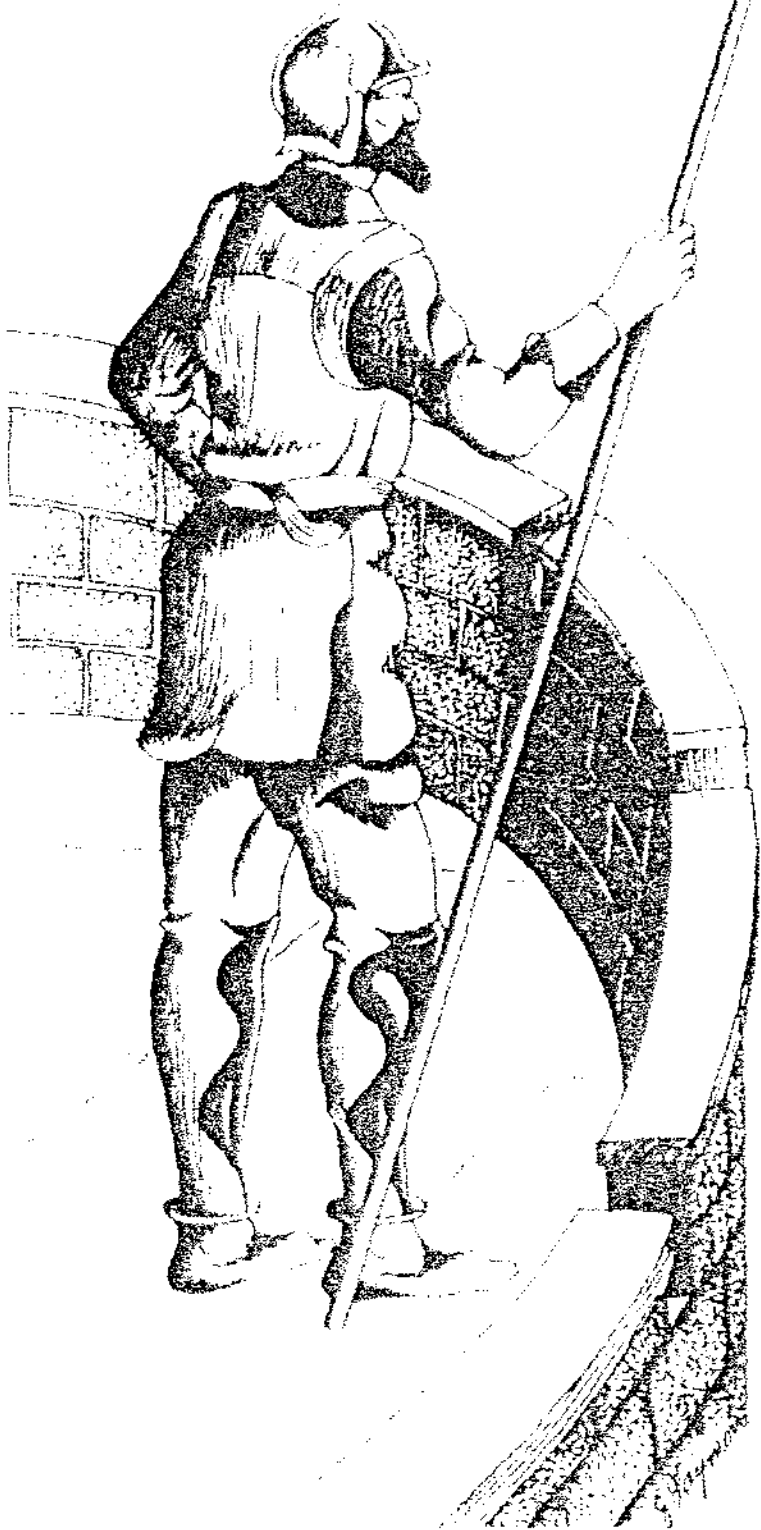


“*Watchman,
what of the night?*”

“The hour has come, the hour is striking and striking at you,
the hour and the end!” *Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)*



In this Issue:

A Response	Page 2
Our Postal Box	Page 3
Muslim Silence	Page 4
The Holy Spirit	Page 5

Editor's Preface

This will be the last monthly issue of WWN. The next issue will begin a bi-monthly schedule and the first issue will be dated, July-August 2006. As I have noted previously, our mailing is in two parts. Periodical mailing for all out-of-country addresses, and bulk mailing for all USA addresses. The postage for overseas mailing has increased sharply, as well as other costs. WWN is still free upon request, and we want to keep it that way.

