

"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 EVERLASTING GOSPEL

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CATHOLIC DISHARMONY

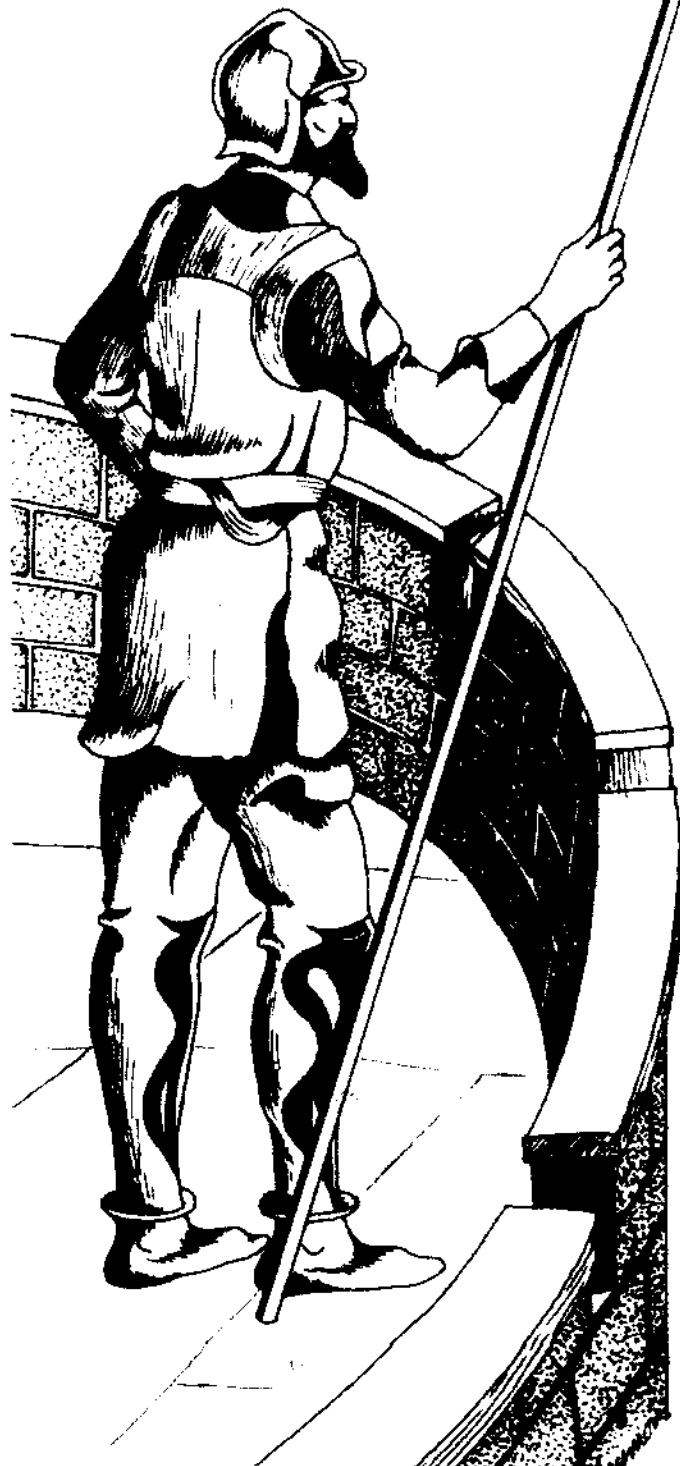
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Editor's Preface

In this issue, we continue the study of the meaning of the "Everlasting Gospel" of Revelation 14. Again we follow the study with "Helps" primarily from *The Desire of Ages*. May we suggest that you note the comparison with the Pharisees of Christ's day and the Laodiceans. Keep in mind that it was the Pharisees who advocated a lifestyle which to them procured merit before God. Further, it seems that for many "independents" the mention of the formula arising out of the Reformation is anathema. We are unable to separate what is truth from the error others have interwoven with that truth. To assert that one's salvation is solely dependent on "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" does not mean that I believe in what is called "eternal security." I can fall from grace and be lost. We have prepared a taped study seeking to reduce the need of man, and the redemption provided by God to the lowest common denominator. We called it "The Two Mysteries." You may have a copy merely for the cost of postage and handling - US\$1.00. Send your request to the Foundation office, P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854, and ask for Tape #121.

