

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

With the extensive circulation of the tract - "Jerusalem in Bible Prophecy" - the mailing list for WWN has been considerably increased. On the tract, we noted WWN as a "newsletter" so that the reader would understand something about what they were requesting. This is true. Each issue does contain news items, but WWN is more than that. Some who have already received their copies of the paper have written back and used the term, "newsletter" and then added, "but it seems to be more than that, an in-depth study paper, or something like that." This is true. We use the term, "Thought Paper" here at the Foundation.

The idea of a "thought paper" was born when I was finishing my graduate work at Andrews University some three decades ago. In an Education class, taught by Dr. George Akers, we were required to write what he called a "thought paper." I thought that was a good idea to transfer to the area of religion, a paper which analyzed an issue and challenged the thinking of the reader regarding that topic. It permitted a departure from mere recitation of traditional data, and opened up new vistas for contemplation. In other words, "thought papers" probe; venture into new perceptions of traditional concepts, and challenge the status quo. Now every issue of WWN is not a "thought paper," but some are. In either this issue or the next will be articles which meet the criteria, as we review the Essay in E&CT by Dr. J. I. Packer.

The material presented by Dr. Packer, and to adequately address the issues which he raises, will more than fill one issue of WWN if we include other items of merit in each issue. The outgrowth of his suggestions require some "thought paper" type of articles. Whether, we can include such an article in this issue is problematical.

Keep in mind, also, that the editorial "Let's Talk It Over" write-ups are many times miniature "thought papers."



E & C T - 6A

"Crosscurrents among Evangelicals" is the title given to Dr. J. I. Packer's Essay in Evangelicals & Catholics Together. Dr. Packer, a recognized leader among Evangelicals, is Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. His theme concept are Luther's words at the Diet of Worms in 1521 - "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen." He begins his Essay by telling his reaction to the film, Martin Luther, which he watched. These words of Luther were the high spot in the movie for Dr. Packer. Then he writes:

"I did not at that time expect ever to be in circumstances that would make me feel like Martin Luther at Worms, nor for more than forty years was I. But during the past few months I have constantly identified with his words quoted above, as I answered a stream of letters telling me that I should withdraw my name from the published list of supporters of 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' and thus recant my endorsement of its contents." (p. 148)

Packer then sets forth the three-fold objective of his Essay: 1) Review the criticisms of the Accord, ECT, from concerned Evangelicals; 2) To clear ECT of misunderstandings reflected by the criticisms; and 3) To reargue ECT's case for parachurch cooperation in Christian political social action.

It must be kept in mind that the Accord drawn up by Chuck Colson, and Richard John Neuhaus with thirteen other Evangelicals and Catholics has done to the Evangelical Community what the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-56 did to the Community of Adventism. Interestingly, the Evangelical critics who wrote to Dr. Packer asked him how he reconciled two Biblical passages - Galatians 1:6-10 and 2 Cor. 6:14-15 - with his endorsement of the Accord. These are key texts, both of which we will discuss in separate "thought paper" type of articles.

Packer maintains that the problem is that the drafters of the Accord adopted what is called the "Lund principle," formulated at an ecumenical gathering, which states "ecclesiastically divided Christians should not try to do separately what their consciences allow them to do together. The document urged that Protestant evangelicals and believing Roman Catholics act together as far as possible in both societal and evangelistic

tasks of Christian mission, which is in truth the mission of the Triune God, carried out through God's people." (p. 149) [Keep in mind this re-occurring emphasis on the Trinity] The application of the "Lund principle" is what those who protested to Packer, challenged. They do not perceive the Roman Catholic Church as a truly Christian Church, because, as Packer admits, these Evangelical protesters "have an informed commitment to a traditional Protestant vision, heritage, and policy." (p. 150) In fairness to Packer, it must be stated that he does not embrace Roman Catholicism, but seeks to differentiate between the Roman Church itself and those he terms as "good quality Roman Catholics" in that Church.

