

*"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 PERTH DECLARATION

AN APPEAL or - -

A DECLARATION OF WAR?

"The Perth Declaration, drafted and voted by the General Conference's Annual Council in Perth, Australia, in early October [of last year] has become one of the most significant appeals by church leaders in recent years." So read a report on the North American Division's year-end meeting for 1991. (Adventist Review [AR], Dec. 5, 1991, p. 6) One dare not overlook the force of this declaration coming as it did by action of the Annual Council in session. The actions of the Annual Council between sessions of the General Conference carry the same authority as the actions of the General Conference itself. (*ibid.*, July 7, 1985, p. 8)

While the Declaration was phrased in such language as "We reaffirm," "We believe," and "We appeal," it is understood to be a declaration of war on the right and on the left. Elder Folkenberg told the NAD committee that in face of the steadily strengthening attacks on the church, "we don't have the option of silence anymore. We've lost that one. And both extremes, left and right need our attention." (AR, Dec. 5, 1991, p. 6) However the Perth Declaration focused the primary attack on the right, noting this group as presenting themselves "as defenders of the authentic Adventist faith, the correctors of others, often elevating to importance issues not agreed upon by the body as vital."

It is the paragraph of reaffirmation which raises the most questions, and becomes a new concise summary of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. In discussing the "Separationist movements," both on the right and on the left, the Editor-in-chief of the Adventist Review uses the phrase - "our core beliefs" in his response to the Perth Declaration. (AR, Dec. 5, 1991, p. 4) The Declaration itself states that "we reaffirm confidence... in the fundamental truths that bind us together as a people. Among these are..." A careful analysis of these selected "fundamental truths," these "core beliefs," needs to be made.



The reaffirmation reads:

1) We believe "in Christ, the Lord of Creation, in His mighty acts as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2."

Do not even the Evangelicals so believe?

2) We believe "in His atoning death at Calvary that made possible our salvation and final restoration to eternal life."

Do not even the Evangelicals so believe?

3) "We rejoice in full assurance of our salvation as a gift from God, and in victory over temptation and sin by His overcoming power."

Do not even the Evangelicals so believe?

4) "We accept the Scriptures as our teacher and final authority, and respond to His limitless love in grateful obedience."

Do not the Evangelicals profess the same?

Wherein do we differ from Evangelicals in these "core beliefs" as stated in the Perth Declaration?

This is in no wise to be construed that these "core beliefs" are not for the most part, statements of truth. BUT where is the "unique message" which in the next paragraph of the Perth Statement declares that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was to bear to the world?

As if as an afterthought, the reaffirmation paragraph declares last - "We affirm as well our confidence in His leading through the Spirit of Prophecy." But does this reaffirmation adopted by the Annual Council show that "confidence"? Hardly! Ellen G. White has carefully defined the historic fundamentals. During the 1888 debate wherein some declared the "precious gems of truth" coming through the Lord's chosen "messengers" to be a removal of "the old landmarks," she declared that those who were making the charges knew not what those landmarks were. She then defined them as: 1) "The temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God." 2) "The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment." 3) "The nonimmortality of the wicked." She indicated that the events of 1844 opened to the Advent believer's "astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having a decided relation to God's people on earth," and the all-encompassing Three Angels' Messages. (Manuscript, 13, 1889)

Now where in the paragraph of reaffirmation in the selected "core beliefs" is the sanctuary

truth set forth - the cleansing of the sanctuary and the final atonement? Where is the Sabbath reaffirmed, even though this is no longer unique to Seventh-day Adventists. Where is the guard against the inroads of Spiritism - "the non-immortality of the wicked" - reaffirmed? The bottom line is simply that this is not a reaffirmation to the truth committed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the beginning, but rather a reaffirmation to the compromises made with the Evangelicals in 1955-56. The Annual Council in the Perth Declaration **did not affirm what was denied in 1955-56**, but affirms only those teachings as examples of Adventist "fundamentals" which harmonize with the Evangelical teachings. So whether the leadership want to admit it or not, the Perth Declaration still locks the Church in apostasy.

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GRAHAM IN MOSCOW

Christianity Today captioned a report in their "News" section - "Graham School Bridges Soviet Church Divisions." It read:

Nearly 5,000 pastors, lay preachers, and other church workers came from across 11 time zones of the Soviet Union to attend a Billy Graham School of Evangelism conducted last month in Moscow. It was the largest such school the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has ever sponsored. And for the Soviets, according to local denominational leaders, it was the most representative gathering of Soviet Christians ever held. The five day conference brought together Baptists, Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Methodists, and members of other denominations, "registered" (government sanctioned) and "unregistered" alike. (August 19, 1991, p. 40; emphasis supplied)

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"The Lord has made His people the repository of sacred truth. Upon every individual who has had the light of **present truth** devolves the **duty** of developing that truth on a higher scale than it has hitherto been done."