In the second article of this issue, we discuss two items which we have received in our postal box, one of them being the Rosary. The idea of "mystery" dominates the prayers of the Rosary. It is also biblical. Our word "mystery" is transliterated from the Greek. Paul wrote - "Without controversy, great is the mystery (μυστηριον) of godliness (I Tim 3:16). How are we to relate to true biblical mysteries? For example - God is a mystery; the Incarnation is a mystery. Sin is mysterious. It cannot be justified; the redemption that is in Christ Jesus can be experienced but not fully understood. It will be the theme of eternity. But how do we relate to the study of these "mysteries" now, such as the Holy Spirit? How do we perceive - "In beginning, Gods (Elohim - plural) created (bara-singular)? How do we understand - "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God" (John 17:3), and 'ο ζων (the Living One" Rev. 1:18)) Who was sent?

A Response

Soon after the April issue of WWN was placed in the postal system, I received an E-mail via the Webmaster from a doctor in California requesting comments on his "observations." He wrote:

My observation is that Sabbatarian organizations, all of them, other than SDAs are withering on the vine, so to speak. Sabbatarianism just isn't accepted by the great mass of Christians. Why, should be most obvious – just read the NT over and over! Other Christians have many intelligent and capable analysts of the Bible and translators from its ancient manuscripts. No translators have ever become noted Sabbatarians – this is significant to me – and obviously to the rest of the Christian world.

...

Nothing (is) wrong with Sabbath worship. Sunday is never commanded, I fully agree. What is commanded is "TODAY" (meaning every day!) in Hebrews 3 and 4. To declare that Heb. 4 reinforces Sabbath observance of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue is a certain error. One has only to read the build up to that text. Unbelief in Him and His grace was what was lacking in the Israelites. Christ (was to be) their Sabbath "Rest" – not the seventh day! . . .

(No I am not supporting Sunday over any other day and I have not joined with Sunday worshippers. Most of them are not concerned with Sunday replacing the Sabbath from a God commanded point of view. Many of them work on Sundays too, at least some times, and still consider themselves Christian in good standing. They "love" God AND "love" their fellows of this planet.)

To this letter, I replied. (While I will reproduce what I wrote, it will be enlarged and annotated.)

Dear Dr. --- You will observe that I am replying on Sabbath, which some years back I probably would not have done. As I read the New Testament Scriptures, I observed that the issue was not which day is the Sabbath, but how does one use that sacred time.

(Which day was the seventh day, - none other was commanded to be the day of rest - was settled at the beginning of the establishment of Israel as a nation under

God in the journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan. Each week for forty years in providing manna, God designated which was the sixth day and which was the seventh day).

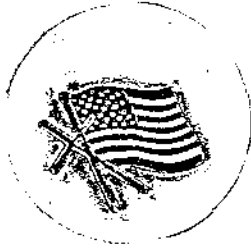
The Sabbath controversies that are noted in the Gospel of John involve the keeping of the Sabbath, not which day is the Sabbath. For example, see John 9:14-16, which records the restoring of sight on the Sabbath to one born blind. Jesus forever settled the question of the day to be observed as the Sabbath in the gospel dispensation. He declared, "The Sabbath was made for *man*" (Mark 2:27). In practice, as "his custom was" Jesus attended, and took part in synagogue services on that day (Luke 4:16). Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, "as his manner was" entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and disputed with those in attendance (Acts 17:2). The question discussed was not which day was the Sabbath, on this they all agreed; but how were they to relate to Jesus of Nazareth.

In preparing this issue (WWN 4-06) I personally received a blessing and some new insights. The seventh day is God's day, not man's day. It was God who rested. Man was merely invited to join Him. It was only man's second day of existence. At the very dawn of human history, even though Cain and Abel brought different gifts, they came with those offerings on the same day – "at the end of the days" (Gen. 4:3, margin). After the flood, the beginnings of profane history are marked by the Babel builders, and from them came the origins of sun worship; while sacred history through Abraham is marked by the blessings of the first promise (Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3) and the Law, including the Sabbath (Rom. 9:4).