The Roman Catholic Church is in turmoil, and the suggestion is made by conservative Catholics that the solution can be found in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This new Catechism presents us with some problems. No longer is it admitted that the Roman Church changed the day of worship to Sunday, but rather it is suggested to be of apostolic origin. There is also in this new statement of Catholic belief, the emphasis on the celebration of the Eucharist connected with the Sunday Mass.

In the editorial - "Let's Talk It Over" - we discuss why we did not reorder the *Adventist Review*, nor the *Ministry* for the year 1997. One cannot be attentive to the meaning of the "Everlasting Gospel" and give support to a "social gospel." There is a vast difference between emphasizing truth, and setting forth how we can adjust so as to make people feel at home with a lifestyle contrary to truth. Is a church paper, whether for the laity or ministry, to be a prophetic voice calling to a higher plane, or merely a voice pleasant to the perceptions of the reader?



The Everlasting Gospel - 2

In the first article of the series on "The Everlasting Gospel" we discussed the experience of the Rich Young Ruler. In this essay we shall return to it, and note again the significance of what Jesus said. When the Ruler asked, "Which?" in response to His declaration, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17-18), Jesus enumerated five of the last six of the Decalogue: "Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother." (Luke 18:20) These define one's relationship to his fellowmen. The young man could respond that he had kept these from his "youth up," and Jesus did not challenge his honesty.

Every individual who so desires can keep these commandments. The four negative commands are forbidden acts which a morally good person refrains from doing, as well as showing respect for his parents. Jesus, however, did not quote the tenth - "Thou shalt not covet." Why? Paul perceived its significance when he wrote - "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7:7) Sin is more than a mere act; it arises out of the heart of man. One or all of the other five will be broken to obtain the object coveted. There is more to entering into life than the mere observance of five commandments. There was a lack which the Ruler could not bring himself to change; and that lack had to do with two things: 1) Recognition of the very nature of sin; and 2) the only remedy for its cure. To state it simply in another way, it means denial of self, and acceptance of Jesus Christ as the only way back to the Father. This lesson from the experience of the Rich Young Ruler as given in Scripture, we refuse to recognize, and seek instead to interpret this experience as teaching that men as a means of salvation must keep the law. "Human nature could not keep the law, even if it would." (See "Helps," p. 4 in previous issue of WJN) Herein is the crux of the difference between the Everlasting Gospel, and the Tridentine Gospel being promulgated by "voices" proclaiming themselves to be "historic" Adventists.

The question is not whether the Ten Commandments should be kept. God has not altered His requirements. The same demands which rested on Adam and Eve - perfect obedience - rests on each today. The question is how shall this design of God be reached. The first step is the recognition on the part of an individual of his own condition - that of absolute worthlessness. Then and then only can regeneration begin. Tragically, this all too often, as with the Rich Young Ruler, is too much for us to recognize, and we seek another way - the Tridentine way of "the mystery of iniquity."

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount had selected two of

these Ten Commandments to illustrate a higher righteousness required than mere assent to the letter of the Law. He said that the commandment - "Thou shalt not kill" - included being "angry with [one's] brother without a cause," and saying to him - "Thou fool." He incisively went to the heart of the seventh commandment declaring "that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart." (Matt. 5:22, 28) Could the Rich Young Ruler have said in the light of this - "All of these have I kept from my youth up"? Jesus was plainly indicating that the letter of the Law is one thing, the righteousness required by God is another thing. In introducing this section of His sermon, Jesus has unequivocally stated:

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (ver. 20)

This is what Paul was talking about when he declared that "touching the righteousness which is in the law," he was "blameless," for he was "a Pharisee." (Phil 3:5-6) He realized, however, that a higher standard of excellency was required; and thus sought not his own "righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (v. 9) Herein again the line is drawn between "the everlasting gospel" and the Tridentine concepts of "the mystery of iniquity."