PRESENT TRUTH

It was Peter who wrote - "Be established in the present truth." (II Peter 1:12) For the Apostolic Church, the fulness of time had come, and Jesus had been sent forth, made of a woman. (Gal. 4:4) He had been delivered for our offenses and had been raised for our justification. (Rom. 4:25) The proclamation of this glorious provision was "the present truth" of the Early Church. It is still truth. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7:25)

While truth is eternal because its source is the Eternal One, there comes, however, to every period of time a truth particularly apropos for that time. For that generation it is "the present truth." Around that truth clusters the significance of all other truth adapted to the need of God's people. For example, consider the parable of the Ten Virgins. We are **not** living in the time, when they - as a unit - "went forth to meet the bridegroom," but rather in the hour when the slumbering virgins awakened to the midnight call - "Behold the bridegroom, be ye going out to a meeting of him." (Matt. 25:6 Gr.) Five responded; five went to buy oil." There was a separation; it was decision time for the Ten Virgins.

What then is "the present truth" for this hour? Once that can be determined, then the issues which are presently dividing the Adventist Community can be clarified. The roots of the Adventist people are in the 1844 Movement. "The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to [the] astonished eyes [of the believers] the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having a decided relation to God's people upon the earth." (Ms. 13, 1889) From this revelation of truth, there was developed "a doctrine never known in theological history until the second half of the nineteenth century and which is a doctrine held exclusively by the Seventh-day Adventists." (Barnhouse, Eternity, Sept., 1956) This doctrine is known as "the investigative judgment," or is presently referred to as "the pre-Advent judgment." These names obscure the real doctrine. The real truth of pure historic Adventist theology involves the cleansing of the sanctuary and the "decided" relationship of that cleansing to God's people on earth. The final atonement is "the present truth" for this hour.

In the 1955-1956 SDA-Evangelical Conferences, the leadership of the Church denied the final atonement. Ford's brutal attack in 1979 zeroed in on this concept. In the Perth Declaration,

the Church in session did not reaffirm that which was denied in 1955-1956. On the periphery of Adventism are those "voices" who while seeking to affirm the historical teaching of the sanctuary truth, are merely mouthing cliches of a fossilized theology. It is time to reaffirm our faith in that teaching which is so uniquely Seventh-day Adventist, but do so in the framework of a restudy of the Bible as to what the type is really telling us. The earthly priests of the Divinely ordered type "served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." (Heb. 8:5)

Merely a casual mental review of the typical service on the Day of Atonement tells us that the ministry of that day was not confined wholly and solely to the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary, but involved a special ministry for "the uncleanness of the children of Israel" at the Altar in the court. (Lev. 16:19) To this fact, we have not given due consideration. Further, we have not considered the meaning and significance of the fact that in this cleansing, the blood of the bullock and the blood of the Lord's goat were mingled. (16:18)

We have been so engrossed - those who will even study the sanctuary truth - with the meanings to be derived from a study of the furniture and compartments of the sanctuary that we have failed to perceive the magnitude and significance of the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly. How do you compare a ten cubit cubical with the Heavenly Holy of Holies wherein are assembled, when the judgment is set, the unnumbered hosts of angels? (Daniel 7:10) And why are they there at the commencement of the judgment? To defend their record keeping? Did they not abide in the truth when it was decision time among the angels? (See John 8:44)

Consider another question. When the books are opened, will the Heavenly Court have to call into review the decision of Jesus on the Cross in regard to the thief who confessed Him, Lord? Or will the words of Jesus concerning those who hear and believe, apply? (John 5:24) Do these questions, to which we have given little thought, if considered, nullify the unique sanctuary truth committed in sacred trust to this people? Absolutely not! But it will require study which is more than surface thinking and the cliches of a fossilized theology. The same openness with which our founding fathers approached the teachings of William Miller, confirming some, discarding others, will need to characterize our research.

