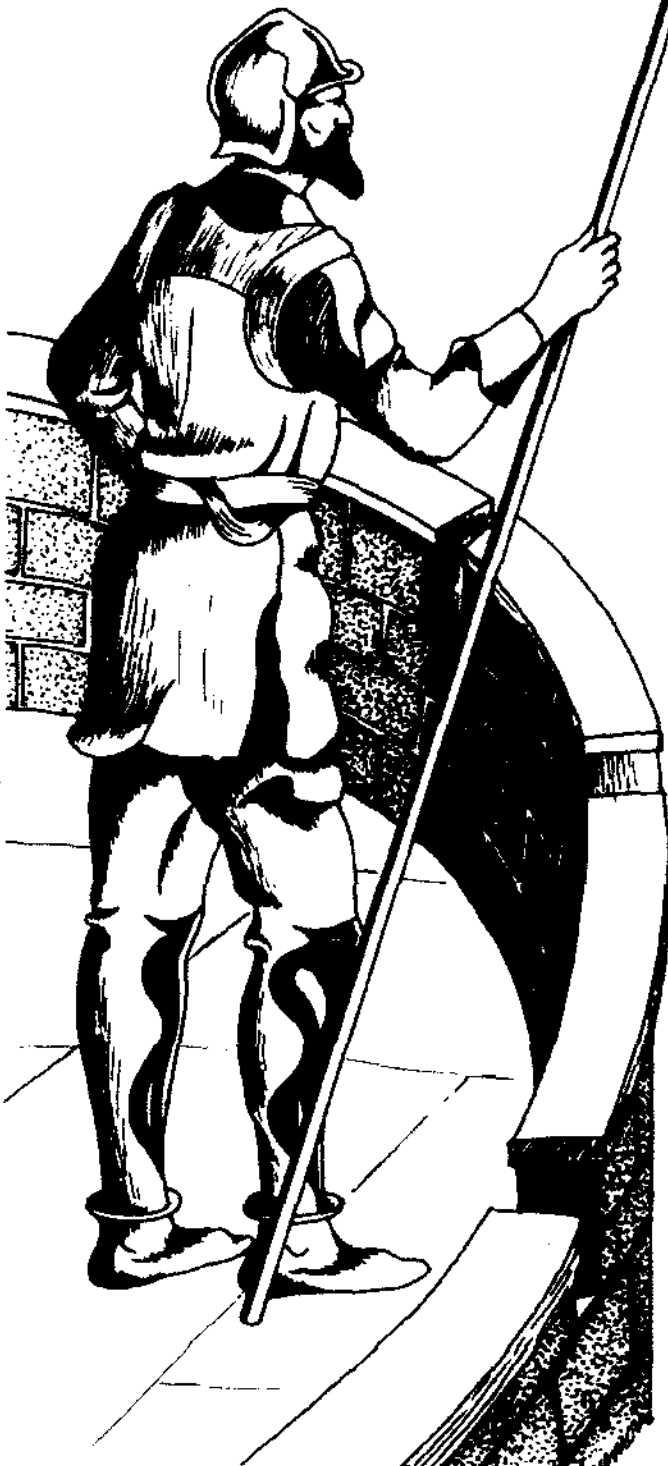


*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"*
Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



EXEGESIS OF REVELATION

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, THE MAN-CHILD,
AND THE REMNANT OF HER SEED

(Part I)

An individual can approach the study of the Bible from two different viewpoints. One can either let the text speak for itself, or one can read into the text traditional concepts which he has been taught, or preconceived ideas of what the text is saying from his own personal biases and prejudices. By letting the text speak to him, the Holy Spirit can open to his mind new vistas of truth each time he studies which he has not previously seen. There may remain unanswered questions which he will not be able to answer until fuller light is revealed to him. This is especially true in the study of Bible prophecy.