Jesus gave an object lesson which brings into sharp focus this contrast. The record reads:

Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. (Luke 18:10-14)

It should be observed that the Pharisee "prayed with himself." Thus the call to "God" also included himself. This is the same as those today who believe that by their good works they contribute to their salvation. It should also be noted that the record of this object lesson is found in Luke alone. He did his research for the gospel record while in Judea with Paul, during Paul's confinement. He shared with Paul his findings. One can only imagine Paul's response when he learned of this story that Jesus told. You can almost hear him say, "Luke, this is it! It tells the whole story. I was once as that Pharisee. Don't leave it out of your record of the life of Jesus." And he didn't. Further, Luke quotes Jesus as using the same term that Paul uses

in his unequivocal conclusion in Romans 3- "justified." That conclusion reads - "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:28)

Paul reached this conclusion by first noting certain obvious facts; that is, obvious to all except the Pharisee and the Laodicean. He documented the fact that "all are under sin." (Rom 3:9) He is not saying that all have committed sins, which is also true, but that all are under sin, and unless there is an escape from this state of being, there is no hope. Paul then strengthens his position by quoting from Psalms 14 - "There is none righteous, no, not one. ... There is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10,12) A second fact follows; here enters the Law - the Law speaks to them who are "under the law" that *all* may be guilty before God. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in [God's] sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (3:19-20) The law serves but one purpose, and that purpose tells me that I am a sinner, however reluctant I am to so confess. Then what is the solution? It cannot be in myself - I am not good, neither am I righteous. Echoing down the corridors of time is the answer Abraham gave Isaac - "God will provide *Himself* a lamb." (Gen. 22:8) This is what Paul states the answer to be - "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24) Because of this "free" grace, and the redemption provided by Jesus Christ, God can "be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (v. 26) The final premise which Paul drew is inevitable. Note it again - "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." On this fundamental concept, the revelation of the Gospel as given to Paul rests. Any other premise is accursed. (See Gal. 1:12, 8)

What is this word - "justified" - which Paul uses? And what does it mean? The word in the Greek - δικαιοω - is a legal term, as is clearly indicated in the Papyri, and means to judge, declare, pronounce righteous, and thus acceptable. The basis for this acceptance is the meritorious blood of Jesus Christ, nothing else. (Rom. 3:25) As used judicially by the Greeks it had a negative meaning - "to condemn" - as well as the positive aspect - "to acquit." The LXX, the Bible of the apostolic Church, constantly used the term in the positive sense of "to pronounce righteous." The legal emphasis of the word in the LXX is stronger than in the Hebrew Masoretic text. For example, Isa. 45:25 suggests that "righteousness is with Jehovah, while the LXX reads that Israel is "declared righteous by Him."

After making the dictum that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Paul illustrates what he means by noting the experience of Abraham. To this we shall return; but in the process of his argument, Paul cites Psalm 32 which describes "the blessed-

ness of the man, unto whom God imputeth [puts to his account - λογιζεται] righteousness *without works.*" While Paul quotes only a part of verse 2 because the rest was not apropos to his argument, the part omitted is very apropos to the present understanding of righteousness by faith. It reads that the blessedness of imputed righteousness comes to those "in whose spirit there is not guile." The LXX uses the same Greek word to translate the Hebrew word for "guile" as was used by John to describe the guilelessness of Nathaniel as perceived by Jesus. (John 1:47) Those who receive Christ's righteousness are in their inmost souls true and honest. They know their hearts to be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." (Jer. 17:9) They know and freely acknowledge that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (10:23) The simple honesty of the publican would solve all the problems of Laodiceanism and would soon produce the people in whose mouth there is no guile. (Rev. 14:5) We forget that God is not looking for 144,000 perfect people but for 144,000 sinners in whom He might show His great salvation. Only such will know the blessedness of transgression forgiven, and sins covered.