The Word **must** be permitted to speak. The

result will be "the present truth" for this hour. We **must** understand what the final atonement in its last aspects means in regard to the removal of the uncleanness of the children of Israel. This means a careful review of both Leviticus chapters four and sixteen. To stimulate study of the salient points involved, we now list some key factors of the services in which the priests "**served** unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

LEVITICUS 4

The mediation in the daily services in which the confession of sin was made involved only sins of ignorance - "if a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord." (4:2) Paul used this fact in setting forth Jesus Christ to the assembled synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. He declared:

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts. 13:38-39)

Since "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," nor could those "sacrifices...make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:4, 1), it should be obvious that the thrust of those services was to reveal the nature and objective of the Heavenly. What do we learn therefore?

1) Even though done in ignorance, there was a record made that needed to be cleared. When convicted of the sin, a formula for confession and atonement was available. Thus from the very start of the study of the sin offerings, it should be obvious that the blood of the sin offering did not transfer sin to the sanctuary, but rather was a confirmation of the sin, and the acceptance of the means provided for forgiveness.

2) There were four categories of "sinners." a) The sin of "the anointed priest" so as to bring "guilt upon the people" (4:3 NKJV); b) A sin committed by "the whole congregation" (4:13); c) The sin of a ruler (4:22). This included the priests as individuals. (See Numbers 3:32; the Hebrew word for "chief" is translated "ruler" in Lev. 4:22); d) The "common people" (4:27). The first two categories involved corporate guilt, while the last two were individual.

3) For the corporate guilt, the High Priest mediated the sacrifice. (4:3-4, 16) For the individual confession, the common priest ministered. (4:25, 30, 34)

4) Only in the ministration of corporate guilt and confession was the blood taken into the sanctuary. There it was sprinkled seven times "before the veil" separating the holy from the most holy place. It was "recorded" on the horns of the Altar of Burnt Incense. The balance of the blood was poured at "the bottom of the altar of burnt offering" in the court. (4:16-18)

5) The blood of the sacrifice for the individual, be he a ruler or an individual of the congregation, was "recorded" on the horns of the Altar in the court, and the balance of the blood poured at the bottom of the Altar. (4:25, 30) At no time was it ever carried into the sanctuary. The law of the sin offering required that the common priest eat of the sin offering in the court. (6:25-26)

6) The result of the mediation in three of the categories - one corporate, and the two individual - was that "the priest shall make an atonement for them [or him], and it shall be forgiven them [or him]." (4:20, 26, 31, 35) Only in the case where the sin of the High Priest brought guilt upon the people is this statement omitted.

These details pertaining to the sin offerings of the daily services do permit some immediate observations:

1) The Altar in the Court was the center for the daily services. From the sacrifices offered thereon all blood flowed which effected the atonement resulting in forgiveness. It symbolized the earth - Calvary - where the great Sacrifice of God was made. (See Rev. 11:2)

2) The daily service resulted in an atonement. This sets forth the fact that an atonement was made at the Cross. Christ ministered as a common priest while on earth extending forgiveness to all who sought it, and then gave His life for the remission of sins. (Luke 5:24; 23:42-43; Rom. 4:25)

3) As the common priest ate of the offering, offered "for sin" (Lev. 6:26), so Christ partook of our "flesh and blood" being made to be "sin for us" (Heb. 2:14; II Cor. 5:21). He "offered Himself" for us, "Himself the priest, Himself the victim" (Heb. 9:14) Then He was called to be High Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec. (Heb. 5:9-10)

We turn now to the details of the work of the high priest as he served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.

LEVITICUS 16

In studying this chapter, there are certain linguistic details that must be kept in mind. What we refer to in our Adventist nomenclature as "the most holy place" is noted in this chapter as simply, "the holy" with the word "place" supplied by the translators (Lev. 16:2). The part of the sanctuary which we term, "the holy place," is noted as "the tabernacle." (16:16, 17) The court is referred to as "the altar that is before the Lord." (16:18)

Further, it needs to be kept in mind that the services described in this chapter took place on the 10th day of the 7th month. In Leviticus 23, this day is designated as "the day of atonements" - plural in the Hebrew (23:27, 28). Whether the plural is used because of the various cleansings described as taking place on this day, or whether it is an example of the Hebrew usage of the majestic plural to note the contrast between an atonement involved with the daily services resulting in forgiveness and the atonement of this day which resulted in a cleansing, needs careful study. Our spiritual forefathers evidently perceived the latter understanding, as they designated in the 1914 Year-book Statement of Beliefs, the services of this day as "the atonement."

