

"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)

THE YEAR 1950

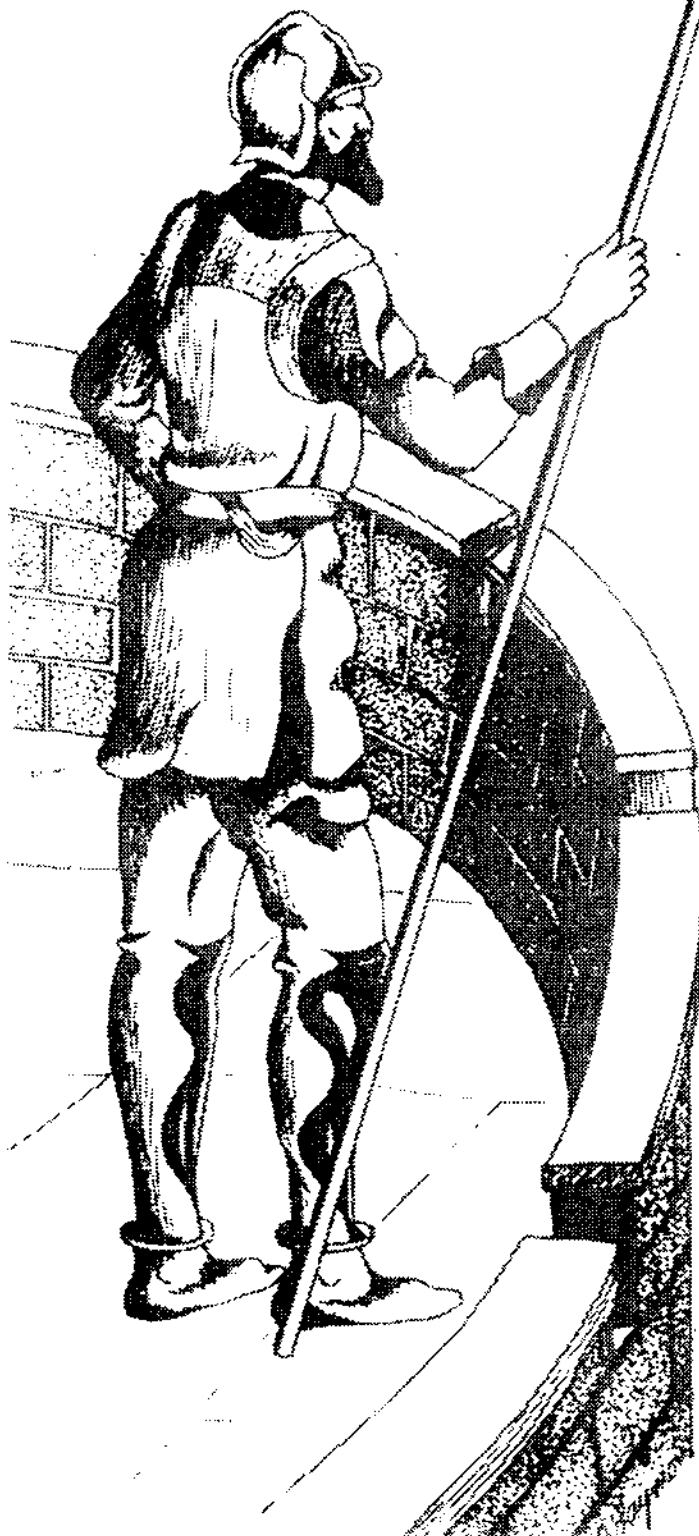
THE FOCAL POINT OF EVENTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

Editor's Preface

In the August issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?" we covered some of the same ground which will be covered in this issue. That was because in the final historical coverage in Knight's book, *A Search for Identity*, he reviewed the tension in Adventism since 1950. In this study, we give the basis as to why the date 1950 has significance. It is, as it were, a climax date in the long standing conflict between truth and error in the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

We sometimes fail to realize before there was a Seventh-day Adventist, even before the name was considered, basic truth was committed in trust to a small remnant who survived the great disappointment in 1844. This truth was not a pillar of the faith, but a part of the foundation upon which the pillars were to rest. It is the foundation which no man can lay, save that which is already laid in Jesus Christ - the full revelation of the gospel of God. This the enemy of God hates. It forever settled his fate, and established "the kingdom of God" and demonstrated the "power of His Christ."

