

"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)



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### Editor's Preface

The first article in this issue will serve as a preface to the series of articles which will begin with the January issue of WVN. In this series on the "Eternal Verities" - the Godhead, Incarnation, and the Atonement - we will put in summary form the studies of the 1997 Seminar. Too long have we held our peace while a new Gnosticism has been sweeping through the corridors of Adventism in America and spreading its deception to three other continents. The denigration of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the projection of the papal doctrine of the Trinity under the guise of professing to oppose it, needs to be exposed so that all who honestly want truth can find it.

The second article on the new thrust which the ecumenical movement is seeking to take, has been largely confined to books and articles in German. We have been able to get bits and pieces through the ENI releases from the WCC. Material received from Germany has been translated, and our Librarian, Terrie Lambert, has been working diligently to put together this information so that our readers can be aware of this new emphasis which will include all the religions of the world. This new emphasis carries as its slogan - "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation." And as the brother in Germany, who supplied us with the German documents, asks, "Are you not for Justice, Peace, and the integrity of Creation?" Yet behind this new force is the Spiritism of the Eastern religions combined with Socialism ideology. One is reminded of the words in *The Great Controversy*, "Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion." (p. 562)

On the last Sabbath in September, Darren Lambert and I visited, as observers, the weekend Campmeeting of the Reformed Seventh Day Adventist Church held near Springdale, Arkansas. The speaker for the Sabbath service presented a challenge to those who embrace "historic" Adventism. We invited him to carry through on his own challenge, and make suggestion in "Let's Talk It Over" that it would be a good idea for all who profess "historic" Adventism to do likewise.

# Why Study? ---

When we first announced at the beginning of this year that our seminar studies in connection with the 1997 Annual Fellowship would be on the Godhead - Incarnation - Atonement, some asked, Why these subjects? Yet, when the hour arrived for the fellowship, we were pressed as to where to place all the folk who came. It was evident from the start that God was blessing the study of His Word. So again the question - "Why study the topics of the Godhead, Incarnation, and Atonement?"

## The Godhead

An ancient heresy which plagued the Early Church has again reared its diabolical head. There is a new Gnosticism being foisted on the unwary. As with the old pagan Gnosticism which perceived of one supreme deity from whom emanated lesser aeons, and the Christian version which perceived of Jesus Christ as one of the aeons, so today in neo-Gnosticism, Jesus Christ is perceived as having emanated, or generated from, or was "birthed" by God the Father. In America a quartet of "voices" - Allabach, Beachy, Goslin, and Stump - promote this ancient heresy, while in Australia, Pittard and Gibbons resonate this concept. Basically, the issue, or bottom line, is the denigration of the pre-existent Logos, who was with God, and who was God as much as the Father is God. (John 1:1-2)

## The Incarnation

While the ever-existent, self-existent I AM is being denigrated on the one hand, the victory which this same I AM achieved in the flesh is being denied or muted by those whose faith cannot grasp the reality of the Mystery of Godliness - God manifest in the likeness of a flesh of sin. (I Tim. 3:16; Rom. 8:3 Gr.) Yet man's redemption cannot be separated from a true understanding of the condescension of the Eternal Logos. (John 1:14) Tragically, various "alternate" theories of the Incarnation have arisen in the community of Adventism which are but a "generation" removed from the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Many of these "voices" come from "high" places in the regular Church.

## The Atonement

Within the community of Adventism, there are few who would deny that an "atonement" was achieved on the Cross, but by far the larger portion of the community conceive of this atonement as completed, thus denying the "atonement of atonements," or final atonement prefigured

in the typical service of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary. Living at the very time of the closing work in the sanctuary above, little is said, or discussed as to what is involved in this last work of Christ as the great High Priest. The very heart of Adventism has ceased to pulsate. It is true that an understanding of what is meant by the "final atonement" is fraught with perils of extremism, and must be grasped by faith, because the "evidence" is not seen. Movements of the past with their failures and errors stigmatize any attempt to forthrightly discuss what the "final atonement" actually means or could be.

## Limitations

Returning to the subject of the Godhead, we need to note the limitations which the Scriptures impose on this study. Paul, writing to Timothy, clearly stated that God dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (I, 6:16) By the senses, we cannot define or describe God. The curtain is drawn over His Being. The only One through which a revelation of God has come is the monogenes theos, as indicated in John's preface to his Gospel. (1:18; alternate Gr. Text) This God, Jesus Christ, we likewise have not seen. But John did. He writes:

*That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word (λογος) of life; ... declare we unto you. (I John 1:1, 3)*

Further, John declared that He whom they saw and with whom they had had physical contact, was "that eternal life, which was with the Father"- the Logos (ver. 2). While the curtain is drawn on aspects of God, there is no question expressed as to the "eternalness" of Him who was with God from the beginning. The challenge "to comprehend as far as mortal can, the deep things of God" (*Great Controversy*, p. 599), is further heightened by Paul when he states that Jesus Christ (the Word made flesh) "in His times shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." (I Tim. 6:14-15) Yet when He shall return the second time, on His vesture dipped in blood is the name written - "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:13,16) How shall He show the *only* Potentate as "King of kings and Lord of lords", and He Himself carry the same name emphasized on a garment dipped in blood? This picture, if meditated upon, opens a rich field for thought. This unique revelation of God, we shall discuss more completely when we study the linguistic aspects of the Shema of Israel in upcoming issues of WWN.