Returning to the experience of Abraham cited by Paul to illustrate his premise of justification "without the deeds of the law," we note two aspects of the on-going redemptive process. First "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." This is quoted from Genesis 15:6, and there it says literally that Abraham said, "Amen" to God. He believed - he acknowledged the promise of God, and said - "So be it." So also am I to believe what God promises me - the record of Christ's righteousness in place of a record of sin - and no good works of mine added to improve the record.

The second aspect had to do with the sin problem not as the works of sin, but as of sin itself. Abraham and Sarah could not have a child; it was humanly impossible. Only by the direct intervention of God was Issac conceived. Only by the direct intervention of God will there be a people who will be translated who do not first see corruption. This aspect of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is not expanded upon until the final book of Scripture. Paul merely concludes that the experience of Abraham "was not written for his sake alone, ... but for us also, to whom it *shall* be imputed, if we believe on *Him* who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (4:23-24) There is a present justification, and there is a future justification, neither of which are or will be through the merits of human works. The everlasting gospel is concerned about the final justification of which the first-on-going is an example and prerequisite. Between the two experiences is what is called sanctification - the lifetime between the experience of forgiveness and cleansing. Before considering this part of the everlasting gospel and what it means, we shall continue to note further aspects of the gospel revealed to Paul.

(To Be Continued)

Helps

Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his greatest triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. ... *The principle that man can save himself by his own works*, lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. *Satan had implanted this principle*. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin. (*Desire of Ages*, pp. 35-36)

As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now; the Pharisees do not know their spiritual destitution. To them comes the message, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." [Rev. 3:17-18] ... The righteousness of Christ is to them a robe unworn, a fountain untouched. ...

Man must be emptied of self before he can be, in the fullest sense, a believer in Jesus. When self is renounced, then the Lord can make a man a new creature. (*ibid.*, p. 280)

The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was "full of leprosy." Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. ... *Thus it is with the leprosy of sin, — deep-rooted, deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power*. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." [Isa. 1:5-6] ... Whosoever will fall at [Jesus'] feet, saying in faith, "Lord, if thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," shall hear the answer, "I will, be thou made clean." (*ibid.*, p.266)

For the moment the interest of the hearers was awakened. They exclaimed, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" They had been performing many and burdensome works in order to recommend themselves to God; and they were ready to hear of any new observance by which they could secure greater merit. Their question meant, What shall we do that we may deserve heaven? What is the price we are required to pay in order to obtain the life to come?

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." *The price of heaven is Jesus. The way to heaven is through faith in "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* (*ibid.*, p. 385)

Our own works can never purchase salvation. (*ibid.*, p. 280)

It is *only* through faith in Christ that sinners may have the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them, and that they may be "made the righteousness of God in Him." Our sins were laid on Christ, punished in Christ, put away by Christ, in order that His righteousness might be imputed to us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895) #

The "Solas"

When we as Adventists look at the conflict over the Gospel, we get hung up on certain terms that are used by those opposed to the Tridentine formula of the Council of Trent. These terms growing out of the Reformation are - *sola fide*: "by faith alone;" *sola gratia*: "by grace alone;" *sola Christi*: "through Christ alone." The formula which associates these terms states that one is justified "by grace alone through faith alone, because of Christ alone." Neuhaus, in his dialogue with Evangelicals, avers that this is a sixteenth century theological construct (*E&CT*, p. 200). When it originated is at the moment immaterial. It does express the distinct difference between the Tridentine position of Rome, and the Everlasting Gospel. The question of primary concern is; Is this formula, and the terms used in it, Scriptural? This we need to carefully check. Let us start with the source of redemption - "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus". (Rom. 3:24)

Is it - *sola Christi*? Jesus Himself declared - "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14:6) Peter affirmed - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Neither by any earthly priestly intercession, nor works of righteousness which I might do, am I awarded salvation - it is through Christ alone - *sola Christi*.

Through what medium does it come? Paul wrote to Titus - "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (2:11) It was "God [who] commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) It is this grace - God's grace - by which we are justified freely. "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross, I cling." It is *sola gratia*.