In the time frame of 1950, a prophecy of Jesus was established by a series of events which should be as important to the people of God in earth's final hour as was the first part of the same prophecy to His followers in AD 66. With 20/20 vision we can see and proclaim with eagerness that which has been fulfilled, as well as that which will be fulfilled in the future, but when it is fulfilled prophecy which impacts upon us in the "now" time, we refuse to make the decision which its fulfillment demands. The Israel of Christ's day made the same mistake. They rejected the evidence of fulfilled prophecy before their eyes. They rejected the Messiah!



The Year 1950

The Focal Point of Events of the 20th Century in the Great Controversy

In the study of Bible prophecy, one finds prophecies which are either fulfilled at the end of a time sequence, or by events. For example, in the book of Daniel, the prophet wrote that he heard "holy ones" in heaven conversing, the question asked, and the answer given for him to write down: - "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (8:14). This is a "time" prophecy. Jesus in his eschatological discourse stated - "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken" (Mark. 13:24-25). This is a prophecy of events to occur. However, from those prophesied events, when they did occur, we have dates. The Dark Day was May 19, 1780; and the Falling of the Stars occurred on November 13, 1833.

A careful study of the prophetic word brings the year 1950 into focus. Around that year, and in that year, events of deep significance took place, events which not only "cast their shadows before," but also an event which prophecy had indicated would take place with no references to time.

In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream in which "four great beasts came up from the sea" (7:3) one following the other. Finally a little horn arose in the head of the fourth beast, and was never separate therefrom (v. 8). He continued to observe that after the "reign" of this horn for a specified period, "a time, and times, and the dividing of time" (vs. 25-26), "the judgment was set and the books were opened" (vs. 9-10). Then the prophet is startled by "the great words which the horn spake" (v. 11). It is true that the "little horn" spoke words against the most High during his reign for "a time and times, and the dividing of time" (538-1798); but the word, "great" is supplied in verse 25. The *great* words follow "the hour of His judgment" in 1844.

There have been three dogmas promulgated by the "little horn" since 1844:

- 1) The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception - 1854
- 2) The Dogma of Papal Infallibility - 1870
- 3) The Dogma of the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven - 1950.

The last of these "great words" which impacts 1950 should provoke serious study and comprehension as we parallel the great controversy between Christ and Satan. They reach back to the beginnings of the Second Advent Movement and to the very first dogma in 1854. Relative to the "Marian" Dogmas, the chain of events has been listed in *The Thunder of Justice*:

The current Marian times had their beginnings in 1830 when our Blessed Mother appeared to Catherine Labouré in the convent at Rue de Bac, in Paris, France, as the Mediatrix of all Graces, and gave the Miraculous Medal to the world. One side of this medal had an image of two hearts: the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. (p. 7).

Sixteen years later, Mary supposedly appeared to young children in the French Alps telling them about things which upset her Son. The Roman Church approved this revelation in 1851, and in 1854 Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Four years later another apparition of Mary confirmed this Dogma. The accounting reads:

In 1858, Our Blessed Mother appeared to a peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France, announcing herself as the Immaculate Conception - confirming the dogma proclaimed by Pius IX (in 1854). Bernadette had never heard the term until told by Our Blessed Mother. (*ibid.*)

Another series of events parallel these dates:

- 1) "The public labors of Mr. Miller, according to the best evidence to be obtained, date from the autumn of 1831" (*Memoirs of William Miller*, p. 97)

Though faulty in certain Biblical exegesis, the Second Advent Movement led by Miller in the States directed attention to the prophecy of Daniel 8:14; the study of the sanctuary types; and consideration of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14. After the passing of time in 1844, there came from the shattered and disappointed believers, a small "remnant" who would later become known as Seventh-day Adventists. However, prior to the adoption of a name, God committed in trust to this remnant the doctrine of the Incarnation in direct contradistinction to the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

2) In 1858, the first volume of *Spiritual Gifts* was published, which discusses the Great Controversy "between Christ and His angels, and Satan and his angels."

The very first paragraph sets forth the issue which ignited the rebellion which had been seething in the heart of Lucifer - the design of God for and in the creation of man. The key sentences read:

And I saw that when God said to His Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man. ... He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to God, and receive the highest honors. Until this time all heaven was in order, harmony and perfect subjection to the government of God. (p. 17). (See also Isa. 14:12-13)

In passing, it might be well to note that had this concept been understood, the formulation of the doctrine of the "investigative judgement" as an explanation for 1844 would have been modified to conform to the vision given Daniel in chapter 7.

