



*"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

TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

Open-Ended Theology Marks 1st Quarter SS Lessons for 1983

The subject of the Adult Sabbath School Lessons for the first quarter of 1983 is "Christ's All-Atoning Sacrifice." While throughout the lessons the subject of the Incarnation is referred to, the third lesson discusses in detail this primary truth. Part #1 of this third lesson is captioned - "The Second Adam." In this section it is stated - "Christ came in the same nature as Adam. . ." (p. 21) - without defining which nature, the pre-Fall nature, or the post-Fall nature. Part #2 discusses the text - "The Word was made flesh," (John 1:14) - and suggests there are three possible interpretations to the meaning of the "flesh" Christ took. However, only two are discussed in this section - the "after-the-Fall" position, and the "pre-Fall" viewpoint.

The question is asked - "Can the Bible be used to support the 'after-the-Fall' position on Christ's nature?" Then certain texts are cited - Isa. 53:12; Romans 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Hebrews 2:14-17. In the comment which follows, it is suggested that in addition to these texts, "support" can also be found in certain Ellen G. White statements - and these are cited, but not the strongest ones. The second question reads - "Can the Bible be used to support the 'pre-Fall' position on Christ's nature?"

Two of the same texts are cited as given for the first question, except Hebrews 2:14-17 is omitted, and a different verse in Isaiah 53 is used. It is stated in the comments which follow that those who wish to hold this view can also find support in the writings of Ellen G. White, but entirely different references are given than were used in the comments on the first question, - albeit, the strongest that can be found. The student is left to make his own choice as to the nature Christ took upon Himself in the Incarnation.

The very structure of the questions, with the comments, present a very serious problem. While the same Bible references are used for both questions with but two exceptions, thus suggesting a variance of interpretation; different references are cited from the writings of Ellen G. White, thus suggesting contradiction. With these lessons for the first quarter of 1983, the question of the Incarnation which came to the forefront due to the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956, again confronts the Church.

The picture is further complicated in the "Teaching Aids for the Adult Lessons." There it is suggested - "Teachers should not try to resolve this issue as they teach today's [The Incarnation] or any other lesson this quarter." (p. 40) The subject of the Incarnation is to remain open-ended as far as the design of the hierarchy is concerned. Previous to this suggestion, it is stated - "The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not spelled out a definitive stand in this matter. Neither the previous 22 statements of belief nor

the recent 27 Statements of Fundamental Belief voted at Dallas in April 1980 take up this matter." (Ibid.) These teaching aids were written by Dr. William G. Johnson, the new editor-in-chief of the Adventist Review. This factor must be considered before entering into a discussion of the lessons as found in the Adult Quarterly. These comments on the part of Dr. Johnson reveal either a lack of knowledge on the part of the Editor-in-Chief, or a willful cover-up to deceive the laity of the Church. Whichever the situation is, this is but another reason why he should not have been selected editor of the official organ of the Church, and this serves as a forewarning of the continued apostasy to which the readers of the Adventist Review will be subjected.

The Dallas Statement of Beliefs does leave the incarnation undefined in reference to the question under discussion. It reads: "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ [A questionable formulation in itself] . . . Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God." (Adventist Review, May 1, 1980, p. 23) In this statement, Jesus is declared to be "truly man," and "a human being." Adam was truly man and a human being both prior to and after the Fall, so the 1980 Statement reflects and open-ended theology on the Incarnation. But this is neo-Adventism, not historic Adventism.

The "previous 22 statements of belief" to which Johnson referred is the Statement of Beliefs first published in the 1931 Yearbook, and formally voted at the 1950 General Conference Session with only two sentences added to Statement #19. In this 1931 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, the subject of the Incarnation was formulated in these words - "Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence of the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on earth as a man, exemplified in His life as our example, the principles of righteousness. . ." While this statement does not use the language of "pre-Fall," or "after-the-Fall" terminology,

it does state that Jesus took "the nature of the human family." While not explicit, it is implicit that Jesus took the nature of a race that possess a fallen nature. This is a "bridge" statement between the historic Adventist Church's position on the Incarnation, and the neo-Adventist Church which emerged in the sixth and seventh decades of this Century. A comparison of thought between the Dallas Statement and the 1931 Formulation should stimulate some thinking. The 1931 Statement indicated that Jesus Christ "took upon Himself the nature of the human family," while the Dallas Statement declared "the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ." There is a difference between these two concepts.