How do I respond to the provision of God? I believe. In the Greek, this is the translation of the verb form of the noun, faith. In English there is no verb for "faith." "For by grace are ye saved through faith." (Eph. 2:8) Paul said to Peter - "We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal 2:16) Jesus Christ is even the author of saving faith. (Heb. 12:2) *Sola fide* expresses this concept of Scripture.

All - the source: "the grace of God;" the provision: "the redemption in Christ Jesus;" and the means of appropriation: "the faith of Jesus" - are outside of man, and come solely (*sola*) from God.

That men would pervert the once for all atoning sacrifice of Calvary and turn it to mean "once saved always saved," does not nullify the truth of Scripture that we are justified by grace alone, through the exercise of faith alone, in the redemption found only in Christ Jesus. Let the anathemas of the Council of Trent fall; let the compromises being forged to efface the Reformation teaching on justification take place, we need to determine as did Luther, "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God." "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Gal. 5:5) #

Catholic Disharmony

All is not peace and harmony within the Church of Rome. An editorial in *The Catholic World Report* (October, 1996), a conservative journal, discussed the fact that the American bishops are arguing about the teaching authority in the Church of Rome. "In June, San Francisco's former Archbishop John Quinn...delivered a highly publicized lecture at Oxford, calling for a more 'democratic' Church and thus a less powerful papacy... Then, on August 12, the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardine of Chicago held a long-awaited press conference to announce...his own project to set the future course for the Catholic Church." (p. 34) He called his program the "Catholic Common Ground Project." Bernardine indicated that he felt compelled to launch this project because he was unhappy over the "meanspiritedness" being manifest in debates among American Catholics. These factors were the basis for the editorial, "The 'Source and Foundation' of Christian [Roman Catholic] Unity." That there be no doubt as to his position, the editor quoted from the Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium*: "The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful."

Philip Lawler, in his editorial, let it be known that Pope John Paul II has been outspoken in presenting the Church's teaching. "The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has shown us (as the Pope himself put it) 'the content and wonderful harmony of the Catholic faith.'" In other words, there is no need for any debate or dialogue. The cover of the October issue of *The Report* featured Mary clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. In the lower left corner was the present Pope with his shepherd's staff, his head bowed in adoration. The upper right corner had the words, "Catechism of the Catholic Church," and across the center in bold characters - COMMON GROUND - with a subtitle - "What Are the Sources of Unity Among Catholics?" The answer was in the background portrayal. Clearly, the written source is the new Catechism.

The Catechism is a documented 756 page volume with documentation taken from the Church Fathers, Papal Encyclicals including those of the present pope, and the Church Councils, including Trent. But of interest, there is also much Biblical reference. It is because of this documentation that we need to take a careful look.

In previously recognized Roman Catholic catechisms, the question of the Sabbath, which day it is, and why it was changed, is clearly enunciated. For example, *The Convert's Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, prepared by Geiermann, and which received the "apostolic blessing" of Pius X in 1910, reads:

Ques.--Which is the Sabbath day? Ans.--Saturday is the

Sabbath day.

Ques.--Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Ans.--We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the council of Laodicea (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday... The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her. (p. 50: See Facts of Faith, p. 69)

During the Sabbath-Sunday controversy which marked the closing decade of the 19th century, a priest of the Church offered repeatedly \$1,000 to any one who could give a single text of Scripture justifying the observance of Sunday. Not so, as we have come to the final decade of the 20th century. The new Catechism of the Catholic Church with the Apostolic Constitution, *Fidei Depositum* by the present Pope, would appear to seek to collect on its own \$1,000 offer. It is of interest to note to whom this "Deposit of Faith" is addressed by John Paul II: - "To my Venerable Brothers the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and to all the People of God."

