



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

THE ROAD FORKS THRICE

At Every Crisis There Are Three Options

This is a borrowed title. The one from whom it has been borrowed will recognize it. While it was used involving a different subject, than it is being used in this Thought Paper, its basic truth and challenge has too often been overlooked. Very often the "narrow" way lies between two "broad" ways, both of which lead to destruction. To find the "narrow" way at a time of crisis is very difficult, because it is so "narrow" and the gate so "strait."

The first major crisis which faced the Second Advent Movement came on the morning of October 23, 1844. Prior to the agreement on the date, October 22, 1844, as the date for the culmination of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, and the return of Jesus, William Miller had written of his conclusion in 1818 -

"Reckoning all these prophetic periods [Seven times, 2300 Days; 1335 Days] from the several dates assigned by the best chronologers for the events from which they should evidently be reckoned, they would all terminate, about A. D. 1843. I was thus brought, in 1818, at the close of my two years' study of the Scriptures,

to the solemn conclusion, that in about twenty-five years from that time all the affairs of our present state would be wound up." (Memoirs of William Miller, p. 76)

The time of the coming of Christ - "about the year 1843" - was considered too general by some who embraced Miller's views. So as the year, 1843, approached, Miller wrote out his 16 point view of the second coming of Christ. The final point read:

"I believe that the time can be shown by all who desire to understand and to be ready for His coming. And I am fully convinced that some time between March 21st, 1843, and March 21st, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come, . . ." (Ibid., p. 172)

When March 21, 1844, came and passed, the believers in the Second Advent experienced their first disappointment. Out of this disappointment rose "The Seventh Month Movement." While Miller himself had called attention to the significance of the seventh month in Jewish ritual law in an article for the Signs of the Times, May 17, 1843, he did not embrace the tenth day of the seventh month date for the return of Jesus until a few weeks prior to October 22, 1844. The failure of Christ to return on that date produced the Great Disappointment.

Before the disappointed believers the road forked thrice. They could denounce their faith in the prophecies, and declare it all a deception. This fork many took.

They could continue to set dates for the return of Christ. This fork others took. Or, they could honestly sit down and seek where the problem lay, and where the mistake had been made. This was the "narrow" way - a few found it!

William Miller's first response to the Great Disappointment came on November 10, 1844, in a letter to Joshua Himes. In it he wrote:

"Even to this day, my opposers have not been able to show where I have departed from any rule laid down by our standard writers of the Protestant faith. I have only interpreted Scripture in accordance with their rules, as I honestly believed. And not one honest man, who understands this question, will deny this assertion of mine." (Life of Miller, p. 301)

Wherein then had an error been made?

Following the Great Disappointment, three men in the Canandaigua area of New York state spent the winter of 1844-45 in the study of the Scriptures in regard to the Sanctuary which they perceived to be "the heart of the typical system." The joint conclusions of Hiram Edson, Dr. Franklin B. Hahn, and O. R. L. Crosier were first published in articles by Crosier in the Day-Dawn, which he edited; and then, more fully in the Day-Star, issued in Cincinnati, Ohio. These studies were based on the type and antitype principles of Biblical interpretation. "The initial Day-Dawn presentation came into the hands of Joseph Bates, James White, and various other Eastern Adventists, and many readily accepted the position set forth." (SDA Encyclopedia, p. 365) From this developed over a period of time, the Seventh-day Adventist teaching on the Sanctuary and the Investigative Judgment.

On October 27, 1979, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was brought to another crisis. On that date, Dr. Desmond Ford at a meeting of the AAF on the campus of Pacific Union College presented a paper in which he took issue with basic theological assumptions held by the Church in regard to the Investigative Judgment. Here again the road forks thrice. We can throw out the whole of our sanctuary teaching, including 1844, and the final atonement of Christ in the Heavenly sanctuary. Many

have taken this fork. On the other hand, we can take the position that our teaching on the sanctuary cannot be justified based on the plain Word of God, and that since the Writings of Ellen G. White constitute a reinterpretation of Scripture, we can use her writings to sustain our basic concepts in regard to the Sanctuary and the Investigative Judgment. Some - in fact, many perhaps unwittingly - are taking this fork. Dr. Raymond F. Cottrell, former Associate Editor of the Review set for this position in Spectrum (Vol 10, #4, p. 20), and in a presentation at a meeting in Loma Linda, February, 1980. While many professing to adhere to "historic" Adventism eschew this conclusion, they in reality hold to this "fork of the road" because they base their position on the Writings only, being unable otherwise to answer Ford's arguments. This leaves only the "strait" gate and "narrow" way left for consideration.

