anathema (αναθεμα)." His dictum read:

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

Why? Paul preached a Gospel which he was willing to certify as to its source. He wrote:

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it [by man], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:11-12).

What was the Gospel which Jesus Christ gave to Paul by Divine revelation, which can be classified literally as a part of "the spirit of prophecy"? (Rev. 19:10). This "testimony of Jesus" is stated clearly and emphatically in Paul's general epistle to the "saints which are at Ephesus, and to all the faithful" in the Roman province of Asia. It reads:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

In these three verses, there is stated the basis of salvation: 1) God's gracious gift, 2) our relationship to it, and 3) what is to occur because of it. These we shall consider in reverse order.

God does not change his requirement of perfect obedience to His standard of righteousness. The recipient of God's gracious provision is created in Christ Jesus "unto good works" – the same works "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." There has been one all-important difference – the revelation. Instead of speaking from the smoking summit of Sinai, He has now spoken to us "in a Son" (Heb. 1:2, Gr.) in our likeness (2:14-17). That Son sits at God's right hand on "the throne of grace" (4:16) "able also to save to the uttermost" all "that come unto to God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (7:25).

Paul expresses the salvation proffered as an accomplished fact, "for by grace have ye been saved" (σεσωσμενοι). This passive participle is in the perfect tense. "There is no English tense corresponding to the Greek perfect" (Machen). This makes translation difficult. "The Greek perfect tense denotes the present state resultant upon a past action" (*ibid*). The past action to which Paul is referring is the sacrifice God made on the Cross in Jesus Christ. This verse is better translated by the ARV - "For by grace have ye been saved through faith" – than the KJV in this instance.

In Paul's perception of saving grace even the faith exercised in its reception is the "faith of Jesus." To the Galatians he confessed, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (2:20). Saving faith has its origin in Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:2). Its exercise does not accrue merit. It is all "the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Paul's understanding of salvation was summarized simply and concisely by his answer to the question asked by the Philippian jailor, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" His response was – "Believe (exercise faith) in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30-31). To the Romans he would write: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (3:28). With this background for the Gospel which Paul received by revelation from Jesus Christ, we can now approach the first "1888" confrontation.

Paul had completed his third missionary tour and mapped his plans to return to Jerusalem. Enroute he was repeatedly warned not to go, as danger confronted him (Acts 20:22-23; 21:4, 11). The day following his arrival, he reported to James and all the elders "particularly what God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry" (21:19). He didn't need to tell them about the synagogues which the gospel he preached broke up (Acts 18:7-8; 19:9). Reports had already reached Jerusalem (21:21). He could not testify that large churches were raised up. He left behind "home churches" (Rom. 16:4, 5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15). In reporting this meeting,

Luke, who was present, writes that the elders "glorified the Lord," but immediately delivered a counter report to Paul. This requires careful consideration. They began with the "numbers" game. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe" (Acts 21:20). This contrasted with the numbers attending the "home" churches. Where were these thousands worshipping apart from the temple? In his epistle, we find that James addresses his "beloved brethren" in the synagogues suggesting what their conduct should be under certain circumstances (2:2-5, margin). The word translated "assembly" in verse 2 is the Greek word, συναγωγή (synagogue). Paul never used this word in referring to the "home" gatherings. They were "churches." The Greek is εκκλησία, "a called out" people.

The "elders" characterized the "thousands" of Jews as believers – they were exercising faith (πεπιστευκωτων), but - they were also zealous of the law" (v. 20). It was faith plus works. This was also echoed in James' epistle – "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (2:24). It was the beginning of "1888," a controversy that has not ended yet!

The next major confrontation which impacts on our day is the Reformation, particularly the counter-reformation formulated in the Council of Trent. In Chapter 10 of the "Decree on Justification," it is declared:

Having, therefore, been thus justified, and made friends and *domestics of God*, advancing from *virtue to virtue*, they are *renewed*, as the Apostle says, *day by day*; that is, by *mortifying the members* of their own flesh, by *presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification*, they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified, as it is written: *He that is just, let him be justified still*; and again, *Be not afraid to be justified even unto death*; and also, *Do you not see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only* (*The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. 2, p. 99).

Observe the last quoted verse is James 2:24.

Subjoining the chapters on Justification were canons which the Synod thought necessary so that "all might know not only what they ought to hold and follow, but also what to avoid and shun." Canon XII declares:

If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema (*ibid.*, p. 113).