In regard to the Sabbath, the Catechism first reiterates the Old Testament pronouncements in regard to the Sabbath, then the second section presents "The Lord's Day." It is prefaced by the text - "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Ps. 118:24) Three sections are devoted to the reason for its observance. They read:

The Day of the Resurrection: the new creation

Jesus arose from the dead "on the first day of the week." Because it is the "first day," the day of Christ's Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the "eighth day" following the sabbath, it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ's Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's day (he kuriake hemera, dies dominica) Sunday:

We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead. [Justin]

Sunday -- fulfillment of the sabbath

Sunday is expressly distinguished from the sabbath which it follows chronologically every week: for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the sabbath. In Christ's Passover, Sunday fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish sabbath and announces man's eternal rest in God. For worship under the Law prepared for the mystery of Christ, and what was done there prefigured some aspects of Christ.

Those who lived according to the old order of things have come to a new hope, no longer keeping the sabbath, but the Lord's Day, in which our life is blessed by him and by his death. [St. Ignatius of Antioch]

The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public, and regular worship "as a sign of his universal beneficence on all." Sunday worship fulfills the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people. (pp. 581-582)

Several things should be noted from this discussion of what is termed "The Lord's Day." The word "Sabbath" unless at the beginning of a sentence, or in a section title, is never capitalized. The question and answer format of the previous catechisms is no longer used. Absent is any reference to the change of the day of worship being done by the Roman Church as a mark of her authority or power in religious matters. In the footnotes, reference is given to texts of Scripture. The quoted references above are from early Fathers of the Church suggesting the change from Sabbath to Sunday was an apostolic act. If we have eyes to see, the whole basis of the conflict over the Sabbath question has been altered in this new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The discussion of the Third Commandment [our Fourth] begins with two passages of Scripture - the commandment itself from Exodus 20:8-10 and Mark 2:27-28. Then follows a section on "The Sabbath Day" which we have not quoted. This section links the Sabbath to the Jewish religion, yet its binding claims are emphasized. From the use of Mark 2, the inference is clear. Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath - refers to the new day - "The Lord's day." Not only is it inferred, but the transition paragraph from the discussion of the Sabbath in the Old Testament to the observance of Sunday emphasizes this text. In other words, the change is the Lord's - not the act of the Church. The Church is merely following "her" Lord. Sunday carries the same essence for the Christian as the Sabbath did for Israel.

Three sections follow the one quoted above and discuss some very important factors: 1) "The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the [Roman] Church's life." (par. 2177) This is followed by a quotation from the *Codex Iuris Canonici* which states - "Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in the light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day in the universal Church." 2) "The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: 'On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.'" (par. 2180) The reason given is that "Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice." (par. 2181) Observe how Sunday and the Eucharist are bound together. This is made the basis of identifying with the true Church. "Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and his Church." The mere enactment of a Sunday law does not produce the basis for the mark

of the beast, but a forced participation in the blasphemous Mass of the Roman Church would. In fact, the final paragraph on the "Third" Commandment encourages religious legislation in the name of religious liberty. It reads: "In respecting religious liberty and the common good of all, Christians should seek recognition of Sundays and the Church's holy days as legal holidays." This is perceived of as "a precious contribution to the spiritual life of society." (par. 2188) The game plan has not changed. The objective as stated in *The Liberal Illusion* remains, but the factor connected with it, which comes closer to the Biblical designation, "mark of the beast" has been defined.

As the forces within the Roman Church draw their battle lines, and as the ecumenical movement comes closer to its objective, it becomes evident in reading various sections of the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that it was not only written with the Roman Church in mind but also had a broader objective of being the "Common Ground" for a universal Church. The Eucharistic Mass, and that Mass on Sunday, will ultimately come to the forefront of the final confrontation.

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Let's Talk It Over

In determining what publications a small research library will place on its shelves for an ensuing year, decision time comes each Fall as renewal notices are received from the publishers. For 1997, we made some decisions which we have been contemplating during the year. We chose not to renew the Library subscriptions for the Adventist Review and the Ministry.