Because Ellen G. White stated the Lord showed her "in a vision, . . . that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the sanctuary &c" (Word to the "Little Flock", p. 12), we have given to Crosier's article the status of infallibility, and have not bothered to check what Crosier wrote with the Bible. First it must be observed that the endorsement specifically stated that the true light concerned "the cleansing of the sanctuary" or the ministry in the second apartment. On this point Crosier called the second apartment ministry "The National Atonement" in contrast to the daily services which he noted as "the individual atonement." This means simply that the Day of Atonement involved judgment of a corporate nature. Little attention has been given to this facet of the judgment scene. But this is why in the book of Daniel, the judgment could be pictured as involving "the little horn" - a corporate body." (Dan. 7:26) Thus in the Third Angel's Message, the "loud voice" is heard declaring that if any man (singular) worships the "beast" - in other words, corporately involves himself with the beast - shall suffer the final plagues of God's wrath. (Rev. 14:9) Further, this gives light to the fact that "in the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed." (8T:247)

Secondly, Crosier wrote - speaking of the daily services on behalf of the individual - "Then, the victim being presented and slain, the priest that was anointed took some of the blood into the Holy, and with his finger sprinkled it before the veil of the Sanctuary and put some of it upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense." (Advent Review, September, 1850, p. 42) From the references cited, it would seem that Crosier and his colleagues assumed that what was done with the blood when the High Priest caused the Congregation to sin, and when they sinned as a corporate body was the same for the ruler and the common person. This simply was not true.

The Law of the Sin Offering for the common person was that the officiating priest ate part of the victim thus transferring the sin to himself. (See Lev. 6:24-26, and the violation noted in Lev. 10:16-17) Further "the priest that is anointed" did not minister the individual atonement where the ruler or the common person was involved. (Lev. 4:25, 30)

The blood of the sin offering was not taken at all times into the sanctuary. In fact most of the time it was not. A transaction - forgiveness - resulted from an atonement through the ministry of a priest, and took place as far as the individual was concerned at the Altar of Burnt Offering. (Lev. 4:31) This simple correction in our understanding of the sanctuary types would have saved us much agony which has resulted from the crisis we are now in. But crises can be therapeutic if we will but allow them to be so - and when we are willing to recognize that we have three alternatives, and not just two. The road forks thrice.

What does the correction of the Crosier mistake mean to me as an individual? When I see in the One who hung upon the Cross, my "Sin Offering" who partook of my fallen nature, and I accept Him, the promise is mine - "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (Greek, krisis = judgment); but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) I can face the judgment triumphantly, and expectantly. The assurance is mine that if I overcome - "by the blood of the Lamb," the word of my testimony,

and love not my life "unto death" (Rev. 12:11) - Jesus "will not blot out [my] name out of the book of life, but [He] will confess [my] name before [His] Father and before [my] angels." (Rev. 3:5)

What about the record of my deeds? What are they anyway? My sins - these are fit only to be cast into the depths of the sea, and to be remembered no more. (Jer. 31:34) My righteousnesses - they are but as filthy rags. (Isa. 64:6) Why do I need them, when Jesus will clothe me "in white raiment." The counsel given at the time of the Holy Flesh Movement is very apropos. Ellen G. White wrote - "We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved. The Lord shows, to the repenting, believing one, that Christ accepts the surrender of the soul, to be moulded and fashioned after His own likeness." (SM, bk ii, p. 33)

The issue becomes very simple. It is not the record of my deeds that should concern me in the Judgment, but my relationship to Jesus Christ which must first begin at the Altar of Burnt Offering - the Cross where they are forgiven. Once that is cared for, then in the Great Day of Atonement, I stand in a corporate relationship as a member of the Son's house. (Heb. 3:6) He carries me through. Even as the individual who brought his sin-offering in the typical service placed his whole weight upon the animal as he laid his hands in confession, so I place my whole and sole dependence upon Jesus, my great High Priest. I believe the Father - the One who sent Jesus - that the provision made is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25) What is the sanctuary all about anyway? It is the revelation of the way God has chosen to save sinners. The sinner comes daily to the Altar of Burnt Offering to find forgiveness; he afflicts his soul outside the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement while the High Priest accomplishes the cleansing.