In the third chapter on "The Plan of Salvation" is to be found two direct statements indicating the nature that Christ would assume in the Incarnation. They read:

Jesus told (the angels) that they should have a part to act, to be with Him, and at different times to strengthen Him. That He should take man's fallen nature, and His strength would not be equal with theirs. (p. 25).

Satan again rejoiced with his angels that he could by causing man's fall, pull down the Son of God from His exalted position. He told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man's nature, he could overpower Him, and thus hinder the accomplishment of the plan of salvation. (p. 27).

This position, that Christ took upon Himself man's fallen nature, was consistently held for the next seventy years. Although not singled out in the listing of the "pillars" of the faith (Ms. 13, 1889), documentation has shown that this concept was a part of the very fiber of Adventist teaching. (See the research by Dr. Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, which surveys one hundred years of Seventh-day Adventist Christology from 1852 onward, or *An Interpretative History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, by the Editor).

With the presentation of Righteousness by Faith at the

1888 General Conference session and the sessions following, the doctrine of the Incarnation received special emphasis by both A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner as a part of that message. Although there are certain current church historians, such as George R. Knight, who would like to mitigate this fact, the documentation is available to substantiate what these "messengers" actually taught. It is true that at the beginning of the 20th Century an aberrant movement, known as the Holy Flesh Movement, challenged the concepts as set forth by A. T. Jones then serving as editor of the *Review & Herald*. (See, R. S. Donnell, *What I Taught in Indiana*, p. 15) However, at the time of its demise in 1901, E. J. Waggoner placed in bold contrast the position held by the Church with the Dogma of Rome. In the evening meeting on April 16 at the General Conference Session, he stated:

The doctrine of the immaculate conception is that Mary, the mother of Jesus was born sinless. Why? - Ostensibly to magnify Jesus; really the work of the devil to put a wide gulf between Jesus the Saviour of men, and the men who He came to save, so that one could not pass over to the other. That is all.

We need to settle, every one of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not. There are a great many that have got the marks yet, but I am persuaded of this, that every soul who is here tonight desires to know the way of truth and righteousness, and there is no one here who is unconsciously clinging to the dogmas of the papacy, who does not desire to be freed from them.

Do you not see that the idea that the flesh of Jesus was not like ours (because we know ours is sinful) necessarily involves the idea of the immaculate conception of Mary. Mind you, in Him was no sin, but the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, the marvel of the ages, the wonder of the angels, that thing which even now they desire to understand, and which they can form no just idea of, only as they are taught it by the church, is the perfect manifestation of the life of God in its spotless purity in the midst of sinful flesh. O that is a marvel, is it not? (GC Bulletin, p. 404)

In 1949 a revised edition of the standard Adventist publication, *Bible Readings for the Home*, was released. The chapter, "A Sinless Life" was altered. For example, the 1915 edition read, "In Christ, (God) demonstrated that it is possible, by His grace and power, to resist temptation, overcome sin, and live a sinless life in sinful flesh." The revised edition read - "In Christ, (God) demonstrated that it is possible, by

His grace and power, to resist temptation, overcome sin, and live a sinless life in the flesh." One word only omitted, and the changed concept moved the Church toward Rome, and away from the sacred trust committed to it in its inception.

In 1950, the administration of the church changed hands. To the new General Conference Committee, two young missionaries to Africa, home on furlough, presented their concern that the Church had never fully repented of the rejection of the 1888 Message nor had fully accepted it, as brought by the two "messengers," Jones and Waggoner. These two 1950 "messengers" wrote out the basis for their findings in a manuscript known as *1888 Re-Examined*. From Heaven's viewpoint, this one event may be viewed as the prime event in 1950 in the purposes of God for His church. Wieland and Short took a firm stand in regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation reflecting the original position of the Church. (See *A Warning and Its Reception*, pp. 186-189) Based on the same basic premise as set forth in the manuscript, that there "is a True Christ and there is a false christ," D. K. Short published in 1991, a paperback, *Made Like...His Brethren*. Whatever reaction may be taken to some of the positions expressed by Short, he clearly set forth Jesus as accepting the fallen nature of man in the Incarnation.