He seeks to give identity to Evangelicals. He writes:

"Historically, evangelical identity has been shaped and fertilized by a complex of movements: the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, the Puritanism of the seventeenth, the Pietism of the eighteenth, the religious populism of the nineteenth, and the Pentecostalism, including the charismatic renewal, of the twentieth. Theologically, evangelicalism defines itself against naturalistic Pelagianism by affirming the need for radical renewing of our sinful hearts by the Holy Spirit and against mechanical sacramentalism by affirming the directness of the Spirit's regenerating work in our hearts with and through the gospel Word." (*ibid.*)

Packer lists seven principles to which Evangelicals adhere:

1) "The supreme authority of the sixty-six book canon of Holy Scripture as the self-authenticating, self-interpreting Word of God. This is sometimes expressed as the sufficiency of Scripture... and it is sometimes abbreviated into the Reformation slogan sola scriptura ('by Scripture alone')."

2) "The majesty of Jesus Christ as God incarnate, mediator of the new covenant of grace, substitutionary sin-bearer, perfect Saviour, risen, reigning and returning Lord. ... Typically, this redemptive Christ-centeredness leads to a strong insistence that our present justification through faith in Christ - that is, our acquittal from the guilt of sin and acceptance as heirs of glory - is grounded entirely on His righteousness. ... This is referred to as sola fide ('by faith alone')."

3) "The lordship of the Holy Spirit as source and sustainer of all spiritual life and communion with

God."

4) "The necessity of personal conversion...."

5) "The priority of evangelism in the Christian life. ... Christians should share the gospel."

6) The need for community in the Christian life. "The Church is essentially a fellowship of believers in Christ with Christ" manifest in local churches, and "also in parachurch bodies."

7) "The practice of administering the ordinances or two sacraments that Jesus instituted, i.e. baptism and the Lord's Supper."

To this seventh identifying mark, Packer adds a comment that needs to be questioned. He wrote:

"Many, if not all, see these rites as means of grace, conveying and confirming the benefits they signify, through the active exercise of faith that they evoke. The Lord's Supper, in particular, becomes an event of spiritual refreshment through thankful, intentional remembering of Christ's cross and self-offering to Him in gratitude for it." (p. 152; emphasis supplied)

This comment narrows the distance between the Roman Catholic perception of these "sacraments" and the Biblical revelation as merely symbolic acts with no merit resident in either the water, the bread, or the fruit of the vine. This leaves the only real distinction between the two viewpoints - Evangelical and Roman Catholic - as the power and authority of the officiant, who in the case of Roman Catholicism is the priest.

Packer continues with more definitive paragraphs about the commitment of his critics "to a traditional Protestant vision, heritage, and policy." He asks, "What does that mean?" As for "vision" he indicates that "the Protestant vision has historically been that the Roman Catholic Church should break up and dissolve; ... and that as a means to this end Protestants should constantly speak against Roman Catholic teaching about the Church, the papacy, the gospel, the Mass, the priesthood, Mary, and the Christian life, not only to keep the unwary from embracing these ideas, but also to hasten their demise." (p. 152; emphasis his)

In this, Packer has accurately written. Tragically today, this "vision" is dying, even in the Community of Adventism. Then Packer adds this insightful comment because of the resurgence of Romanism - "To any who see the vision of Rome

vanishing as expressing God's goal, the current call is for redoubled efforts in rebuttal of Rome's teaching and anything less appears as crass and perhaps treasonable folly." (p. 153)

As for "the Protestant heritage," Packer defines it as "a body of learned polemic against specific Roman Catholic tenets as expressed in the deliverances of the Council of Trent, the catechism of Pius V, the two Vatican Councils, the papal promulgations of Mary's Immaculate Conception (1854) and her Assumption (1950), and most recently in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) Since Rome sees conciliar statements and papal definitions ex cathedra as infallible and irreformable, **nothing changes here**, and most of the polemical arguments go back in substance to the sixteenth century." (ibid.; first emphasis his; second supplied)

At the core of the problem is that in all of these expressed Roman Catholic beliefs is the denial of the gospel. Packer lists three ways in which the gospel is denied:

1) "The doctrines of transubstantiation and the Mass-sacrifice in which, according to the Council of Trent, 'the same Christ' is sacrificed 'in an unbloody manner, who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross.'"

2) "Rome's Mariology, Mariolatry, and regular invocations of other saints" obscures "the loving availability of Jesus" and discourages "people from directly approaching 'the throne of grace.'"