The narrow way between choosing to jettison our sanctuary doctrine, and the slavish adherence to the fallible work of Crosier begins at the gate of faith - even faith in Jesus, our Substitute and High Priest. The road forks thrice!

As if one crisis in a generation wasn't enough, immediately following on the "heels" of the attack on our Sanctuary teaching, came the disclosures in regard to the Writings of Ellen G. White. This was spearheaded by a long-time minister of the Church, Elder Walter T. Rea.

Over this issue emotions run high, not that such charges as documented by Rea have not been made previously; but the disclosures reveal literary borrowing much more extensive than hitherto realized. Hidden and suppressed documents have now come to light which only serve to heighten the tension of the crisis. In discussing this issue, I want it clearly understood by the reader that I will merely set forth the evidence - documented - and then suggest what I believe the "narrow" road and "strait" gate to be.

First, the negative aspects of the crisis: (In listing these, I shall not use Rea's book - The White Lie - but rather material published in either church sponsored publications, or documentation released with the approval of the E. G. White Estate itself.)

1) More damaging and distressing than anything found in The White Lie was an article appearing in the Ministry (June, 1982, pp. 5-12). It was written by the associate editor, Warren H. Johns. There was reproduced a statement found in Ellen G. White's Diary #16 (Nov. 21, 1890), a statement obviously copied from F. W. Krumacher's book - Elijah the Tishbite - published in 1838. This statement appears in polished literary form in Ministry of Healing, p. 479 (1909). But as it appeared in the Diary, it was prefaced with "My guide said. . ." When I first read this article in the Ministry, I was on my way West to speak at a "retreat" on the subject of the Spirit of Prophecy. I thought in preparation I had covered all the "bases" in what was to be a two-hour presentation squarely facing up to the issues involved. But I was totally unprepared for the revelation this article contained. After reading it, I learned by experience what Daniel 4:19 meant, where it states - "Daniel. . . was astonished for one hour and his thoughts troubled him." The explanation given by Elder Johns were not answers. Needless to say, I did not mention this article

in the presentation at the "retreat."

2) The issue of the "shut door" will not go away. But what is most critical is the explanation which the Secretary gives as to the conclusion which Ellen G. White drew from the vision given her. He writes - "Ellen misinterpreted this [her first] vision." (One Hundred and One Questions, p. 58) This opens a Pandora box. Most of the Writings are not the record of the actual vision, but rather how Ellen G. White perceived the meaning of the vision to be.

3) Recently, I received from a "highly placed source" the following - "It may surprise you to know that the White Estate has never attempted to say which of Mrs White's writings are inspired and which are not." I was surprised! Why? This was not the conclusion that I drew from a class which I took at Andrews University during the school year of 1964-65 in Prophetic Guidance and taught by Dr. A. L. White. But since this is now the position of the Estate, it speaks volumes.

Now to the positive aspects of the Writings of Ellen G. White: 1) A number of her early visions were given in public gatherings and eye witness accounts of these manifestations of the Spirit indicate that while in vision she did not not breathe. (See J. N. Loughborough, The Prophetic Gift in the Gospel Church, p. 54) This accords with the experience of Daniel, while in vision. (Dan. 10:17) I found this to be one of the most convincing of evidences when presenting the subject of "The Gifts of the Spirit" in evangelism. However, the Syllabus prepared for the Prophetic Guidance Course (S-570) states - "Physical phenomena in connection with the visions is presented by some as a test. We hesitate to do so, for the Bible does not so specify it, and it may be counterfeited." (p. 10, Emphasis theirs) How such a physical manifestation as witnessed in the public visions of Ellen G. White could be counterfeited is difficult to perceive. J. N. Loughborough reports that in receiving the Dorchester Vision, Ellen G. White was "in vision all the afternoon until almost sunset, - over six hours, - the longest vision she has ever been known to have." (Loughborough, op. cit., p. 68) It was during this vision that a ten-pound Bible

was placed open upon her chest. When this was done, "she arose upon her feet, and walked into the middle of the room, with the Bible open upon her left hand, and lifted as high as she could reach, with her eyes steadily looking upward, and not upon the Bible. She continued for a long time to turn over the leaves with her other hand, and place her finger upon certain passages, and correctly utter their words with a solemn voice." (Ibid., p. 68) Why the Bible holding is emphasized and the "non-breathing" aspect down-played is difficult to understand.