In the book of Revelation, there are some key chapters which cast light on our present time which need to be carefully re-studied by just letting the text speak to us. These chapters are the heart of the last section of the book - chapters 12 through 19. Since the book is a whole book, there will be a "knitting" back into the first section of similar concepts and key phrases. For example, the "forty and two months" of Revelation 13:5, is also to be found in 11:2. It will be our objective over the next several months to take an exegetical look at these chapters and see just what they are saying. Questions may remain unanswered, but we will be left with the facts of what is written so that as we seek to understand more fully through continued study, the groundwork will have been laid.

Revelation 12

This chapter focuses on two visions - "wonders," significant apparitions - seen by John. One is a woman with child (v. 1-2), and the second is "a great red dragon" (v. 3). The interrelationship between these two symbols is continued to the time of "the war with the remnant of her seed." (v. 17) The "fiery red (Gr. *purros*) dragon" is defined "as that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." (v. 9) The "child" is called "a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." (v. 5) He is also "the seed" of the woman, since the "remnant" are referred to as a "seed." The woman is not defined, but the very elements of the two visions

- a serpent, a seed, and a woman - bring to mind the first gospel promise in Genesis 3:15, where the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. The role of the "Man child" is described further as "Michael" (v. 7), the "Christ" or Messiah (v. 10), and the "Lamb" (v. 11).

Verse 7 brings us to our first judgment call. Are we going to read into this verse, our perceptions, or are we going to let the text speak for itself? "There was war in heaven." Is the word, "heaven," to be understood the same as the word is used in verses 1 and 3? Or are we to interpret it as meaning, the dwelling place of God? If the latter, our traditional perceptions place this war prior to the creation of man. The text indicates that as a result of this "war," Satan "was cast out into the earth." This then would mean that this "earth" existed some time before the creation of man, and further that God created man and placed him where Satan was confined. If on the other hand, we read this word "heaven" as it is used of the other two "visions" - the stage where the symbolic drama was being enacted - the "war in heaven" then becomes the battle of the Man-Child, the incarnate Michael with the dragon, and the resultant victory of the Cross, where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. This would harmonize with the next pronouncement John hears from the heavens - "Now is come salvation." (v. 10).

Following through on the fact that the Devil "was cast out into the earth" (v. 9), "is cast down" (v. 10), the action of the prophecy turns to activity on the earth and the sea. John hears a command - "Rejoice, ye heavens (plural), and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath." (v. 12) The use of the plural for "heavens," and the reference to the "inhabitants that dwell in them," removes the use of the term as the place of the vision, to the reality where God dwells. But why the use of terms "earth" and "sea" to refer to the inhabitants upon whom Satan manifests his wrath? He was merely "cast out into the earth." We must leave this an open question in the light of what follows - the two "beasts" of Chapter 13, one of which would "rise out of the sea" (v. 1), and the second which would come "up out of the earth" (v. 11).

The first activity of the devil, after his defeat, was to manifest his wrath against the woman "which brought forth the man child" (12:13) The "woman" flees into the "wilderness." (We meet this term again in Chapter 17, where

another "woman" is pictured as being in a "wilderness" See 17:3.) The woman of Revelation 12 is in the wilderness for a given period - "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (v. 6), and "for a time, and times, and half a time" (v. 14). Why two different time descriptions for the same period? First, the designation of verse 14 is the same as Daniel 7:25, thus linking the prophecies of the two books. The language of verse 6, - 1260 days - is also the time that "the two witnesses" prophecy "clothed in sackcloth." (Rev. 11:3) This links the "two witnesses" closely with the "woman." The emphasis on the woman in the wilderness is that there she will be fed, and "nourished." Is she nourished by "the two witnesses"? The text says - "They should feed her." (12:6) The only antecedent to "they" connected with the same prophetic time element are "the two witnesses."

In contrast to the nourishment received, the "wrath" of the devil is symbolized as casting "out of his mouth water" in such quantity so as to become a flood to overwhelm the woman. We have read into this term, "water," persecution. Are we justified? John in his gospel defines "water" differently. He quotes Jesus as saying - "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Then John explains what this means - "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive." (John 7:38-39) If this concept is applied to "water" in Revelation 12, does it therefore represent the "doctrines of devils" which sought to overwhelm the true church of God, and which flowed as a "flood" during the 1260 day period? (See I Tim. 4:1) Are we thus told that the only source of true nourishment is through the Two Witnesses?