3) "The Tridentine exposition of justification as a salvation through the efficacy of the ongoing sacramental system to produce what would once have been called meritorious righteousness. This obscures "the Biblical meaning of justification... of the believing sinner on the basis not of our own righteousness (we have none), but Christ's."

Packer at this point quotes Michael Horton's succinct statement taken from his Essay - "What Still Keeps Us Apart" - in Roman Catholicism (p. 257) Horton declared that the Tridentine (Council of Trent) equation of justification with sanctification "rejects Paul's whole point in Romans 4:1-5, that justification comes only to those who (a) are wicked and (b) stop working for it."

At this point, it needs to be emphasized that the community of Adventism is not exempt from this issue. One has only to recall the front cover of a recent publication of a certain independent ministry to know that the issue of justification and its relationship to sanctification is very much

alive. Tragically, as the regular Church drifts toward Rome in association, many of the independent ministries have already drifted there theologically denying the Protestant heritage. Further it needs to be remembered that the Message of 1888 in its emphasis on righteousness by faith was specifically a call to free "the everlasting gospel" from any and all traces of the Tridentine theology.

Since one of the specific criticisms of the E&CT Accord, to which Packer replied, involved an affirmation on this key doctrine, we need to discuss this point as completely as possible within the limitations imposed by space availability in this issue. The Accord read - "We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ." It was this affirmation along with its corollary - "All who accept Christ as Lord and Saviour are brothers and sisters in Christ. Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ" - which ignited the firestorms which have swept through evangelical circles. Packer's response to the criticism of the justification statement was "that, as it stands, [it] is no less compatible with the Tridentine doctrine of justification than it is with the Reformational view." (p. 155)

The question is, do we take this compromised affirmation as the real truth, or do we veer toward the Tridentine position as many of the "independents" have done; or do we accept the Pauline position as reflected in the Reformation credo - "by faith alone" - and as incorporated into the 1888 Message brought by Jones and Waggoner, who were designated as "the messengers of God's righteousness"? (See TM, p. 96)

Other points of Dr. Packer's defense as to why he signed the E&CT Accord, and their implications must be discussed also.

(To Be Continued)

PAUL'S POSITION

The Apostle Paul was unequivocal in regard to what he understood the gospel to be. "It is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16) It concerns "Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:3-4) The salvation resultant from His incarnation, death and resurrection "is the gift of God, not of works, lest

any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9) The victory realized by the sinner is given by God "through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 15:57) Thus man's restored relationship to God is by and through Christ alone. It is ours to accept.

Further, Paul made it painfully clear that to teach any other gospel, even if done by an angel, was to "be accursed." Note carefully what he wrote:

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

This means simply and plainly that Romanism and its Tridentine gospel, and those in the community of Adventism who veer toward this Council of Trent teaching are "accursed." Now it is true that the Council of Trent also pronounces a curse. It reads:

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

Why could Paul be so emphatic? Listen to his words - "But I **certify** you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11-12)

Now I am sure that if Paul were to be living today, - he would say the same words - there would be those who would sneeringly remark - "O, he has the Elijah syndrome" - as inferred from the words of Elijah, "I, even I only, am left." (I Kings 19:10) This attitude is going to be eternally costly to those who continue to hold to this concept. God has but **one** "everlasting Gospel" message for the final generation. (Rev. 14:6) This gospel does not vary from "the revelation of Jesus Christ" as given to Paul. Further, the "many voices" sounding in the community of Adventism today are a snare to the sincere people of God. God as "One" has only one "present truth" for any given generation. By this truth "the many voices" can be differentiated. While a present truth may be an adjunct truth, it will be presented in the setting of the gospel revealed to Paul.

We might press this point of the fallacy and de-

ception of what is called the "Elijah Syndrome" a bit further. Jesus Christ declared unequivocally - "I am the way...: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." (John 14:6) His disciples perceived the same truth. Peter told the Jewish leadership - "Neither is there salvation in any other: there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts. 4:12) Jesus is the truth, and even as there are no multiple "Christs;" neither are there differing "truths." To think otherwise is to be self-deceived.

Why was the Reformation message centered in the concept - "by grace alone, through faith alone" - a concept clearly inferred by Paul? He wrote - "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without (Gr. koris, "distinct from") the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:28) To answer this question, we need to start with man as sin modified him.