2) In 1948, a revised edition of - The Witness of Science - written by George K. Abbott, M.D., F.A.C.S., was published. Chapter One began with this testimony: "Forty years of medical and surgical practice, with much time for research work, has left me with some settled conclusions regarding the reliability of scientific statements made in the messages [of Ellen G. White] on health and medical practice. Many of these statements were published at a time when they were contrary to ideas generally accepted among physicians and could not have been proved by the reports of any research then extant." (p. 11)

3) In 1954, I took a course at an Extension Division of the University of Virginia while doing evangelism in the Potomac Conference. In the Education class there was a discussion of motivation and certain methods used. I was able to loan the Instructor a copy of the book - Education. When he returned it to me, I remarked that it had been published in 1903. His reply was simply - "That person must have been a prophet."

It should be obvious there is a great gulf between the positive and negative aspects of the Writings of Ellen G. White. This is what makes it so difficult to find a solution. The "broadways" at the fork of the road also become painfully obvious. The total rejection of the manifestation of the prophetic gift through the ministry of Ellen G. White is one of the forks of the "broad" way. The other is to enter into a system of idolatry similar to the adulation bestowed by the Mormons on the writings of Joseph Smith and the Christian Scientists on the Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy.

This latter fork is not the position which Inspiration defined. Ellen G. White stated of her call in 1903 -

"From the year 1846 until the present time, I have received messages from the Lord, and have communicated them to His people. This is my work - to give to the people the light that God gives to me. I am commissioned to receive and communicate His messages. I am not to appear before the people as holding any other position than that of a messenger with a message." (Quoted in The Final Word, p. 10)

It must be remembered that she designated two others as "messengers" from the Lord to His people besides herself, prior to the time the above statement was written. Much has been made, and still is, of her comments in 1906 that her work involved much more than a prophet. She was not stating that her writings were to be considered as equal to, or superior to, the Bible, but rather the various lines of work in which she became involved were much more varied than could be perceived under the designation of the term, Prophet or Prophetess.

To take, therefore, the fork of the road which exalts her Writings either equal to, or above the Scriptures, is entering a broad way just as much as those who would totally reject all that she has written because of the plagiarism found as the basis of a number of the books. What then is the "narrow" way and the "strait" gate? The road forks thrice!

How did the early pioneers - those who saw her in vision; her husband who helped her edit what she wrote - view the "visions"? In The Review and Herald, published in Paris, Maine, April 21, 1851, James White wrote an editorial on "The Gifts in the Gospel Church." He used as Biblical references, Ephesians 4:11-14, and I Cor. 12:28. The article is too long to reproduce in its entirety, but several key paragraphs need to be considered:

"It is universally admitted that a portion of the gifts exist in the church at this day, such as 'the word of wisdom,' and 'the word of knowledge,' and no one denies that 'pastors' and 'teachers' were to be in the church until its perfection. Then if a portion of the gifts were to remain

in the church, why not all of them remain? Why should the professed church of Christ pick out from that catalogue of gifts, so freely bestowed by the Great Head of the church, those that suit them best, and trample the others in the dust? It is sometimes asserted, by those who oppose the operations of the Spirit of God, that the gifts were designated for the apostles alone: but if this is true, then the church of Christ has been destitute of 'the word of wisdom,' 'the word of knowledge,' and the gift of 'faith' for about 1800 years, and those who have professed to be 'teachers' and 'pastors' have assumed a calling which ceased to exist at the death of the apostles. It is therefore very evident that all the gifts run parallel with each other, none of them ending before the rest, and that they were to extend quite through the gospel age. ...

"The gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places. The Bible is an everlasting rock. It is our rule of faith and practice. In it the man of God is 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' If every member of the church of Christ was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, and searched the Holy Scriptures diligently and with much prayer for duty, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we think, they would be able to learn their whole duty in 'all good works.' Thus 'the man of God may be perfect.' But as the reverse exists, and ever has existed, God in much mercy has pitied the weakness of His people, and has set the gifts in the gospel church to correct our errors, and to lead us to His Living Word. Paul says that they are for the 'perfecting of the saints,' 'till we all come in the unity of the faith.' The extreme necessity of the church in its imperfect state is God's opportunity to manifest the gifts of the Spirit.