When the "truth" came to my family home in Iowa, we were introduced to the Review & Herald under the editorship of F. M. Wilcox. It was during the great depression and so we read "borrowed" Reviews. However, being a teenager, I was introduced to The Youth's Instructor, whose editor, Lora E. Clement, through her editorials, "Let's Talk It Over," left a lasting impression on my mind. It was at college, and upon entering the ministry of the Church that the Review became a regular part of my reading menu. Soon thereafter, Wilcox retired and F. D. Nichol was appointed editor after a six months interim under W. A. Spicer. Nichol was followed by Kenneth H. Wood in 1966. In a little more than a year we began the publication of "Watchman, What of the Night?" We had occasion to take issue with Wood over several items because he failed to do his "home work" well. However, in retrospect, we but added our voice with those who were opposed to his stand on various fundamental principles with which we could also agree. This we regret. The inroads that liberalism was making into the Church and the lowering of the lifestyle standards on the part of many were anathema to him. I have often wondered what his reaction has been to the changes which have been made in the Review since his departure, changes which have led to our decision.

When Dr. William G. Johnson became editor and his theology became known to us (We obtained a copy of his doctoral dissertation from Vanderbilt University), I approached a friend who had been a member of the committee that had appointed him and asked him if the committee knew of his positions. The reply was in the affirmative. I then asked, "Why, knowing all of that?" He responded, "We thought he would grow in that position." I wonder now what he thinks of all the "growth" manifesto? With the departure of Myron K Widmer from the editorial staff, the only relative fundamental voice on the staff, there is little promise of a truly "Adventist" Review. Looking down the road because of this change, the possible successor to a soon retiring Johnson is unthinkable.

What is the basic problem? The Adventist Review has become a voice of a social gospel. Instead of perceiving the true gospel, and seeking to call the Church to that gospel, they have let modern lifestyles dictate the message of the publication. The capsheaf came when a feature article asked the question - "Gay Adventists — The Ultimate Oxymoron?" (August, 1996, p. 11) It is true that the first response took a positive stand for truth, but the counter reply - that was something else! The final suggestion, that if one could not accept this oxymoron, he ought to think of a name change in his church affiliation, does have merit.

Turning now to the whyfore of the cancellation of the Ministry subscription, the change of direction and policy as in the case of the Review is the underlying factor. At one time, I had in my possession all of the early copies of the Ministry. They contained excellent source materials. However, due to frequent moves as an evangelist, I made a terrible error in judgment and left them behind during one move. The first major change in the Ministry came under the editorship of R. Allan Anderson in which he used the magazine to promote the "new" theology resultant from the SDA-Evangelical Conferences in an endeavor to "soften" up the ministry of the Church for the acceptance of the book, Questions on Doctrine. The present decline became very evident with the "sacking" of J. David Newman as editor at the last General Conference session. What should have been done was to change the Ministerial Department and replace Cress as the Ministerial Association Secretary.

There is in the present emphasis a failure to understand the basis of the Three Angels' Messages committed to the Church in the beginning. It is the "Everlasting Gospel" which is the core of these messages. If this were proclaimed and accepted, the ills which plague man today whether it be sin - homosexuality - or the results - aids - would be met, and the reign of sin could be quickly ended in the return of Jesus. The sinner must realize, no matter what his orientation might be, that the practice of sin must cease, and that he can find consolation only in the mercy of a forgiving God. It must not be forgotten that it was God who gave the Law which removed the leper from the camp of Israel. Until cleansed he could not return.

Beyond this, there is a future aspect to the demand of the final message that was committed in sacred trust to the Church. When "the mark of the beast" is urged upon us, no amount of "social gospel" can prepare one to stand at that time. If I have not so related to Jesus Christ that I "love not my life unto death" (Rev. 12:11). I will accept the mark to save my life. What will have brought this about? "Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands, and conformed to worldly customs, [the social gospel] will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death." (5T:81) whg

1997 ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP

August 4 - 9

It is being planned to devote the morning seminar period to a basic Biblical teaching, such as the Godhead, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Final Atonement and then in the Evening have an open discussion of what was presented in the morning.

During the afternoon period, a class in Practical Public Speaking and how to outline one's material for presentation will be conducted. While learning, it will also be a "fun" time.

Begin making your plans now to be present. Send for an attendance request form so as to insure accommodations. We shall seek to hold costs at the 1996 level.

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"The only atheism is the denial of truth."

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