Then we face another judgment call. The 16th verse states that "the earth (not the sea) helped the woman" opening its mouth to swallow the flood so that she might be preserved. Is this "earth" to mean the place from whence the second beast of Revelation 13 arises? To accept the term, "earth," in a prophetic sense, and to apply it to the data that follows Revelation 12 leads to some interesting observations.

The second beast of Rev. 13 speaks "to them that dwell on the earth" (v. 14). The First Angel's Message heralds the everlasting gospel first "unto them that dwell on the earth," and then "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people." (14:6) Is the objective of the "everlasting gospel" to unmask the enemy, and preserve the purity of the woman?

There is a final confrontation. It reads:

"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." (12:17)

Each of these clauses are pregnant with concept. 1) The "wrath" of the enemy continues against the "woman." 2) A new symbol is introduced, "the remnant of [the woman's] seed." And 3) This remnant "keeps" (not professes to, nor tries to keep) the commandments of God, and they "have" the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In this chapter, the word, "war" (polemos) is used twice, both times in connection with "the seed of the woman" - the Original Seed, and now the "remnant." (vs. 7, 17) The "war" concept is carried through this final section: a) The first beast of Revelation 13 makes "war with the saints." (v. 7) b) "The spirits of devils...go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world to gather them to the war (polemos) of that great day of God Almighty." (16:14) And c) "These shall make war with the Lamb." [The verb form of "war" is used] (17:14) Those with the Lamb are "called, and chosen, and faithful."

This presents another question to be pursued in the study of the book of Revelation as introduced by verse 17. What is the relationship between the Seed of the Promise, (The "Man-Child," "Michael," "His Christ", and "the Lamb") and the "remnant seed"? Here is the data:

- 1) The victors of the last of the seven churches - Laodicea - sit with "the faithful and true Witness (martus)" on His throne. These overcome as He also overcame. (3:21)
- 2) The 144,000 "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." (14:4) These "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14)
- 3) The marriage of the Lamb "is come" because "His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (19:7-8)

The "remnant of [the woman's] seed "have the testimony of Jesus." The text does not say, "the woman has the testimony of Jesus," only "the remnant." This phrase is used in several different places in the book of Revelation. The word translated, "testimony" is marturia. In John's writings - his Gospel, Epistles, and the

Revelation - he uses the word 30x, and it is translated, "record" and "witness" as well as "testimony." John also uses the verb form, martureo, 47x, and the word, martus, from which we derive our English word, "martyr," 5x.

How then are we to understand, the phrase, "testimony of Jesus" in Rev. 12:17. By eisegetical interpretation, we have read this to mean, "the Spirit of Prophecy" by making a comparison with Revelation 19:10. How is this phrase used in Revelation, apart from 12:17? Note the following verses:

"John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." (1:2)

"John...was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (1:9)

"I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (19:10)

"I beheld the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness (marturia) of Jesus, and for the word of God." (20:4)

What deductions can be drawn? 1) The "word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus" are associated together. 2) Gabriel, "His angel (1:1), has this testimony, as well as the (apostolic?) "brethren" of John. 3) The "remnant of her seed" also have it. Is this to be understood singularly, one person, or collectively, the group?

There is an overall picture conveyed by Revelation 12. In each period, whether in regard to "the Man-Child", or the period of the woman in the wilderness, or in the war against the "remnant," it is the "dragon" operating. This dragon or serpent is specifically called "the Devil, and Satan." In the following chapters, other symbols are used designating powers under the control and authority of the dragon doing the work which the 12th Chapter attributes to the dragon. This chapter is the outline which the following chapters detail and enlarge.