While the neo-Adventist Church - as suggested by Johnson - has not spelled out a definitive statement on the Incarnation, the historic Seventh-day Adventist Church did. The 1889 Yearbook contained a section captioned - "Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists." (p. 147f) Principle II reads: "There is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father . . . that He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that He dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, lived our example. . ." It should be observed that this statement used words from John 1:14 - "dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" - and defines the "flesh" of this verse to be "the nature of the seed of Abraham."

Prefacing these "Principles" in the 1889 Yearbook, it was stated - "The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principal features of their religious faith, upon which there is, so far as we know, entire unanimity throughout the body." Historic Adventism did define its position on the Incarnation - Christ took upon Himself the fallen nature of Adam through the seed of Abraham - but neo-Adventism as expressed in the Dallas Statement allows you to take your choice, supposedly, between where we once stood, and the Evangelical concepts of Apostate Protestantism. This open-ended theology is reflected in the 1983 Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly. How can two walk together, lest they be agreed?

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH?

When one surveys the five texts used by the author of the Sabbath School Lessons for the first quarter of 1983, in the questions asked concerning the Incarnation (p. 22), he becomes a bit puzzled as to why Isaiah 53:12 is listed first. The 53rd Chapter of Isaiah is primarily a prophecy of Christ's sufferings on behalf of man when He would be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," and when His soul would be made "an offering for sin." (verses 7, 10) It is true a few concepts at the beginning of the Chapter could be understood as applying to the Incarnation - "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." (verse 2) However, when one looks carefully as the book Dr. Norman Gulley of Southern Adventist College has written to parallel these lessons he has authored, one immediately becomes aware of a new attack seeking to nullify the historic position of Adventism in regard to the nature Christ assumed in the Incarnation. While apparently open-ended - take your choice approach - the Helps are weighted toward the "pre-Fall" nature of Christ's humanity. In Christ Our Substitute, some parts of which are written in a conversational style with dialogue between two "voices," the reason becomes very clear as to why Isaiah 53:12 is listed first among the verses cited. Isaiah 53:12 is introduced with the objective of making key New Testament texts which teach that Christ took the "after-the-Fall" nature of man in the Incarnation, not teach this at all, but rather are referring really to the time He "was numbered with the transgressors" at Calvary, when upon Him was laid the iniquity of us all. Note the subtle dialogue Gulley has woven into his book:

"But the Bible says He was 'numbered with the transgressors' (Isa. 53:12),' the first voice persists. "He was made like unto his brothers in every way' (Heb. 2:17). In agreement with Isaiah 53:4, Matthew affirmed He 'took our infirmities' and carried our diseases (see chap. 8:17). Paul said it straight - '[God] hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin' (2 Cor 5:21). There you have it. What could be more plain? He did become one of us, taking our sinful flesh through Mary.

"Ah, but wait a minute,' the second voice

cautions. 'Don't pluck the passages out of context. What they say is true. He did become sin for us, was numbered with the transgressors. But when? At Bethlehem or when He became our sacrifice? The context of Christ becoming 'sin for us' in 2 Corinthians 5 is His death, not His birth (see verses 14ff.) Isaiah agrees. For He 'poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors' (Isa. 53:12).

"The questioner shakes his head. 'You haven't said anything about Christ being 'made like unto his brethren in every way' (Heb. 2:17). Surely it refers to His birth and not His death.'

"Again look at the context. He came to experience human suffering and temptation to (1) reconcile man's sins and (2) empathize with man's struggle (verses 17, 18). 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil' (verse 14).'" (pp. 35-36)

Turning to the second text used - Romans 8:3 - "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" - Gulley in his book has the one who protests the neo-Adventist viewpoint state: - "'Yes,' the protest continues, 'but isn't there still more to it than that? What about the Biblical texts 'made in the likeness of men' (Phil 2:7), 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (Rom. 8:3)?" To this Gulley retorts - "'Likeness' doesn't mean 'sameness.'" (p. 35)

It is at this point that Gulley gets all caught up in his own assumptions, and the fallaciousness of the whole position becomes apparent. By having the one protesting bring together Phil 2:7 and Romans 8:3, indicates that Gulley is well aware of the connection and meaning of the words in these two verses. The same Greek prepositional phrase - en homoiomati - is used in both references. The question in Phil 2:7 is simply - Did Jesus in taking the "likeness of men" become a real man, or was He only a phantom, appearing to be a man? In Lesson 5 - "Tempted As We Are" - Gulley emphatically declares - "Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human when He came to earth." (p. 34) [This is not true, but is Gulley's view]

Now if "made in the likeness of men" means Jesus was "fully human" to Gulley, then why does not "made in the likeness of sinful flesh" mean that He fully took upon Himself our fallen human nature? You cannot have "likeness" mean "fully" in one verse, and less that "fully" in another reference, when the same human author - Paul - uses the same word in both texts.

