



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye w^t
enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

"THE JESUS DIFFERENCE"

Was the WORD Made Flesh or Not?

Back in 1965 when Elder Donald G. Reynolds was pastor of the White Memorial Church in Los Angeles, he wrote an article - "Adam and Evil" - for the Review in which he stated, "Christ became the second Adam. He took Adam's nature, but never took Adam's sin. Jesus was not like you and me when He was here upon earth, for He was never a sinner. He came to this earth as Adam before Adam fell." (July 1, 1965) Now twenty years later, Elder Reynolds, now president of the Upper Columbia Conference, has written another paper - "Jesus - Divine Human Saviour." He indicates that this constitutes a revision from his former position. He now writes:

Those who take the "sinlessness" of Christ to the extreme say that because Christ was sinless in nature He had an advantage over us in dealing with sin. Thus we can't hope to overcome as Christ overcame because we are not like Him.

Those who take the "sinfulness" of Christ's nature to the extreme say that we can live in sinless perfection.

What is needed is the balance between these two positions which this paper has attempted to show. That is to say, Christ was not identical in every respect to Adam before

the Fall. Nor was He in every respect like Adam after the Fall. (p. 7)

In the fourth issue of the Adventist Review for 1985, the editor, Dr. William G. Johnson, began a series of editorials telling why he is a Seventh-day Adventist. The second editorial seeks to set forth "The Jesus Difference." He wrote:

Some Adventists argue over the human nature of Jesus. While one group asserts that Jesus came in the nature of Adam before the Fall, the other holds that He took the nature of Adam after the Fall. Both sides seek to safeguard the person of Jesus: the former, from any suggestion of sinfulness; the latter, from any tendency to deny the reality of His humanity. The issue is not specifically addressed in the church's Statement of Fundamental Beliefs.

Whatever the view held on this specific matter, all Adventists can say Amen to the following facts about Jesus Christ: (1) He is fully and eternally God; (2) He is fully man; (3) He is a single, undivided person; (4) He was absolutely sinless in propensity and act; and (5) His temptations and struggles were real, with the possibility of failure and loss. (January 31, 1985, p. 2)

The editor in his typical form seeks to sidestep the issue over the nature Christ assumed in humanity by hiding behind the apostate Statement of Beliefs voted at Dallas. He knows full well that this issue was addressed by our spiritual forefathers in previous statements of belief. However,

what the editor holds to be "facts about Jesus Christ" presents a mixture of truth and error which strikes at the very heart of the Gospel.

Observe carefully Johnsson's first two assertions for he claims all Adventists can say, "Amen." "(1) He is fully and eternally God; (2) He is fully man." We do not question the "eternally God" concept neither do we question his third proposition which relates to the first two - "He is a single, undivided person." But in putting all this together is where the error arises. If Jesus was fully man in the incarnation, and this is when He became a man, then He was a sinner, for man is a sinner. On the other hand, if Jesus came as "fully God" and existed in an undivided, single person, then He did not die, for God cannot die. Calvary, then, was only a mirage. The Bible declares the death of Jesus basic and primary to the Gospel. Paul told the Corinthians - "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (I - 15:3)

The truth of the Incarnation hinges around two concepts. Two questions only need to be asked, and then the simple answers expanded. (1) Who was He who came in the flesh having existed in another form previously? And (2) What was the nature of the flesh, He assumed in the Incarnation? Jesus Himself answered the first question. He told the Jews unequivocally - "Before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58) Paul answers the second question. He wrote - "God [sent] His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." (Rom. 8:3)

The I AM - the self-existent One (I am); the ever-existent One (I AM) - became flesh. He was pre-existent, and in the pre-existence was holy, and undefiled. That pre-existent Identity did not cease to be, when the Messiah (Michael) became the Man, Christ Jesus. None of us can claim such a pre-existent state of being. In this Jesus was not like us, or in this aspect are we like Jesus, nor ever will be. Would He remain holy and undefiled? That would be determined and was determined by the decisions He made during His incarnation. Whether we become holy and undefiled - like Him - and ultimately separated from

sinners - is determined by the decisions we make in our probationary time.