"Every Christian is therefore duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in the wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word

should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in 'all good works.' But if a portion of the church err from the truths of the Bible, and become weak, and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive and heal the erring, we should let Him work. Yea more, we should pray for Him to work and plead earnestly that He would work by the Spirit's power, and bring the scattered sheep to His fold. Praise the Lord, He will work. Amen."

With the writing of that "Amen," the whole question should have been closed then, and it should close it for us now. The "strait" gate and the "narrow" way is to take the Writings written on the basis of direct revelation as "messages" from the Lord "to revive and heal the erring;" but at no time are we at liberty to place the gift in the wrong place - in the place of the Bible, or equal to it, for the Bible alone is "the perfect rule of faith and practice."

This concept of the relationship between the Holy Bible and the Writings, our spiritual forefathers wrote into their first Statement of Beliefs. The statement read - "III. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of His will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice." In the article of belief on "Spiritual Gifts," these pioneers reiterated that "these gifts are not designated to supercede, or to take the place of the Bible." This was the position in all denominational Statements from 1872 through 1914.

Can we be honest with ourselves? Has it not been the emphasis of the "broad" road to the right, that has produced the counter reaction of the "broad" road to the left? But to accept the "strait" gate - even though we know what it is - is becoming more and more difficult, and few there be who are really willing to walk through it, down the "narrow" way.

There is one more area - a continuing crisis - which also has a road that forks thrice. It is the crisis of 1888 which

has not as yet been resolved. Some would hold that the messages given by Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner "caused untold harm to the Adventist Church" squarely in face of the fact that Ellen G. White declared these men to be "messengers of God's righteousness" giving "just what the people needed." (TM, pp. 96, 95) See WWN (XVII-6) - "Was Waggoner Wrong in 1888?"

The issue is simple - and I do mean simple - is a man saved by grace alone, or is he saved by his faith and works? We make it something hard because of our guilt complex over our sins, and our refusal to take by faith the release from that guilt so freely offered by God. Paul wrote - "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) Paul also has asked - "Do we then make void the law through faith?" To this he answers - "God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Rom. 3:31)

There are those who read this statement by Paul on how salvation is obtained, and who open their hearts to receive this blessed gift. But into their ear, the enemy whispers - "Are you sure that nothing you can do will merit the favor of God? Don't you think you ought to add a few of your own good works just to be sure? They are righteous acts, so it can not do any harm." Satan thus nudges a person through the wide gate of self satisfaction in human accomplishment.

However, if the person should resist this suggestion of the enemy and cling by faith to the gift of God, knowing that in his hand there is nothing he can bring to merit the law's demand, Satan has another suggestion to whisper: "You know you are saved; you have accepted the free grace of God, so you have perfect liberty to do what you wish, because has not God given His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways?" And if the person listens to the presumptive suggestion of Satan, he is nudged down the fork to the

left which likewise leads to destruction.

Well has it been observed - "We have found in our experience that if Satan cannot keep souls bound in the ice of indifference, he will try to push them into the fire of fanaticism," (5T:644) So whatever the issue, the road forks thrice.

The "broad" way usually has two gates to the "narrow" way's one. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24) The blind Laodicean cannot discern the narrow path, and he must rely on the sound he hears. It is not said that the Laodicean is deaf - only blind - and because of this, his problem is the discernment of voice. It is whose "voice" we hear - the voice of Jesus, standing, calling to come down the "narrow" way, or the babel of sound from the "broad" ways!

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LOOKING AHEAD

Plans are being laid for at least two adult Seminars in 1985. Certain changes in the physical plant of the campus are being made to accommodate the folk who will attend. We do not want a group so large that the instruction has to be given as lectures; but rather small enough so that the group can discuss any point at the time that it comes up during the Seminar.

The topic for the 1985 Seminars will be Romans (Chapters 1-8). Study preparation has already begun. As I have been studying carefully what Paul has written under the Holy Spirit's guidance, points that I have not perceived before are shining forth in soul satisfying light. I anticipate a great blessing for all who will attend.

The Seminars are scheduled for the third week in June (16-22) and the first week in August (4-10). We plan to limit the attendance at each Seminar to 20-25 adults perhaps smaller. So begin to plan now!

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"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 178, Lamar, AR 72846, USA. It is free upon request. The Canadian affiliate is - The Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Ontario, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, Ont. POH 2J0.