Romans 8:3 has more significance than merely the concept of "likeness of sinful flesh." The text states that Jesus condemned "sin in the flesh." If language has any meaning at all, it means simply that Jesus took a nature resultant from the Fall - a nature "degraded and defiled by sin," a nature in which "He could understand 'how strong are inclinations of the heart.' Uniting in Himself 'the offending nature of man' 'all the strength of passion of humanity' clamored for expression, but 'never once did He yield to temptation to do a single act which was not pure and elevating and enobling.' He condemned sin in the flesh." (In the Form of a Slave, p. 46) To teach that Christ only overcame in the "pre-Fall" nature of Adam is to rob God of His glory and deny the authority of "His Christ." (Rev. 12:10) Even as Christ was able to command demons to come out of men held as slaves of Satan, so with authority, He broke the hold of Satan on fallen human nature by repressing every desire to express and do His own will. "Not my will, but Thine be done," was the prayer of the conquering Christ.

We need to look only as how the word "flesh" is used in Romans to understand what liabilities Christ assumed in becoming man. At the very beginning of the Epistle, Paul stated that Jesus Christ "was made of the seed of David according to flesh." (Rom. 1:3) Thayer in his Lexicon notes that when "flesh" is used in contrast with "spirit," it "has an ethical sense and denotes mere human nature, the earthly nature apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God; accordingly it includes whatever in the soul is weak, low, debased, tending to ungodliness and vice." (Article, sarx) But in such a flesh - "degraded and defiled by sin" - Jesus maintained the purity of His character, for He is declared to be "the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." (Rom. 1:4)

This "flesh" is described further by Paul in Phillipians 2:7 as the "form of a slave" which He accepted at Bethlehem in place of the "form of God" which He shared in Eternity with God. Now Adam possessed no "slave-form" when he came forth from the hands of the Creator on the sixth day, but after the Fall, he became a slave to sin, and was unable to resist the slave nature resultant from sin. But the second Adam taking the liability of the first Adam resultant from the Fall, conquered - He exercised authority over all flesh. (John 17:2)

One final text used in the Sabbath School Lesson on the Incarnation is Hebrews 2:14-17 where it states that "forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He [Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same." The order in the Greek is "blood and flesh." Not only did Jesus carry the outward resemblance of man in His flesh, He also bore the inward nature of man - the blood. "It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man." (SP, II, p. 39)

PERSONAL NOTES

Elder Norman Gulley, the author of the Sabbath School Lessons for the first quarter of 1983, was my immediate predecessor as head of the Bible Department at Old Madison College. Between his service at Madison College, and his present position at Southern Adventist College as a member of the Religion Staff, he became Dr. Norman Gulley with a degree from the University of Edinburgh (Scotland). Those who still have some of his Syllabii from Madison College, such a Studies in the Sanctuary, Course #350, will find that what Gulley taught at Old Madison is not what is to be found in the Sabbath School Lessons.

One of the editors of these lessons of the first Quarter, 1983, Dr. Leo R. Van Dolson, in 1977, prepared the Adult Teaching Aids for the 2nd Quarter's Lessons on "Jesus the Model Man," authored by Dr. Herbert Douglass. He also co-authored with Douglass, the book for additional study with the title - Jesus - The Benchmark of Humanity. These 1977 Lessons created no small stir in Australia. It will be interesting to learn of their reaction to the 1983 lesson series, as they

are almost in complete contrast to the 1977 Lessons on the Incarnation. If Jesus were to ask the laity what they go to see - there could be but one answer - "A reed shaken in the wind." (Matt. 11:7) The "breed" of John the Baptist is an endangered species, if not altogether extinct due to the actions of the hierarchy, and the self-preservation instinct of the clergy.