Since the high priest on this day, as he with the common priests in the daily services, "served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," the details given in this chapter require thoughtful analysis:

1) In performing his duties on this day, the high priest was clothed fully in linen from his head to his ankles. These garments were noted as "holy garments." (16:4)

2) On this day, Aaron entered three times into the most holy place: once with incense, once with the blood of the bullock, and finally with the blood of the Lord's goat. (16:12-15)

3) The offering of the bullock is noted as "the sin offering for himself, and for his house." (16:6, 11) It needs to be kept in mind that the texts do not say, "for his sons" who served as "common priests" and who ate of the sin offerings of the individuals, thus identifying with their sins. Further, no hands were laid on the bullock in confession. Aaron ministered that day as a type of Christ our High Priest. The "house" concept is made a part of Paul's introduction of Christ as the High Priest of our profession. (See Heb. 3:1-6)

4) There was a movement on that day in the ministry of the high priest. The cleansing was

done in three steps, or stages, first the most holy, then the holy, and finally in the court at the altar there.

5) The first cleansing was deemed necessary "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." (16:16) Yet in the cleansing of the altar in the court, where the registry of their confessions had been made, only the uncleanness is noted as the final act before the scapegoat is brought into the ceremony. (16:19-21) The record of sins is first considered as the books are opened. That which lies at the root of our sins - our uncleanness - is the last to be cleansed.

6) In this final cleansing, the blood of the bullock and the blood of the Lord's goat are mingled. (16:18)

Since we are not living in the time when "the judgment was set and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:10), but over 100 years past that date, we must be near to, or in the time pictured in the service when the central focus of the Heavenly Ministry of Christ is on that which was typified by the ministration at the altar in the court. Therefore, all of these typical factors must be clearly perceived, and then related to aspects of Christ's High Priestly ministry as revealed in other references of the Bible. The resultant revelation would be "the present truth" for this hour.

OTHER REFERENCES

EZEKIEL 9

"The Visions of God" given to Ezekiel (Chapters 8-11) when cast into a last day setting project a relationship with the last phase of the final atonement. The eschatological significance of certain prophecies of Ezekiel have been recognized by other than Adventist commentators. (Bible Commentary on the Old Testament, "Book of Ezekiel," pp. 305-306) Ellen G. White was specific in relating Chapter 9 to the final ministry of the Heavenly Sanctuary. (5T:207-208)

In the typical services of the Day of Atonement, the last act of cleansing centered in the Court at the Altar of Burnt Offering, or Brazen Altar. The focus of Ezekiel 9 is likewise at the Brazen Altar. (9:2) The One commanded to do the sealing was "clothed with linen" even as the high priest was clothed on the Day of Atonement.

In Ezekiel 10, the work of "the man clothed in linen" is enlarged. He is commanded to take

"coals of fire" from between the cherubim and scatter them over Jerusalem. (10:2, 6-7) Some interpret these "coals of fire" as symbols of judgment. However, "the man clothed with linen" was never commanded to destroy, but only to seal. (9:4-6) The cleansing by coals of fire find a parallel in Isaiah's experience who having received "a live coal...from off the altar" was told, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Isa. 6:6-7) John the Baptist defined one of the objectives of Christ's mission to be a baptism "with fire." (Luke 3:16)

DANIEL 7

The enlarged scope and significance that is given by the typical service of the Day of Atonement, when the movement of the high priest on that day is considered, helps one better to comprehend the part of the prophecy of Daniel 7 which relates to the time when "the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

In the sequence of Chapter 7, Daniel is brought in vision to the time of the "little horn" which was to reign for "a time, and times, and a dividing of time." (7:8, 25) This brings us to A.D. 1798. Then Daniel beholds "till" the Ancient of days sat in judgment. This judgment - "the cleansing of the sanctuary" - would begin in 1844. (8:14)

We have failed to consider the import of the events to take place after 1844 as revealed to Daniel. He wrote - "I beheld ~~then~~ because of the great words which the horn spake." (7:11) We have placed "the great words" as being fulfilled during the 1260 years of the medieval supremacy of the Papacy. But a careful reading of the text (7:25 KJV) indicates that the word, "great" is supplied, and the "great words" from Heaven's viewpoint follow the date, 1844. It is after this revelation - and other details which are given concerning the end of the "beast" which nurtures "the little horn" - that Daniel sees the Son of man coming to the Ancient of Days to receive "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom." (7:13-14) All of these factors have not been duly considered in our study of the final atonement. (In an up-coming issue of WVN, we will give consideration to this)

REVELATION 14:6-12

The steps, stages, or agenda in the mediation of the cleansing on the Day of Atonement were three-fold: - First in the Most Holy, that which pertained to God and the record of the sins of the people; next, in the tabernacle where was