A closer look at some of the symbolism provides meaningful insights into a correct interpretation of past history. The dragon or serpent is described as a "fiery serpent" (drakon purros), better translated as "serpent of fire." Hislop in his Two Babylons notes, that "along with the sun, as the great fire-god, and in due time,

identified with him, was the serpent worshipped. 'In the mythology of the primitive world,' says Owen, 'the serpent is universally the symbol of the sun.' In Egypt, one of the commonest symbols of the sun, or sun-god, is a disc with a serpent around it." A pictorial drawing from a Phoenician coin is used to illustrate the fact. (p. 227)

[For further study on this association between the serpent, the sun-god, and Sunday observance, see Robert Leo Odom, Sunday in Roman Paganism, Takoma Park: Review & Herald Pub. Assoc., 1944]

Consideration needs to be given to the designation of Jesus in the incarnation as the "Man-Child" (hulos, arsen). This reads literally "a son, a male." In the Greek, there are two words used to designate man - anthrōpos, a human being - from which we derive the English word, anthropology, the study of man. The second is aner, a male person of full age in contrast to a child, or a husband. Then there is this adjective - arsen - which emphasizes the male sex. Jesus did not come into humanity as a eunuch, bereft of the forces which drive men, but was in all points tempted even as we, yet He sinned not.

His victory over the Devil and Satan is hailed by a loud voice proclaiming - "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ (Messiah)." (v. 10) The word, "power" is exousia, authority. With the victory of Jesus, the dominion lost by Adam is returned to the new head of humanity, the Second Adam. No longer could the Devil accuse mankind before the Throne of God, for "caught up unto God, and to His throne" (v. 5), was One who was to ever live to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7:25)

After noting the salvation and strength provided in the redemption accomplished by Michael in His warfare with the dragon, a three-fold agenda is given for victory over the dragon by each child of humanity. (v. 11)

1) "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." The only provision for our sins, is the sacrifice of Calvary. The wages of sin is death, but on the Cross, Jesus Christ tasted death for every one who would believe on Him. (Heb. 2:9) Through this sacrifice has been opened to us "a new and living way" into the holiest to the very "throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 10:19; 4:16)

2) "And by the word of their testimony." This reads in the Greek - dia ton logon tes marturias autōn - "on account of the word of the witness of them." While we cannot contribute to the salvation and strength provided in "the blood of the Lamb," we can bear witness in our lives to the power of the Word, and testify with our mouths to the Truth revealed by that Word when made flesh, "full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) These are the only "works" for which reward will be given. We need to pray with Paul - "that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel," that "I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Eph. 6:19-20)

3) "They loved not their lives unto death." There is a price to pay for speaking forthrightly the truth. He who was "the Truth" (John 14:6) paid that price, and He said to all who would follow Him - "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." (John 20:21) It is at this point, that for too many, the victory is lost. We are not willing to accept the cost imposed by truth. It may not be a physical death that we will be asked to endure. Once inflicted it is over; but professional assassination brings with it a death in life, and when confronted with this prospect, men buckle. The agony of Calvary, in which Christ experienced the "second death," will never be known by the redeemed, but the death in life experienced by the Son of man when "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11), will be the experience of those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

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"When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart...

"One thing will certainly be understood from the study of Revelation, — that the connection between God and His people is close and decided."

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 114

OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

During the preparation of this issue of WWN, two streams of thought converged, opening some deeper insights into truth. We were studying the book of Romans in our Sabbath School fellowship. We wanted to review Paul's teachings in the light of the controversy engendered over some interpretations given in the book, Beyond Belief. Then there is always the crucial issue as to whom the "man" in Romans 7 is. Having made our way past the theology of justification by faith as presented by Paul in the first eight chapters of Romans, we entered into a careful analysis of what has been termed the Jewish question - "And so all Israel shall be saved." (11:26)

The key verses are:

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."

Just what are our Christian roots?

The second stream of thought which converged into this picture of our Christian heritage resulted from a review of what Dr. Mervyn Maxwell had written in his book, God Cares, Vol. I. Speaking of the Roman Catholic Church "which rose to religiopolitical prominence as the Roman Empire declined," being the fulfillment of the "little horn" of Daniel 7, Maxwell wrote:

"Actually the Roman Catholic Church was vitrually **the** Christian church in Western Europe for about a thousand years. Because of this early universality, both Protestants and Catholics may regard it as the embodiment of 'our' Christian heritage, for better or for worse." (p. 127; emphasis his)

In considering the "Christian heritage" - "roots" in Romans 11 - observe what Paul writes in answer to his question - "What advantage then hath the Jew?" - "Much in every way: chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." (Rom. 3:1-2) He further defines these "oracles of God" as he introduces the section in Romans on "the Jewish question." He writes - "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the

adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises." (9:4) This then is "the holy root" into which the "wild olive" branches were grafted.