In 1952, a "revised and greatly enlarged" *Answers to Objections*, by F. D. Nichol, editor of the official organ of the Church, *The Review & Herald*, with a foreword by the new General Conference President, W. H. Branson, was published. In it Nichol wrote:

Adventists believe that Christ, the "last Adam," possessed, on His human side, a nature like that of the "first man Adam," a nature free from any defiling taint of sin, but capable of responding to sin, and that that nature was handicapped by the debilitating effects of four thousand years of sin's inroads on man's body and nervous system and environment. (p. 393).

In 1952, Branson called a Bible Conference to refute the challenge made in 1950 by Wieland and Short. In this Bible Conference, the doctrine of the Incarnation was not discussed. A change had begun in the thinking of the Church's leadership which would alter the truth committed to it in contrast to the Roman dogma of the Immaculate Conception. They dared not bring it out into the open at the Bible Conference. However, the confusion was already visible to those who had eyes to see. W. H. Branson, who penned the

foreword to Nichol's enlarged and revised tome, also wrote a book, *The Drama of the Ages*, which was given wide circulation. In it he wrote, alluding to the significance of Jacob's ladder:

The Catholic doctrine of the "immaculate conception" is that Mary, the mother of our Lord, was preserved free from original sin. If this be true, then Jesus did not partake of man's fallen nature. This belief cuts off the lower rungs of the ladder, and leaves man without a Saviour who can be touched with the feeling of men's infirmities, and who can sympathize with them in their temptations and sufferings. By this teaching Jesus is made out to be altogether and wholly divine. Thus the ladder does not reach the earth where men are. (2nd ed., pp. 88-89)

It should be obvious that Nichol's book with its preface by Branson does not agree with what Branson wrote in his publication. Confusion was beginning to set in. The final denial of the Church's primitive faith came in the compromise made with the Evangelicals in 1955-1956. In the published answers to the questions asked by them, the Adventist conferees responded:

Although born in the flesh, (Christ) was nevertheless God, and was exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam. He was "without sin," not only in His outward conduct, but in His very nature. (Questions on Doctrine, p. 383; emphasis supplied).

The very word used, "exempt," appears to be borrowed from the explanation of the Roman dogma in Cardinal Gibbons' book, *Faith of Our Fathers*, where he wrote speaking of Mary, "She alone was exempt from the original taint" (p. 171, 88th rev. ed; emphasis supplied).

The force of the statement in *Questions on Doctrine* rests upon the fact that in the "Introduction" to the book is found this affirmation - "This volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (p. 9). Let it be noted that the Adventist leadership, as Branson, cited above, were as much aware of the meaning of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the 1950s as was Waggoner in 1901. The only difference was that in the 1950s, Adventist "voices" speaking for the Church, embraced the Dogma in principle.

Two other events occurred just prior to 1950 which would have a decisive impact on the decades follow-

ing. In 1948, the World Council of Churches began to function, and the State of Israel was reborn. It was this latter event which jolted the Church into a restudy of its prophetic understandings. In 1944, the Pacific Press published a paperback entitled, *Palestine in Prophecy*. It was used as a "book of the month" by the Voice of Prophecy radio program. The final paragraph of this book reads:

The apostle Paul speaks of Jerusalem as being "in bondage with her children." (Gal. 4:25) Had the Jews been faithful, Jerusalem would have been enlarged and beautified to become the center of the whole earth, beautiful for situation. But throughout the generations (from) the fall of that city in AD 70, Jerusalem has been "a burdensome stone" and "a cup of trembling unto all people" (Zechariah 12:2, 3); and it will be so till the end of time. Palestine and Jerusalem do not have a bright future in this present world, and those who are holding the hope of a national restoration for the Jews are following a theological will-o'-the-wisp.