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LET'S TALK IT OVER

In the typical service on the Day of Atonement, there was one condition which we too often overlook. It reads:

There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy." (Lev. 16:17)

Paul expressed it very concisely when he wrote to Timothy that there is but "one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. (1.2:5) The high priest alone in the type effected the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the people of Israel. He offered "the bullock" for himself, but he did so as a type of Christ "who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) He offered the blood of the Lord's goat - that goat which was taken from the congregation of Israel (Lev. 16:5), symbolizing Him who would be raised "from among their brethren" (Deut. 18:18), and became the Lord's sacrifice." (Gen. 22:8) Not a single individual in the camp of Israel could make a contribution to their cleansing on that day.

There were only two requirements made of the people assembled before the court of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement: - 1) No work of any kind, and 2) Soul affliction. A failure to observe either meant to "be cut off from among his people" by the Lord Himself. (Lev. 23:29-30)

Consider the matter of "no work." All the other annual feast days prohibited only "servile work." (Lev. 23:8, 25, 35-36) This one annual day - the Day of Atonements - carried the same prohibition as was placed on the Sabbath - "in it thou shalt not do any work." (Ex. 20:10) And interestingly, when Paul asks the "holy brethren" to consider the High Priest of their profession (Heb. 3:1), he introduced the Sabbath and gave its true meaning and significance. He wrote:

There remaineth therefore a rest [keeping of a sabbath - margin] to the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. (Heb. 4:9-10)

The word, "rest," in verse 10 is the same root word as is used in Matt. 11:28-30. It is the soul rest provided by Jesus. To enter into that rest is to cease from dependence on our own righteousnesses. We cannot provide forgiveness for ourselves, neither can we effect the atonement from our uncleanness. To attempt it, is

to face being cut-off from the spiritual commonwealth of Israel. We cannot seem to realize that instead of a program of faith plus works, it is having a faith that works. We overcome the enemy "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of [our] testimony," and we are willing to lay our lives on the line. (Rev. 12:11) Why can I not accept the single condition which Jesus placed on doing a work acceptable to God - "believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29); and then believe that that One can truly mediate the atonement for my uncleanness? To even think that I can divest myself of the forces of my fallen nature through rules and regulations is Laodiceanism compounded.

Then there is the matter of "soul affliction." It, too, if not done will be cause for being cut-off. Hand wringing over the Church in apostasy is not soul affliction. Decrying the symptoms does not cure the disease. It may be that I may have the same disease, and in my Laodicean folly not sense it. We need to ask ourselves - all of us - the question: "Am I so involved in exposing the apostasy in the Church that I am gullible to the deceptions being mixed with truth by the "many voices" sounding in the community of Adventism today? Whether the deceptions come from within the Church, or from the "voices" sounding on the periphery, all deception is basically the foundation of apostasy. To think that I can separate truth from error without the Spirit of discernment which comes from God alone, is to deceive myself. With the winds of doctrine blowing at gale force through the Adventist Community, one needs to be before God in soul affliction as he never was before. "So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will be **impossible** to distinguish between them except by the **Holy Scriptures**. By their testimony every statement is to be tested." (GC, p. 593)

May God have mercy on our self-confidence, and our misdirected devotion. May we be driven to our knees because we have been warned that the diabolical working of the enemy transforms his agents into "ministers of righteousness." (II Cor. 11:15) May we through soul affliction be "so firmly established upon His word" that we will not yield to the evidence of our perverted senses. May we in the crisis that now engulfs us "cling to the Bible, and the Bible only." (GC, p. 625)

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Present Truth - from page 6, column 1

registered corporate confession; and finally, in the Court at the Altar which carried the record of the confession of the individual. It is interesting to note that the Three Angels in their messages follow the same three steps. First, there is the message, "the hour of [God's] judgment is come," then, "Babylon," a corporate body, is fallen, and finally, "If any man" - individual. To this parallel, study needs to be given.

IN CONCLUSION

How tragic, in these final hours of human history, the Church to which was committed the sanctuary truth in sacred trust, did not reaffirm its commitment to that truth at Perth. Equally as tragic, are those "voices" which profess to be committed to the sanctuary truth but are merely uttering their time-worn cliches and shibboleths instead of getting down to the meat of the Word of God and feeding the people as "faithful and wise" servants ought to be doing. (Matt. 24:45) Well did the Lord say through Ezekiel - "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (34:2)

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Seminar Study - Revelation 12 - 22

"To hear truth and not accept it does not nullify truth."

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