God has also revealed the "root" of the Roman Catholic Church. In Daniel 7, in symbolic sequence, the prophecy identifies the "little horn" as the Papacy, and places it as growing out of the nondescript beast, or Pagan Rome. (verse 8) From this beast it receives its nourishment, and is never removed nor separated from it, but continues with it until "given to the burning flame." (verse 11) If as the "new theology" of Maxwell contends that "our Christian heritage, for better or for worse" is via the Roman Catholic Church, then the "root" is paganism.

This simple fact of "heritage" finds its primary illustration in the Sabbath-Sunday controversy. The origin of Sunday observance is paganism. "The [Roman Catholic] church took the pagan philosophy and made it the buckler of faith against the heathen. She took the pagan Roman Pantheon, temple of all the gods, and made it sacred to all the martyrs; and so it stands to this day. She took the pagan Sunday and made it the Christian Sunday." (The Catholic World, March, 1894, p. 809)

The Sabbath made for man, blessed and sanctified by God, was given to Israel as a part of the sacred trust. The prophet Ezekiel stated to "the elders of Israel" the words of the Lord God - "I gave them **My** sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them." (20:12) Our heritage of the Sabbath comes to us through Judaism. While the enemy of truth seeks to stigmatize the Sabbath, as "Jewish," nevertheless in the "calling and election" of God, He gave to Israel the memorial of His creation, to be a sign of His redemptive, sanctifying power.

This is not all of the "heritage." To Israel was given "the service" (he latreia), the sanctuary ritual performed by the priests as a shadow and example of the heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 9:4; Heb. 8:5) One of the basic conflicts in the community of Adventism today is the attempt of the enemy to cause the church to mute, or to deny the relevancy of the sanctuary teaching. He has well nigh succeeded. The reason for the enemy's success lies squarely at our door. We are not able to cope with the time span between the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14 in 1844, and where we are now one hundred and fifty years from that event. So we have gone about building "the tombs of the prophets and garnish[ing] the sepulchres of the righteous" in

the adulation of William Miller, while at the same time minimizing or discarding the answer the remnant of "the seventh-month movement" discovered in their disappointment. We are unwilling to take a careful look as the reasonings used to arrive at certain conclusions drawn by these pioneers and ask a forthright question - Do they conform to the type "service" given in trust to Israel? If they do not, then what changes need to be made in our theological perceptions of "the cleansing of the sanctuary"? You do not throw the baby out with the dirty bath water. Is it because we are holding as sacrosanct certain positions, that we cannot arrive at truth? Will this then lead to a change in what we accept as our "heritage"? Remember Jesus warned that "every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13)

Jesus in conversing with the woman of Samaria stated plainly that "salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22) In His day, they had departed far from their "roots." He attempted to alter their "growth pattern" and two times in a symbolic gesture cleansed the temple. But the end came; the "natural branches" were cut off, and "wild olive" shoots were grafted in. However, note carefully, they were grafted into the original "holy stock." (Rom. 11:17) Further, we are warned, "if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." (Rom. 11:21)

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LYING WONDERS

It is sad indeed when one must take space and time to comment on the "lying wonders" of Vance Ferrell. I had intended to ignore his hearsay and comments in past issues of Waymarks (WM); however, letters and telephone calls confirmed that something more was required than letters addressed directly to Ferrell himself. Something needed to be stated in WWN.

In WM #577, he named this editor as one who believed "that there is no Holy Spirit." When my attention was called to this comment, I made a copy of the column, and wrote three words on the page and sent it to Ferrell. The three words were - "Document or Retract!" To this, he replied with a loaded statement for me to sign, but introduced his letter with this sentence - "I have received your request, but am puzzled by it. For over a decade and a half, I have

been told by others that you do not believe that the Holy Spirit exists as a distinct Personage, the Third Person of the Godhead." (Letter dated January 8, 1995) To this, I responded on January 12:

"Inasmuch as you admit in your letter that your information is based on hearsay, as are many of your pronouncements and accusations, may I suggest that you go to your 'hearsayers' and let them produce the basis of their gossip."