Then in 1947, with rumblings in the ancient land of Israel itself that something was on foot, another paperback was published by the same Press which stated:

The God of heaven who overthrew the city and the nation and who because of their apostasy dispersed the inhabitants to the ends of the earth, forever settles the question of a complete return and restoration in old Canaan (of a nation of Israel) by asserting that it "cannot be." (*The Jews and Palestine*, p. 61)

A year later in 1948, our prophetic interpretation was blasted by reality. From "it cannot be" we were confronted with, "it is." From the Jewish viewpoint, it was a stupendous event. Menachem Begin, in his published memoirs, *The Revolt*, stated:

There is no doubt that the revival of Hebrew national independence in our generation has no precedence in human history. A nation had been driven out of its country and after the loss of its liberty and the utter failure of its uprisings. It had wandered about the face of the earth for nearly 2,000 years. Its wanderings had been drenched in blood. And now, in the 71st generation of its exile, this wandering people had returned to its Homeland. The global tour was ended. The circle of wanderings was closed and the nation had returned to the Motherland that bore it.

Let it be clearly understood that the restoration of Israel as a nation, though an unprecedented event in all human history as Begin asserts, was not a fulfillment of any Bible prophecy. Coming events were but casting their shadows before.

Reeling from the impact of a false prophetic interpretation, and confronted by the 1888 challenge by Wieland and Short, the Church replied by a Bible Conference in 1952. Near the close of the conference, W. H. Branson, president of the General Conference, spoke on "The Lord Our Righteousness." As he finalized his study, he said - "The message of righteousness by faith given in the 1888 Conference has been repeated here... And this great truth has been given here in this 1952 Bible Conference with far greater power than it was given in the 1888 Conference." (*Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. 2, p. 616). While an analysis of the presentations given would fail to substantiate Branson's conclusion that the one subject of righteousness by faith "swallowed up every other," it is indicative of the impact the manuscript by Wieland and Short had on the General Conference Committee.

The correction of the prophetic interpretation was assigned to A. S. Maxwell, editor of the *Signs of the Times*. In his presentation, he cited three areas of unfulfilled prophecy, one of which was, "Developments in Palestine." (*ibid.*, p. 230). He began by saying - "The recent dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel has focused the attention of mankind once more upon Palestine." Then he called attention to the prophecy of Jesus which he said "all should be watching with special care," and quoted Luke 21:24. Why? Maxwell noted that while the nation of Israel was restored, Jerusalem was still in alien hands, "the times of the Gentiles were not yet fulfilled." Then he commented that "Jerusalem is to remain trodden down by Gentiles till the probationary time of all Gentiles has run out. If this is correct, how much hinges upon the fate of this ancient city, and the power that occupies it" (p. 231). He failed to distinguish between "Gentiles" as individuals, and "Gentiles" as nations which the linguistics of the text indicate.

In taking the position he took, Maxwell returned to the Church's previous understanding of Luke 21:24, the exposition first given by Edson White in his widely circulated book, *The Coming King*, published in both America and Australia. The first American edition in 1898 read:

We also read that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of

the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. Jerusalem has never again come into possession of the Jews, and will not until "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This will be when the work of the gospel is finished. (p. 98)

Three years later in a letter to Dr. Harvey Kellogg, Ellen White commented, - "In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem; with it He connected the scenes which were to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Letter 20, 1901).

When this prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled in its first phase in 1967, Jerusalem recaptured by Israel, that year, the General Conference made its final rejection of the conclusions drawn by Wieland and Short in *1888 Re-Examined*. Commenting on this final meeting, Wieland wrote to Short:

To sum it all up, as I see the meeting (June 27-29, 1967) in retrospect: the 1951 report said the MS was unworthy of serious consideration because it was "critical;" the 1958 report said it was unworthy of such consideration because it used EGW statements out of context; the 1967 hearing concludes it is likewise unworthy because its fruitage is evil. When we are not able to say anything effective to clarify misunderstandings, I do not think that the last charge is really fair; but I believe the time has come to "let go and let God," and to keep still. The Lord Jesus gave everybody, good and bad, an excellent example - as sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Whether I am right or wrong, I believe I must from hereon be "dumb." ("Buff Section" A Warning and Its Reception, Fnd. Ed., Letter to D. K. Short, p. 8)

Also in 1967, the Central Committee of the WCC placed an Adventist theologian on its Faith and Order Commission with the consent and approval of the General Conference.

Thirteen years later, in 1980, Israel completed a second phase of its control of ancient Jerusalem. By the action of the Knesset, old Jerusalem was combined with its modern counterpart making one city the "complete and united" capital of Israel. Jesus' prophecy reached its final fulfillment.