In noting the limitations imposed on our understanding of the Incarnation, the curtain is drawn over the "how." We can know that God was manifest in the flesh, but the "how" is wrapped in mystery incomprehensible to men. It was the question Mary asked when Gabriel revealed her role in the unfolding of the purposes of God. (Luke 1:34)

The answer Gabriel gave did not explain the "how" but merely emphasized the fact that the One who "shall be [not "is" nor "was"] called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35) was "conceived... of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 1:20)

### The Revelation of Jesus Christ

While the curtain is drawn over aspects of the Godhead, and the "how" of the Incarnation, certain symbolic representations given in the "unveiling" of Jesus Christ can enlarge our thinking as we "exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures." The post ascension revelation given to John in Chapter 4, pictures God seated on the throne clothed in light which bars penetration. Out of the throne "proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." Before the throne were seven torches of fire declared to be "the Seven Spirits of God." (Rev. 4:3-5)

As the next scene comes before John, he again sees the throne. This time there is an added dimension to the vision. He beholds a Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne, and a changed relationship of "the seven Spirits of God". In symbolism, they are represented as "seven horns and seven eyes" of the Lamb "sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5:6)

In seeking to understand the meaning of these symbolic representations, are we to study them in the light of John's Gospel and Epistles? This possibility and meaning will be explored as we begin the articles in the 1998 issues of WWN. John does begin his Gospel with the Logos ("Word," KJV) and God, and defines the relationship between them, and the work of the Logos (John 1:1-3). This Logos became flesh and dwelt among us. He is declared to be "the Lamb of God." (John 1:14, 29). In his Epistle, John describes Jesus as the Paraclete ("Advocate"- I John 2:1). In his Gospel, he quotes Jesus as saying, when He returns to the Father He would send "another Paraclete." Yet the relationship would be so close that they could conclude that He had come to them. (John 14:16, 18) Much of this we have missed as we have indulged in a surface reading and comprehension of the revelation God has given in His Word.

Indeed a veil is drawn on aspects of God and the Incarnation, and the "how" remains a mystery - the "secret things belong unto the Lord our God." However, there is much that is revealed, and these "things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." (Deut. 29:29) Facts are revealed in clear pronouncements and in symbolism. The problem is in how we read them. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in metaphor, and he asked - "How can these things be?" To this "how," Jesus responded - "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:9-10) Tragically, the siren "voices" sounding in the corridors of Adventism today, professing to be "teachers" of Israel, are giving only surface answers which echo heresies which have plagued God's people in times past. It is time that we gave heed to the admonition of Paul to Timo-

thy:

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II Tim. 2:15)*

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## The "Conciliar Process"

### The Ecumenical Initiative

The ecumenical movement in Europe is in commotion. The new goal-objective - "The Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" has raised the feelings of many, as Christians from all different denominations, from laymen to leaders in high positions, have been disturbed. However, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has applied for membership with the Working group of Christian Churches (ACK), which lists the pursuit of this conciliar process as one of its duties. What is the background of this initiative, its goals and terms?

One of the main players in the "conciliar process" is the famous nuclear physicist and philosopher, Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker. Von Weizsacker had been frightened about the catastrophic effects of his own discoveries and inventions and started to search for a way out of the recognised danger. In 1985 he used the platform of the German Evangelical Church Convention in Duesseldorf, to call for a universal peace council. He said:

*We ask the churches of the world to call a council of peace. Peace is necessary today for the survival of mankind. It is not ensured. At an ecumenical council that is called in the name of peace, the Christian churches must make a statement of common responsibility, which mankind cannot ignore.*

*Time is running out. We ask the church leaders to do everything in their power, so that the council can meet as soon as possible. We ask the church communities to call for a council and give it strength through their explicit support. (The Conciliar Process - Utopia and Reality, p. 15)*

The leading head of those who are strongly opposed to the conciliar process is Dr. Peter Beyerhaus, Professor for Mission-Science and ecumenical Theology at the University of Tubingen, Germany. He, together with Lutz von Padberg, Professor for Church-History at the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Lowen, co-edited the book "The Conciliar Process - Utopia and Reality", a compilation of 23 chapters from 19 different authors. Commenting on von Weizsackers call for a Universal Peace Council, Beyerhaus writes:

*This call first found support among the communities and church leaders of the Lutheran Church in Germany, with the Lutheran World Union and with a series of other churches and church or-*