The other editor of the Sabbath School Lessons for the first quarter of 1983 is Dr. Gordon Hyde, who has been placed as head of the Religion Department of Southern Adventist College to correct the inroads of Ford's theology among the Bible Faculty. Few actual changes have been made - these lessons appear to give one reason. They are expressing a theology on the atonement which lies half-way between where the Church once stood, and where Ford stands today. By this new theological umbrella, it is hoped to keep all factions happy, united, and the tithe still coming in to oil the hierarchical machine.

All of the change that is occurring recalls some correspondence following the conclave at Glacier View, and some conversations with Dr. Desmond Ford as noted in Ministry.

On August 15, 1980, Elder K. S. Parmenter, President of the Australian Division, wrote to Dr. Ford, and asked him if he would be willing to "hold in suspense [his] particular views which are at variance with the established 'Fundamental Beliefs'" as voted at Dallas. Further Parmenter asked Ford if he would be willing to hold beliefs out of harmony with the Dallas Statement "in abeyance and not discussed unless at some time in the future they might be found compatible with the positions and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?" (Ministry, Oct., 1980, p. 10)

At a meeting where these requests were presented orally to Dr. Ford, before their being incorporated into an official letter, Ford was also asked if "his doctrinal positions were tentative?" To this Ford responded - "The brethren had made such tremendous progress in the past few days and that the church's position was closer to his than it had been before. He ex-

pressed the thought that if we have come this far in four days, imagine how far the church will go in four years in changing its position." (Ibid., p. 9) These coming Sabbath School Lessons can only be viewed as the beginning of the approach which will ultimately bring neo-Adventism and Fordism into a working accord, so that the only "heretics" will be those who stay by the historic faith.

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FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN OR TRULY GOD AND TRULY MAN WHICH?

In thinking through this question, one might dismiss it as a matter of semantics. However, words do convey thoughts. As a man thinketh in heart, so is he. Basic in the doctrine behind the Sabbath School lessons for the first quarter of 1983 is the concept that Jesus Christ in the Incarnation was fully God and fully man in one Person. The direct sentence reads: "Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human when He came to earth." (p. 34) In his book, written to aid in the understanding of the lessons, Dr. Norman Gulley declared emphatically - "Seventh-day Adventists believe that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man." (Christ Our Substitute, p. 33) He does not document the source for such a pronouncement. The fact is that the Dallas Statement, which supposedly governs the theological thinking of the Church at the present time does not so teach. It reads - "Forever, truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ." (Adventist Review, May 1, 1980, p. 23)

Gulley gives us insight as to where this new view of the incarnate Christ came from which is being projected in these Sabbath School lessons. He writes: "In the councils of Nicea (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) discussion about Christ concluded in the ringing assertion, 'He is fully God and fully man.'" (Gulley, op. cit., p. 43) At this point, we need to ask ourselves a question. Since the Statement on the Godhead as formulated at the

Dallas Sesion reflected the thinking of the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) so as to be in harmony with the Constitution of the World Council of Churches, are we now to expect that at the next Sesion of the General Conference, the Statement of Beliefs will be ammended to reflect the "assertion" of Nicea and Chalcedon? Departing further and further from the Word of God, we now find it necessary to draw on discussions and pronouncements of Church Councils to establish the teachings concerning Jesus Christ in neo-Adventism. But setting up a Christ outside of Scripture, are we not erecting an anti-christ in place of the real Christ, and thus worshipping Baal, instead of the Lord God of Israel?

Paul taught that Jesus Christ was equal (hisa) with God in quality and quantity as He existed in the "form of God." This "form of God" Christ willingly laid aside, and took in its place, "the form of a slave." (Phil 2:6-7) Having divested Himself of the "form of God," He no longer was "fully" God. Jesus recognized this fact when He told His disciples that it was necessary for Him to return to the Father so that He could be ever and everywhere present with them through the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-18; 16:7) In other words, Jesus was no longer omnipresent - and never would be again - thus no longer, "fully" God.