An expansion of the first question leads to another - What did the I AM lay aside when He became man? Or did He lay aside nothing and come as fully God? The Scripture plainly teaches - "God was manifest in the flesh." (I Tim. 3:16) This brings us to the issue of what the great controversy is all about. Was it God's power or God's character that was called into question? In the very first approach to Eve, the question was asked - "Yea, hath God said...?" (Gen. 3:1), not "What did God do?"

We, too often, forget what makes God, God. This is not theoretical, nor abstract. Is God love, truth, righteousness, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness? (I John 4:8; Deut. 32:4; Ex. 34:6) Is God also, omnipotent, omniscience, and immortal? (Gen. 17:1; Col. 2:3; I Tim. 6:15-16) Do the latter produce the former, or do they compliment the former? Who would want to live in a universe where omnipotence, omniscience, existed eternally in one who was hateful, a liar, unrighteous, and full of vengeance? The issue was not the "power" aspects of God, but that which revealed a character worthy and qualified to handle unlimited power. Therefore, in becoming incarnate, Christ emptied Himself of "the form of God" (Philippians 2:6) But "full of grace and truth," He was truly God in the flesh. (John 1:1-2, 14)

In becoming flesh, what was the nature of the flesh, He assumed? What is the force of Paul's expression - "in the likeness of sinful flesh"? Reynolds would have his readers believe that "this mode of expression occurs nowhere else." (Op. cit., p. 3) In this he is mistaken. The same prepositional phrase - en homoimati (in likeness of) - is also used by Paul in Phil. 2:7 - "in the likeness of men." In fact, Paul is saying the same thing in both places. When Jesus laid aside "the form of God," He took "the form of a slave." (Greek) But He took only "the likeness of men" - not fully man, for then He would have been made a sinner. Truly man, yes - the slave form of man; fully man, no - He did no sin. (I Peter 2:22) This is what Paul is also saying in Romans.

God sent His Son in the form of a slave, in the likeness of the flesh of sin. In that "slave form" which He took upon Himself were all the forces of the flesh, to which we yield in sin, but to which Christ did not yield. Herein is the glory of the Incarnation.

Continuing to note the new position that Elder Reynolds is now taking, we observe he is using some of the texts used previously by those, who as he once taught, believed that Christ came wholly in the nature of Adam prior to the Fall. There are two texts which he links together - Hebrews 7:26 and Luke 1:35. (Ibid., p. 5) Let us examine these verses. Hebrews 7:26 reads:

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

It is obvious from the context that the High Priesthood of Jesus is the subject of this verse. So the question arises - Does the phrase - "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" - apply to the time when Jesus "became us" (KJV), or is this speaking of His exaltation as High Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec? The part we leave out of the combined description says He was "made higher than the heavens." The fact is that the rendering of the KJV is misleading in its choice of "became us" to translate the Greek. The NKJV corrects this former unfortunate translation and now reads - "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens." Arndt & Gingrich in their Lexicon translate the clause - "For such an High Priest became us" - thus: "It was fitting that we should have such a high priest." This verse is not talking about the nature Christ assumed in the incarnation, but rather the kind of High Priest we have before the Father. And such is declared to be "fitting." Why distort the Scripture to seek support for an untenable position?

Luke 1:35 also invited critical analysis. The first thing that become obvious in noting the Greek text is that the word, "thing" ("holy thing") is not there. It

has been supplied by the translators, although the KJV fails to note this by placing the word in italics. The word for "holy" is hagion a neuter adjective and corresponds back to the same identical word which designates the Spirit as the Holy (hagion) Spirit. The resulting action of the Holy Spirit upon the womb of Mary was to be called "the Son of God." Paul says that while "Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit," and is "the Lord from heaven." (I Cor. 15:45, 47) The best comment that I know on this verse - Luke 1:35 - reads:

Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. . . . He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united Himself with the temple. (YI Dec. 20, 1900: 4BC, 1147)

The word, "holy" in Luke 1:35 is not used to describe the human nature Christ assumed but rather the identity of the One Who assumed it - the Lord from heaven, the Holy One of Israel. Though "the temple" was "degraded and defiled by sin" which in us breaks forth into sin, but did not in Him "who did no sin." (I Peter 2:22)