In the context of the "1888" experience within the Adventist Church, Ellen White alluded to the doctrinal position of Rome. She wrote:

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

Peter told the ecclesiastical "rulers of Israel" that there is no "salvation in any other" for there is no "other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is through Jesus alone, by grace only that salvation is offered to the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. It is theirs to reject, or accept "by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).

There are those who will not recognize their "righteousnesses" for what they are – "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6) – who call the provision of God, "cheap grace." It is cheap for us; it is free; but the enormous cost was paid by God (John 3:16). This grace does not permit the receiver to accept and thereafter to live as he pleases. Having been "bought with a price" he is to "glorify God" in all his thoughts and conduct (I Cor. 6:20). But this changed conduct does not accrue "brownie points" toward salvation, for by God's grace the price has already been paid.

Those who deride God's provision as "cheap grace" need to consider what kind of salvation

they are advocating. Jesus, in picturing the ultimate realization of salvation, heaven itself, compared it to a banquet where He "shall gird himself, and make (the saved) to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them" (Luke 12:37). Those who consider that salvation is faith plus "the deeds of the law" - are thereby suggesting a "pot luck" dinner at the banquet table of the Lord, so as to be able to make a contribution to their salvation by bringing a "tasty" dish of their own "righteousnesses" to the table. Could we, therefore, conclude that those "voices" in historic Adventism who insist in advocating the Tridentine gospel of Rome, rejecting as "cheap grace" the Pauline revelation given to him by Christ Jesus Himself are advocating a "pot luck" salvation?

## Rome – Center Stage Again

The July issue of *The Catholic World Report* (CWR) had on its full color cover page a picture of President George W. Bush and his wife in Rome for a meeting with Pope John Paul II on June 4. This conservative Catholic publication, while disclaiming to be a Jesuit publication, nevertheless has a Jesuit as its publisher, Joseph Fessio, SJ.

The article reporting this visit to Rome was prepared by the CRW staff. It was prefaced by the comment:

Before a June meeting between George W. Bush and John Paul II, observers on both sides of the Atlantic predicted the Pope would renew his public criticism of US policy in Iraq. Those predictions were wrong (p. 22).

Expecting such a criticism of US policy from the Pope, which didn't materialize, the *Manchester Guardian* reported "that Bush had received 'a papal tongue lashing,'" presumably in private. CWR, however, reported that within a week after the Bush visit, a more realistic – and far more intriguing – line of analysis emerged. John Allen, the veteran Rome correspondent for the *National Catholic Review*, informed his readers:

During his June 4 visit, Bush asked the Vatican to push the American Catholic bishops to be more aggressive politically on family and life issues, especially a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as a union between a man and a woman p. 25 (CWR).

Following the visit with the pope, Bush met with the Vatican Secretary of State, and according to Allen told the cardinal that "the US hierarchy have been slow to take a stand" on the Catholic social agenda he was promoting. He even complained that "not all the American bishops are with me." This was tantamount to inviting the Papacy to enter American politics and openly support his re-election campaign. This is a first in American history. It is also an open admission by Bush that his political agenda is the Papal cultural agenda. All that is taking place recalls the outline of the papal objective enunciated in *The Liberal Illusion* by Louis Veillot, more than a century ago, translated from the French and released to America in 1939 by the National Catholic Welfare Conference of Washington D.C. In it Veillot stated:

When the time comes and men realize that the social edifice must be rebuilt according to eternal standards, ... the Catholics will arrange things to suit said standards. Undeterred by those who prefer to abide in death, they will re-establish certain laws of life. They will restore Jesus to His place on high, and He shall no longer be insulted. They will raise their children to know God and to honor their parents. They will uphold the indissolubility of marriage, and if this fails to meet with the approval of the dissenters, it will not fail to meet the approval of their children. They will make obligatory the religious observance of Sunday on behalf of the whole of society and for its own good, revoking the permit for free-thinkers and Jews to celebrate incognito, Monday or Saturday on their own account. ... In a word, Catholic society will be Catholic, and the dissenters whom it will tolerate will know its charity, but will not be allowed to disrupt its unity (pp. 63-64).

Now a century later, the "indissolubility of marriage" issue (divorce) has broadened its base to include the issue of "same sex" marriages. It needs to be remembered also that the Catholic social agenda includes "the *religious* observance of Sunday." The current pope has placed heavy emphasis on the "religious" aspect of a Papal Sunday, setting forth the Eucharist as a key

element in the observance of the day. It may well be that we are but one vote away from a Sunday law and the final crisis.