The year 1980 also marked the adoption of a new Statement of Fundamental Beliefs in which the original teaching of the Church on the Incarnation was muted to the single observation - "He became also truly man,

Jesus the Christ" (#4). In an expanded explanation of what the voted beliefs mean, the book, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe...*, adopted what is called "the orthodox" position (p. 57, #13), and quotes this position of the Anglican clergyman, Melvill, as a summary of the Adventist belief on the Incarnation. Melvill had written:

Christ's humanity was not the Adamic humanity, that is, the humanity of Adam before the fall; nor fallen humanity, that is, in every respect the humanity of Adam after the fall. It was not the Adamic, because it had the innocent infirmities of the fallen. It was not fallen, because it never descended into moral impurity. It was, therefore, most literally our humanity, but without sin. (p. 47).

This position varies little, if any, from the position stated by Nichol in his book written in 1952 (See p.4 above). The one voice which God raised up to proclaimed the "everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6) was derailed, and that by the official "voice" the Church in session. The "gospel of God ... concerning His Son Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:1,3), was no longer affirmed by the Church, regardless of how many individual members might still so believe. The prophecy of Jesus concerned corporate bodies. Its final fulfillment was reached in 1980.

Now we return to the key event by which prophecy marked the year 1950 - the Dogma of the Bodily Assumption of Mary into Heaven. It does not mean that Mary ascended into Heaven in 1950, that had been taught and believed by the Roman Church from prior times. The teaching was validated in 1950 by the infallible power bestowed by the Roman Church on the Pope when speaking *ex cathedra*. This in turn gave official credence to the apparitions of Mary.

It is reported that Leo XIII (1878-1903) had a vision in which he was informed "that Satan would be allowed one hundred years" to vent his wrath, and that "Satan chose for his one hundred years the Twentieth Century" (*The Thunder of Justice*, pp. 4-5). To counteract this supposed working of Satan, the Church looked upon the Twentieth Century as "the Age of Mary." The writings of Saint Louis de Monfort (1673-1716) are cited as indicating that just as Mary preceded the first coming of Jesus so "the Reign of the Blessed Virgin would precede a Reign of the Lord Jesus." The authors of *The Thunder of Justice* state:

Never before in history have we experienced the number

of apparitions and supernatural phenomena as we have experienced in this century, particularly the latter half. On December 8, 1990, Mary stated to Father Gobbi: "I was driven by the Most Holy Trinity to become the Mother of the Second Advent, and thus my motherly task of preparing the Church and all humanity to receive Jesus, who is returning to you in glory." (p. 20)

Herein is the great deception, the coming of Satan as Christ in "the last remnant of time." All who are not kept by "the power of God through faith in His word will be swept into the ranks of this delusion."

The authors of *The Thunder of Justice* have chronicled various apparitions of Mary since 1531. For the first four hundred plus years till 1950, nineteen occurred. In the next three decades from 1950 to 1980; there were twenty two. And since 1980, to the time of the writing of the book in the early 1990s, thirty six.

This data and the stated objectives behind the Marian apparitions should tell us something. The world is in for an overwhelming surprise. But not only the world but many of those professing to believe the truth for this hour are not "home free" from this great deception.

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (LS, p. 196). The issue transcends a denominational designation. Before there was a Seventh-day Adventist, or the name even thought of, God made provision that the truth relative to the Incarnation be set forth in contradistinction to the dogma that Rome proclaimed. The issue is the gospel of God "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which 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). It is that victory which proclaims the "power of His Christ" (Rev. 12:10).

In the flesh, in the nature of fallen Adam, Jesus lived a life that no other son of Adam had ever lived, or can live. He did no sin. It is by faith in this righteousness alone, that we can have the hope of victory. It is these two basic elements of the "good news" of God that has come down through our church history, and at each point of the way has been contested by the enemy - 1888, 1901, 1950, 1967. But with this final date, God connected a prophecy of Jesus Himself which was to serve for His professed people as a

warning signal, even as the surrounding of Jerusalem in AD 66, by alien armies, served as a warning signal to His people then. There was a brief interlude in time till AD 70, and there has been an interlude in time since 1967 to 1980, when the rejection of the original trust was crystalized in an action by the Church in session. And now as we have entered the 21st Century, the Church has again turned its back on "the gospel of God" through the action of its leaders.

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"What is justification by faith? -- It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day long, then by beholding they are becoming changed into the same image.

"What is regeneration? -- It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless."

Special Testimonies for Ministers, #9, p. 62

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