As Reynolds continues his revision of position, the confusion intensifies. He mixes the sins laid upon Christ as our Sin-bearer, with the nature Christ took upon Himself in coming into humanity. He wrote - "Our sinful nature was imputed to Him or reckoned as His." He compares this imputation to the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. Then he concludes - "The one nature Jesus had; the other nature He 'took.' That is, He had a sinless nature; He 'took' upon Him our sinful nature. In a sense He had a sinless nature in Him and took a sinful nature on Him -- a nature that was placed upon Him; as Scripture says there was 'laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' (Isa. 53:6)" (Op. cit., p.7 Emphasis his)

If one nature is "in" Him, and the other "on" Him in the sense of imputation - a vicarious arrangement [Question on Doctrine terminology, implied but not stated. See pp. 59-60, 61-62] how does one harmonize this position with the Editor of the Review who says that all Adventists can say "Amen"

to the concept that Christ was and is "a single, undivided person." Perhaps it would be well for Reynolds to tell us what mental gymnastics we are going to need to take to reconcile his "on"-Christ-concept-of-the-fallen-nature he is suggesting with the statement - "Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with His own sinless nature." (R&H, July 17, 1900) I have never known that "unite" and "on" were synonyms! Perhaps he has a newer edition of Roget's Thesaurus, than I have.¹

Near the end of his revision, Elder Reynolds asks a question. After quoting I Timothy 3:16 - "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh"- he asks: If it is a mystery then are we on solid ground when we advocate our special or extreme view on this subject?" (Op. cit., p. 8) Keep in mind that Reynolds considers his own previously held view that Christ took the nature of Adam before the Fall as "special or extreme" as well as the view that Christ took the nature of Adam after the Fall to be extreme. Thus for Reynolds both the neo-Adventist position, and the historic position held by the pioneers of the Advent Movement constitute extreme views. This new position as now advocated by Reynolds could be known as the post neo-Adventist teaching. And the basis for it - Paul declares the manifestation of God in the flesh a great mystery. Again Reynolds has failed to do adequate "home work." He places upon the word, "mystery," a transliterated word from the Greek, the English meaning, rather than the intent of the word as used by Paul in the lingua franca of his day. In the manuscript - In the Form of a Slave²- the very first paragraph, I wrote and documented:

In the Bible the incarnation is referred to as a mystery. Paul wrote to Timothy stating - "No one can deny that this religion of ours is a tremendous mystery, resting as it does on the one who showed himself as a human being, and met, as such, every demand of the Spirit in the sight of the angels." [I Tim. 3:16, Phillips] But the word, mystery (μυστήριον), as used in the New Testament does not carry the concept of incomprehension that is often associated with the use of the word in English. Quoting J. A. Robinson, Moulton

and Milligan state that "in its New Testament sense a mystery is 'not a thing which must be kept secret. On the contrary it is a secret which God wills to make known and has charged His Apostles to declare to those who have ears to hear it.'" (James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 420, Emphasis Robinson)

Perhaps Laodicea is not only blind but also deaf, and needs a "hearing aid" so that the "mystery" of the incarnation might be perceived by them. Or perhaps, Laodicea has lost its "Apostolate" and, therefore, no longer possesses the commission to proclaim truth, and thus is propagating error.

¹Roget's Thesaurus, 1936 Revised Edition has the following synonyms for the verb, "unite": "join, combine, connect, couple; merge, fuse, conflate (as two variant readings), coalesce, blend, cement, weld; centralize, consolidate, solidify, coadunate, unify, concentrate; harmonize, reconcile; federate, ally, confederate, league, associate, band together, conjoin, amalgamate, incorporate."

²This manuscript may be obtained by writing to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 789, Lamar, AR 72846.

#

RESPONSE

In the previous Thought Paper for June, we suggested that if there were sufficient interest in a series of Bible Studies based in historic Adventism, we would rework the series of studies which we had used as described in the Thought Paper. The response was quick and positive. This work will go forward, and the set of studies should be ready for distribution by early Fall. We will announce when they are completed through the Thought Paper.

#

ANOTHER RESPONSE

"There is no way to set up a "conference" such as our spiritual forefathers used after October 22, 1844. We simply aren't hurting that much and such conferences cannot be held until the pain of the historic process forces us to them. But it will!"