The article in CWR displayed some pictures in a prominent manner, not only one of Bush listening to the pope making a point with extended finger toward him, but also one from 2003 when Cardinal Laghi, as a personal envoy, was sent by the pope to the White House to seek to avert the war in Iraq. This latter picture shows Bush and Laghi in a handclasp with Bush reaching out to Laghi. Pictures do speak words, and CWR used them.

## A Judicial Opinion

"One of the most closely watched church-state cases in Supreme Court history: a legal challenge to the inclusion of 'under God' in public school recitations of the Pledge of Allegiance," ended in a let down. In a 5-3 decision, the Court side-stepped the constitutional issue and threw out the entire legal challenge on the basis that Dr. Michael Newdow lacked legal right to file the suit in behalf of his daughter.

It was not the usual 5-4 decision because the Vatican representative on the high Court, Antonin Scalia, dismissed himself after public comments he made about the case came to light. However, his side-kick, Justice Clarence Thomas, a Bush Sr. appointee to the High Court, while joining Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor that the pledge "does not rise to the level of a constitutional violation," entered his own opinion that "the high court should have used the case to fashion a new understanding of separation of church and state." At the bottom of Thomas' academic-sounding legal jargon was a truly radical proposal: He recommended obliterating the wall of separation between church and state allowing state governments to favour certain religions over others, even permitting them to name official religions. Under Thomas' view, separation of church and state would prevent the federal government from establishing a national church, but would permit the establishment of religion by individual states. Thus, Alabama could make the Southern Baptist

Church the state church, while Massachusetts could recognize Roman Catholic-ism, and Utah, Mormonism. Each state could build churches, and hire and pay clergy of its particular church if the state constitution so allowed. While none of the other justices joined Thomas in his opinion, keeping in mind that Scalia did not take part, does reveal the radical thinking presently on the High Court.

(See "One Nation Kept in Suspense," *Church & State*, Vol. 57, No. 2, pp. 4-6)

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*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.*

*What is regeneration [sanctification]? – It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless.*

*Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers, No. 9, p. 62)*

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## **"The Remnant of Her Seed" Rev. 12:17**

### **#1**

**Shane Rohrich**

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God. and have the testimony of Jesus."

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown observe that in this verse "the remnant of her seed" is considered as "distinct in some sense from the woman herself" (*Commentary on the Whole Bible*. pp. 581-582). The symbol of "the woman" is continuous in Revelation 12. She can be considered as not only symbolizing the first gospel promise (Gen. 3:15), but also the "one inseparable Church of the Old and New Testament" (*ibid.*, p. 580). The period of the "woman" in verse 17 is following the "time, and times, and half a time" (v. 14.) i.e. words after 1798. The "remnant" is linked by description with the "saints" of Rev. 14:12, who have been involved in the giving of the Three Angels' Messages. The "woman" of 12:17 is thus the body to whom God entrusted the giving of these messages. Something occurs that causes the "dragon" to change from wrath toward the woman, to war with the "remnant" of her seed.

In Revelation 12, "seed" is symbolized twice, once as "the Man-child," (v. 5) and secondly as the "remnant." "War" is also noted as occurring twice, once with Michael, and secondly with "the remnant."

The war against the "remnant" which has "the testimony of Jesus" concerns "truth, pure and unadulterated." In the mouth of the "saints" there is "no guile" [Gr. *dolos* - "perversion of religious truth"] (14:5). They separate from the apostasy. They are undefiled by "women" [plural] (14:4). They keep [not "try" to keep] the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12). The remnant of her seed overcome the dragon "by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony (Truth), and they loved not their lives unto death" (12:11). They are a living testimony of the power of His Christ" (12:10). They are the final "manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).

The conclusion is inescapable. A movement within Adventism will hear the cry at midnight, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom. This is happening today. Becoming distinctly separate, they seek to walk in the "advancing light of truth" which exposes the "dragon's" subtle artifices and objectives. The result is the dragon's "war" with the "remnant" of the woman's seed.

As the end approaches, the testimonies of God's servants will become more decided and more powerful, flashing the light of truth upon the systems of error and oppression that have long held the supremacy. The Lord has sent us messages for this time, that will establish Christianity upon an eternal basis; and all who believe the present truth, must stand, not in their own wisdom, but in God's wisdom, and raise up the foundations of many generations; and they will be registered in the books of heaven as "repairers of the breach" the "restorer of paths to dwell in." In face of the bitterest opposition, we are to maintain the truth because it is truth (R&H, Dec. 13, 1892).