In sending His disciples forth to teach, Jesus declared - "All power is given to me in heaven and earth." (Matt. 28:18) If "fully" God, then there would have been no need to have authority given to Him, it would have been His by the very nature of His being. When He returned to the Father after His resurrection, He was highly exalted above every name in heaven and earth. Thus if "fully" God, such an exaltation would place Him above where He had been prior to the Incarnation. (Phil. 2:9-11)

In the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ is presented as the Eternal Word - "the same was in the beginning with God." (John 1:2) As that Word, He made all things. (1:3) But when manifest in the flesh - the fullness of the Godhead in human form, that fulness was manifest in grace and truth, not in power and divine demonstrations. He was "truly" God - the very essence of

God to meet the human need - "full of grace;" and "full of truth" - to answer the charges of one who abode not in the truth. (John 1:14; 8:44)

Turning briefly to His human side - "fully" man, or "truly" man - He had what no man has ever had - a pre-existence. There was in Him - in His very Person - an Eternal Identity which no man can ever have. "A divine Spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh." Jesus Christ was "truly" man having all the human organism and faculties, but not "fully" man, for He possessed that which no man had ever possessed - a pre-existent Self.

Where does the doctrine of Christ promulgated by Gulley lead? In his distortion of the "kenosis" - emptying of Himself - Gulley brings the "fully-God; fully-man" concept to the Cross. He writes: "Just as in death the natures were separate - only humanity, not divinity, died - so throughout His life the two remained separate." (Christ Our Substitute, p. 44) Then he explains - "Our Saviour could not give us His divinity. That would be a change, not substitution. He could only be a human substitute for man. Thus He came as the second Adam, lived a human life, died a human - for divinity cannot die - and offered man a perfect humanity to replace his." (Ibid.) Thus sin was atoned by a human sacrifice - by the "fully man" side of Jesus Christ - that is if we adopt the neo-Adventism taught in the upcoming Sabbath School lessons.

To add to the problem - we find that Gulley states - "We can look at the phrase "fully man" in two ways. Jesus had either (1) unfallen human nature, such as Adam possessed prior to the Fall, or (2) fallen human nature. Which correct? He took both. For Christ took the spiritual nature of man before the Fall, and the physical nature of man after the Fall." (Ibid., p. 33) Since the "fully" God concept excludes the pre-existent One from the Sacrifice at Calvary, the great antitypical Sin Offering, the Substitute, turns out to be merely the undeveloped character of Adam before his fall, created anew to dwell in a body degenerated by four thousand years of sin, and as developed in Christ during thirty-three years of living, offered to God in sacrifice as the means

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1901 GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION

(Continued)

Article 6. Trustees, Committees, and Agents

The voters of this Conference shall, at each regular session, elect the trustees of such corporate bodies as are or may be connected with this organization, according to the State laws governing such corporations; and this Conference shall employ such committees and agents as it may deem necessary, according to the by-laws in such cases made and provided.

Article 7. By-Laws

The voters of this Conference may make by-laws, and amend and repeal them at any session thereof. The scope of such by-laws may embrace any provision not inconsistent with the Constitution.

Article 8. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the voters present at any session, provided that, if it is proposed to amend the Constitution at a special session, notice, of such purpose shall be given in the call for such special session.

BY-LAWS

Article 1.

Section 1. At each session of the Conference the Executive Committee shall nominate for election the presiding officers for the session.

Sec. 2. At each session of the Conference the Executive Committee shall recommend some plan for the appointment of such temporary committees as may be necessary for conducting the business of the Conference.

Sec. 3. The Executive Committee shall have full administrative power during the intervals between the sessions of the Conference; it shall also give credentials to, or license, such ministers as may be employed in the General Conference work; and shall fill for the current term any vacancies that may occur in its offices, boards, committees, or agents, by death, resignation, or otherwise; unless some other provision be made by vote of the Conference for filling such vacancies.

Sec. 4. At each regular session the Conference shall

elect a standing committee of eight delegates, who shall, with the chairman of the Executive Committee, and the presidents of the various Union Conferences, constitute a committee for auditing and settling all accounts against the Conference.

Sec. 5. The Conference shall elect at its regular sessions twenty-one trustees for the General Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, a corporation of the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, existing under the laws of the State of Michigan.

Sec. 6. The biennial session of the General Conference shall be held during the summer season, at such time as in the judgment of the Executive Committee will interfere the least with the general work in the field.

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Continued from p. 6

of atonement.

Is this the Sacrifice God promised Abraham He would provide? Did God give Himself? Or did He create a Victim in which to dwell, and then to leave in the final agony? Did Jesus Christ, the God-man, taste death for every man? The Gospel as proclaimed by Paul, in his own testimony states - "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (I Cor. 15:3) A Person - Jesus Christ - truly God and truly man - died for my sins. Who died for your sins? The anti-christ of neo-Adventism, or the Christ of the Bible?

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