As created, Adam reflected the Divine likeness. (Gen. 1:27). His son, Seth, reflected "his own likeness, after his image." (Gen. 5:3) The degeneration was so rapid and intense that by the days of Noah, "every imagination of the heart was only evil continually." (6:5) Noah "found grace" (6:8) - he received a warning to give to the world, and a blueprint for deliverance. He carried out the directions. (6:22) Yet the record notes his heart was still corrupt, subject to indulgence. (9:21) The summary picture in Hebrews reveals that because of "faith" in God's word, and acting upon it - Noah became "an heir" - not a possessor - "of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. 11:7)

We need to distinguish between two realities - the reality of what God requires, and the reality of man's inability to so attain. God has not altered; He requires now just what He required in Eden - perfect obedience. The Old Testament is replete with the second reality - man's inability. Job asked - "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" His answer - "not one." (14:4) Isaiah cried out - "We are all as an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (64:6)

We need to pause and grasp what this picture from the Old Testament means. First, "our righteousnesses" - those things we do that are good. A good "moral" life can be attained. Man can carry out the directions of God, even as did Noah in building the ark, and as Moses in the construction of the sanctuary. Yet each must admit with David - "Our goodness extendeth not to Thee." (Ps. 16:2) It is a holy God with Whom

we have to do. To a clear perception of God's holiness, there is but one human response - "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5) The gulf between the holiness of God, and the "righteousnesses" of man must be bridged. "Filthy rags" are not the vestments of heaven!

It is from this take-off point that Paul outlines the "gospel" he received "by revelation of Jesus Christ." He quotes from the Old Testament - "There is none righteous, no not one." (Rom. 3:10) "Therefore, by the deeds of the law ("our righteousnesses") there shall no flesh be justified in [God's] sight." (3:20) This leaves **only one** solution - "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (3:24) By grace alone, through Jesus alone, - "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" - can man hope to again fellowship with an holy God.

But someone asks, isn't sanctification connected with our redemption? Most assuredly! "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus 2:11-12) Does this mean then that the "works" that had no merit in justification are now given a high priority rating in sanctification? Paul asked - "O foolish Galatians ("independents" - "historic Adventists") who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? ... This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1-3)

Since sanctification is the work of a lifetime, let us consider what this means if sanctification is perceived as having redeeming merit. For example, say you have ten years from the time you were "justified freely" until death over takes you. Another person has twenty years. Does this mean that into your ten years, you must concentrate the perfection required for heaven while another will be given twenty years to obtain the same? Sanctification is not Protestant "penance" even though there are many who seek to so make it.

Jesus illustrated the place of sanctification by a parable. A servant coming from the field does not first feed himself, and then wait on the needs of the master of the house. No, he first prepares and serves the meal for the master, not even expecting a thank you "because he did

the things that were commanded him." Note carefully the conclusion Jesus draws - "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:7-10) Where then is there merit in sanctification? It returns to the simple fact - "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **not of works**, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" - which was our duty to do anyway! (Eph. 2:8-10)

Why are we so loath to accept the simple Reformation formula - by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone? I suspect that this is due in part to the unwarranted conclusion drawn by Evangelicals. Because Christ died once for all, then by accepting this once for all sacrifice supposedly brings to me once for all salvation. It seems to be forgotten that though Christ did die once for all, I must die daily (I Cor. 15:31) Jesus also emphasized this factor - "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) The provision is there; the Word of God stands behind it; but daily I must renew my consecration to that provision.

In the final essay of the book, E&CT, Neuhaus discusses what he calls "The Catholic Difference." (We shall discuss this in due course) When God committed to the trust of Adventism the "everlasting gospel," He gave "the Adventist difference." That difference lies in the theology of the sanctuary, and the final atonement. In the type, the High Priest **alone** achieved that atonement, and it was that atonement through the mingled blood of the Lord's goat and the bullock which removed the uncleanness of the children of Israel so that they might "be clean of all [their] sins before the Lord." (Lev. 16:18-19, 30)

Since the dictum to the Old Testament question - "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" - remains - "**not one**," does not honesty require that we reject in toto the Tridentine teaching of Romanism? The Day of Atonement required only two things - 1) soul affliction; and 2) Cessation from our works. (Lev. 23:29-30) This is the same basic criteria of justification, recognition of 1) our undoneness; and 2) the reality of our inability to meet the law's demands.