Oregon

#

WILSON AND THE TRUTH

The Pacific Union Recorder (Feb. 18, 1985) told of a meeting in Bakersfield, California, for the churches in the southern San Joaquin Valley. At this meeting, the featured speaker was Elder Neal C. Wilson, President of the General Conference. The Recorder bannered the objective - "GC PRESIDENT WILSON'S BAKERSFIELD MEETING SPARKS SPIRIT OF UNITY." (p. 4) A careful evaluation of the reports concerning Wilson's answers to questions asked at a "President's Forum" revealed that if unity was achieved, it was based on falsehood. Here is one question and Wilson's answer:

"Q.: Do we still believe the way we used to believe about the beast and its image? What is the view today?"

"WILSON: Our position is not changed. But our work is not to denounce the Roman Catholic Church. We speak the truth and let the truth do the cutting. We have not consigned anything to the 'trash heap,' as one publication has charged. We are not watering down or diluting the message. I regret that statements get into print that do not give an accurate picture." (p. 4)

As one reads the answer, one wonders to which "publication" Wilson is referring. Is it to the Reply Brief filed for the defendants in the EEOC vs PPPA Federal Court case, or is Wilson referring to the manuscript produced by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation which reproduced facsimile excerpts from the Brief. Both could only say the same thing! In the Brief it is stated:

"Although it is true that there was a period in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the denomination took a distinctly anti-Roman Catholic viewpoint, and the term, 'hierarchy' was used in a perjorative sense to refer to the papal form of church governance, that attitude on the Church's part was nothing more than a manifestation of widespread antipapery among conservative protestant denominations in the early part of this century and the latter part of the last, and which has now been consigned to the historical trash heap so far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned." (p. 4, Footnote)

A "composite" now in circulation noted as "Document #5" - perhaps as a result of Wilson's prevarication at Bakersfield - indicates that Wilson himself authorized this statement by the attorneys in the Brief. For proof, this "composite" cites a "Reporter's Transcript, March 30, 1975,

"Anyone who will start up to proclaim a message to announce the hour, day, or year of Christ's appearing, has taken up a yoke and is proclaiming a message that the Lord has never given him." Testimonies to Ministers, p. 61

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." —Prov. 18: 13

WHEN COMMENCED THE

JUBILEE

WHEN THE LANDS SHOULD REST." Ellen G. White

1987



p. Q345. (This documentation we cannot verify as we do not have access to the Recorder's Transcription. Anyone having a facsimile copy of the page, we would be most happy to receive a photocopy of the same.)

A current analysis of Wilson and the truth is to be found in Betrayal, written by one of the plaintiffs in the Pacific Press case. Describing Neal C. Wilson's testimony under oath during one aspect of the trial before Judge Renfrew in Federal Court, Merikay relates:

"Joan [Bradford, Merikay's Lawyer] asks to recall Wilson to the stand, and once again Wilson takes the stand.

"Joan reads Wilson the passage from his deposition where he said there was no attempt to persuade each other. She asks him if that statement, made under oath, is true.

"'That is correct,' he says. 'And I think you will notice the sentence, it says, 'I entered into conversation with her in trying to help her... understand other points of view that should be taken into consideration.' And I spent considerable time. She asked me the question, 'What have I done wrong? Why is everybody unhappy with me?'"

"Neal C. Wilson, SDA world leader, is fabricating lies. Right there on the stand. He is making up a conversation that never happened. His characterization doesn't even sound like me. I am shaking my head no. I can barely sit still.

"'And did you counsel?' Joan Bradford asks.

"'... I urged her and told her that she was taking the wrong route....'

"'Did you counsel her?'

"No one stirs in the courtroom. Wilson stares at Joan, a half smile on his face, one hand laying casually on top of the other. He lifts his top hand up about three inches, and then drops it back, just looking at Joan.

"He never counseled me. I know that he knows that, and he knows that I know that. I wonder what he's thinking in this long silence.

"Then in a loud voice, he says, 'I did

tell her that she ought to submit this to the General Conference if she felt she wanted to. She said that if she trusted the General Conference of the Church, she would, but at that point, she didn't trust the Church.'

"I nearly jumped off my pew. I can't believe the dialogue he is inventing. I can't believe what I am hearing, what's coming out of his mouth. My face burns. That man, probably the most powerful individual in my denomination, is lying. And he thought about the lie a long moment before he uttered it. And he knows that I know he is lying." (pp. 313-314)

#

ANOTHER SERIES OF EVENTS FROM BETRAYAL

"Kim [Merikay's husband] and I have started attending Milpitas [California] Church. The Mountain View congregation is filled with Press employees. I don't feel comfortable there any more. At Milpitas my old friend Elder Leonard Mills is pastor. Elder Mills was a friend back in Michigan when I was a teenager. Now he wants us to join his congregation. He and his wife come over Sabbath afternoon and spend most of their visit asking Kim and me to transfer our membership to their church.