The response to this letter came in Ferrell's "Checkpoints" #143, dated February 1, 1995 in which he claimed that "as of the date of this writing, we have received no reply."

While the issue of the Holy Spirit was generating letters and telephone calls to this desk, my attention was called to another accusation made in WM #563. I again asked for documentation but have received no response as of the date of this writing (March 2, 1995). But in a letter, dated February 20, 1995, I wrote pointedly to Ferrell:

"If you believe that one makes a statement with which you take issue, why don't you ask the person concerned, or give his statements in direct quotes in context, rather than go to your 'hearsayers' (soothsayers?). There are various forms of 'spiritism.' They all have a common source. Whether the seance, the ouija board, or the gossip-monger, all come from the same 'spirit' source. Since most of your data in publication is based on hearsay, what does that make your publication?"

Now to my belief in regard to the Holy Spirit: Let me say categorically, that I believe the Holy Spirit to be the Third Person of "the Heavenly Trio." Jesus Himself declared, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another (Gr. allos) Comforter." (John 14:16) The Greek word implies one equal to, but distinct from. Based on good New Testament scholarship, I have stated that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are "alter-egos." (See The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by Nicoll, Vol. V, p. 195) Further in the Writings, one can read - "The Holy Spirit is Himself, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. He (Jesus) would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent." (Letter 119, 1895) I recognize that Ferrell has a literacy problem in the area of theology, thus necessitating his reliance on hearsayers' evaluation of comments made in harmony with the above belief and convictions. ‡

LET'S TALK IT OVER

During the preparation for a Sabbath School discussion of Romans 8, I took careful note of verse 14 - "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." In checking the Greek text, I found that the verb - "are led" (agontai) - is in the passive voice, in other words, they are being acted upon by the Spirit. An interesting contrast to this is found in the illustration Jesus used in John 10:3 of the shepherd and the sheep. The shepherd "leadeth them out" - active voice.

Christ the Good Shepherd set the course. He indicated clearly that "if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matt. 15:24) This we cannot do unless we are acted upon by the Holy Spirit. Changing the figure of speech to conform to the bumper sticker - "God is my Co-Pilot" - we are happy to have God with us in case we get into a dangerous storm in the flight of life, but we hesitate to let Him be the Pilot. But only those acted upon by the Spirit of God - passively resigned to the Spirit's leading - will ever be "sons of God."

As we reflect on our past life - if we dare to honestly do so - every mistake, every sin, every wrong course taken - can be chalked up against the one fact that we sought to lead ourselves. With Jeremiah, we must confess - "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (10:23) "We cannot retain our own self and be filled with the fullness of God. We must be emptied of self. If heaven is gained by us at last, it will be only through the renunciation of self and in receiving the mind, the spirit, and the will of Jesus Christ." (IHP, p. 155)

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight - the greatest battle that was ever fought by man - is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up." (M of B, p. 203, 1943 ed.)

"Except a man be born out of the water and out of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5, literal) He must be led -

acted upon - by the Spirit.

We sing hymns, and sometimes they become merely words we utter to music. May I suggest that you take time, time that will not be interrupted, and open the "old" Church Hymnal to Number 272, and carefully, prayerfully read the words. Then do likewise with Number 279. End your meditative reading with Number 212. Life can be different.

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News Note: On February 22, 1995, a Defamation of Character, Breach of Contract, and Wrongful Discharge from Employment Complaint was filed in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Maryland, by David D. Dennis, dismissed Director of Internal Audit for the GC against Folkenberg, McClure, Mittleider, Carson, and the General Conference. The allegations are mind-boggling.

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In Canada, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Canada, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, ON P0H 2J0.

In Australia, write - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 846, Belmont, Victoria 3216.

Editor

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

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