The problem returns to a single point -

Laodiceanism - a deception that one needs nothing. Strip the "blubber" of Laodicean egotism from many of the voices sounding in Adventism today, and they would be reduced to a pipsqueak. Tragically, there is being pawed off as "historic Adventism" the Tridentine (Council of Trent) doctrine of justification by faith.

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LET'S TALK IT OVER

Everything that could possibly be conceived by Satan to thwart the Son of man from His objective of providing a redemption for fallen man was done. He dogged His footsteps from Bethlehem to Calvary but prevailed not. When in triumphant faith, Jesus cried from the cross - "It is finished" - heaven responded - "Now is come salvation!" (Rev. 12:10)

Having been unsuccessful in defeating "the redemption in Christ Jesus," Satan turned his attention to mitigating its application in the lives of those who would hear the gospel as well as muting its force by those who would proclaim it. The history of the book of Acts is the story of that conflict.

The conflict begins in Jerusalem itself. The very ecclesiastical body which condemned Christ to death was confronted with the fact that there was salvation in none other Name, but in Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12) The apostles' doctrine was simple. God exalted Jesus to be "a Prince and a Saviour... to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." (5:31)

Soon persecution breaks forth and the Christians were scattered from Jerusalem (8:1). Paul is converted and spends time in Arabia being taught the gospel by direct revelation. (See Gal. 1:15-18) However, developments begin to appear among the Christians who regroup in Jerusalem. The Lord sought to enlarge the vision of the Church from the narrow confines of Judaism to the fact that Jesus is the Saviour for all mankind. Peter was sent to Cornelius. There he proclaimed the same doctrine - that through the name of Jesus "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts. 10:43)

Returning to Jerusalem, Peter is confronted with a new force which had entered the church - "they that were of the circumcision contended with him." (11:2) Peter gives a full report, and for the moment this "party" held its peace.

(11:18) When the issue again surfaces following the first missionary tour of Paul and Barnabas, Peter was no longer in the "chair." James presided, and the "party" which challenged Peter was very vocal. (15:5-6) What the devil could not accomplish in his contest with Jesus, he now seeks to bring about through the adulteration of the gospel itself.

James renders a decision. (15:19-21) Answers to basic questions raised in the contention were not spelled out. The issues reached the "mission" field where Paul had labored. Contention again arose, and it was under these circumstances that Paul sends off his fiery Epistle to the Galatians. He pinpointed the source of the problem. Drawing from an experience from the past, he notes that the problem began when "certain came from James." (Gal. 2:12)

The final picture in Acts, of the Church in Jerusalem, needs to be carefully scrutinized. Paul returns and gives a report of his missionary outreach. He cannot point to "thousands of Jews" which believe, but to home churches composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Not so James; he notes the "thousands" which believe in Jerusalem, and "they are all zealous of the law." (Acts 21:19-20) What is interesting to observe is that when "thousands" believed at the beginning of the book of Acts (4:4; 5:14), persecution broke out. (8:1) Jerusalem was being filled with the Apostles doctrine concerning Jesus. (5:28). Now the "thousands" are zealous for the law, and no persecution ensued. They worshiped in the temple, and performed various rites and ceremonies. In fact, James in his Epistle speaks of conduct for the "Christian" in his synagogue. (James 2:2 margin) Paul took the converts out of the synagogues. (Acts. 18:7; 19:8-9)

The solution suggested by James and the elders for Paul to be accepted led to Paul's imprisonment. Persecution did break out against Paul, but not against James. A secret plot followed to assassinate Paul. How many knew about it? Did James? Who warned Paul? (Acts 23:16) All the details are not given, but we know that neither James, nor the elders, whose counsel Paul had followed, visited him in prison.

This illuminating paragraph is found in Sketches from the Life of Paul:

"When Peter had been made a prisoner and condemned to death, the brethren had offered earnest prayer to God day and night for his deliverance. But no such interest was manifested in behalf of him who was an apostate from Moses,

a teacher of dangerous doctrines." (p. 226)

And what was Paul teaching? "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9) Thus at the very beginning of the apostolic age is to be found the seeds of the conflict between the pure gospel and the Roman Tridentine teaching.

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