"'I'd love to be a member at your church,' I say, 'but I don't think that will be good for you.'

"He smiles. He's a tender man with a peace-filled heart. 'The brethren are just crusty and hardheaded,' he says. 'But they won't hurt you. Not really.'" (p. 195)

.....

"At church this morning I discover that Elder Mills is no longer pastor. A parent whose children attend the church day-care center filed child-molesting charges against him, and the Conference asked him to step aside.... My paranoia springs to the surface, and I wonder how all this relates to the fact that I'm a member of his church. How have the leaders worked this one." (p. 276)

.....

"MARCH 13, 1975 The big day! ... (p. 290)

"After eating and talking about the attorneys and the issues, I head back for the courtroom. Kim and Marc and our friends are going to visit the government

To col. 2, p. 7 →

LETTERS

"We had a visit by Bauer and Nicolici, but not Vannoy. Unfortunately those organizing the function lacked experience, so we had many problems. Advertising was on a non-revelatory basis, with only a phone number. [Name] believes in being quite open and giving our name, address and telephone number.

"Whilst much useful material was given, particularly by Bauer, the following criticisms apply:-

1. Sessions of 90-120 minutes are far too long. . . .
2. Very little reference was made to the Bible, so we took our Bibles in vain.
3. There was no question period after each session. Our folk are used to handing up questions. . . .
4. . . .
5. Un-coordinated efforts. Nicolici advised us to get out of the apostate organization, but Bauer counselled us to stay in the church until we were expelled.

"In conversation, Bauer told me that there was no bank in the USA that could pay all its depositors all their money at once. It surprised me that he did not know the basic economic fact that no bank, savings and loans, or credit union can pay out 100% at any one time. This is the art of the banking operations. I have had a suspicion that Bauer (and others) are not very knowledgeable in economics, nor are they well versed in current affairs, no matter how good they are in theological areas. For example, Wheeling told us that USA interest rates would rise in 1984; in fact, they declined."

Australia

(From a letter to The John Ankenberg Show regarding the Walter Martin - Wm. G. Johnsson Confrontation)

"The book, Questions on Doctrine, will forever remain a monument to the liberal's perfidious misuse of their salaried time to destroy confidence in those doctrines

+++++

"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 789, Lamar, AR 72846, USA. It is sent free upon request. For Canada, write - Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Ontario, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, ONT POH 2J0.

they were employed to uphold. And it is a unique book in that two opposing views have become amalgamated by rhetorical sophisms that it is presented to Adventists as the original and orthodox beliefs, while at the same time, convincing non-Adventists that our doctrines are the same as theirs."

Oregon

(From p. 6 - "Another Series of Events...")

book store; then they'll join me.

"When I step out of the elevator, I nearly bumped into Joan [Bradford] and John [Rea, Lawyer for EEOC]. Joan is crying and saying, 'I have never been so horrified!' and John is drained of color.

"'What's wrong?' Fear grips me.

"'Come here, come here,' Joan pulls me into one of the little side rooms off the main hall. 'My husband was in the cafeteria, and overheard Neal Wilson threatening your minister,' she says.

"I look at her in disbelief. 'Wilson said, 'If you testify in Merikay's behalf you'll be disfellowshipped; and you'll lose your job and your retirement!'" (p.295)

.....

"Last night Elder Mills called. He said that his case was thrown out of court and all charges dropped because the little girl who supposedly told her mother he molested her won't repeat the charges to anyone. The mother says the little one told her, but the little girl doesn't say anything to anybody.

"Elder Mills said he went to the police station and saw the records of his case. It appears that the president* of his local, employing conference, the Northern California Conference told the police that the conference and he would cooperate in any way necessary to secure Mills' conviction.

"'They wanted to put me in prison,' he says, his gentle voice shaking. 'They really wanted to put me away!'" (p. 329)

How many times has this happened before and since?

.....

*Records indicate that Elder Helmuth C. Retzer was president of the Northern California Conference at that time.