As the canon of Scripture closes, Babel as Babylon comes again into the picture (Rev. 14:8) under different symbols – a city, an harlot – while those who are of the seed of Abraham follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (Rev. 14:4). The emphasis in Revelation is that those who follow the Lamb "keep the commandments of God" (12:17; 14:12). What greater prompting does one need to keep the Sabbath, for is it not the Fourth of those commandments?

The doctor in his E-mail to me observed that "to declare that Hebrews 4 reinforces Sabbath observance of the 4th commandment is a certain error." I am not so "certain." Paul wrote that "God did rest the seventh day from all His works" (Heb. 4:4), and then stated that "he that is entered into His rest – the

"rest" of salvation – he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His" (ver. 10). Paul concluded "There remaineth therefore a keeping of the Sabbath (σαββατισμος) to the people of God" (4:9, margin). The people of God will do as God did!



Our Postal Box -
Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854

In any given week, the mail received in our box, other than first class, would overwhelm a shredder. Requests come from charitable organizations, from missions; and much, just promotional material, to sell a product or a service. We subscribe to publications for the library and have them sent simply as A.L.F. Library. Some of these subscription magazines are from Roman Catholic publishers, such as *L'osservatore Romano*, and *The Catholic World Report*. I am sure that their mailing lists are shared with Roman charities around the world, as we receive requests from Africa to Alaska. With many of these charities they enclose a "gift" to encourage you to give. This past week we received two such "gifts," which were of more than just casual interest. One was from the Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate. It was a lapel pin of the American flag overlaid with a cross clearly suggesting the union of Church and State. On close observation the "Cross" was not a

crucifix, but rather a Protestant-Evangelical cross. The card to which it was attached was suggesting "Prayer for Our Country." The final paragraph of this suggested prayer reads:

Send forth your Spirit to this country and make it a source of wisdom and strength, order and integrity throughout the world.

The second gift was included in a letter requesting support of: "Food for the Poor." It was a plastic zippered "coin" case, imprinted with the words, "My Rosary" – the first I ever possessed! Besides, the crucifix suspended from the rose-colored beaded chain, there was another dime-sized medallion holding the chain together. On one side of this medallion was the likeness of John Paul II, and on the other an engraving of Mary with the words, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Included with the "gift" was a booklet, "A New Guide for praying the Rosary which had John Paul II's addition of the "Luminous Mysteries," or "The Mysteries of Light." The last of these five mysteries is "The Institution of the Eucharist" with a Biblical reference from Matt. 26:26 – "This is My body." There are five prayers of the Rosary closing with "Hail, Holy Queen." This prayer to Mary reads:

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy; hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

The final of the four mysteries is called "The Glorious Mysteries." These mysteries are listed as the Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, as well as the

Assumption and Coronation of Mary. For each is given a Biblical reference, except for the last "mystery" which has the reference from the Apocryphal book of Judith. For the "Assumption" of Mary, the prophetic symbolism of Rev. 12:1 is cited as evidence of the actual happening. The reference from Judith reads:

You are the glory of Jerusalem ... you are the splendid boast of our people. With your own hand You have done all this. ... May you be blessed by the Lord Almighty forever and ever (Judith 15:9b-10a).

The book of Judith, containing sixteen chapters, follows the book of Tobias in the Douay (Catholic) Version and precedes the book of Esther. An apologetic annotation is attached to chapter 10, verse 12 of this book and reads - "In this and the following chapter, some things are related to have been said by Judith, which seem hard to reconcile with truth." On this notation, found in the Douay Version, Mary Walsh in her book, *The Apocrypha*, comments - "If the Catholic Church, which is responsible for the introduction and footnote, does not with certitude rely upon the truth of Judith, then why dignify this book by placing it among the inspired books of the Holy Bible?" (p. 23). Actually, the verse from Judith as found in the Rosary Guide is used out of context. "Chastity" is not "coronation."

"Muslim Medievalism, Muslim Silence"

[This title captioned the comments by Richard Cohen of the Washington Post Writers Group appearing in the *National Post* published in Canada.] Cohen wrote:

What strikes me about the threat to execute Abdul Rahman, the Afghan who converted to Christianity, is not that Afghanistan remains deeply medieval and not even remotely the democracy that we would all like it to be, but that with the exception of the (largely) Christian

West, the rest of the world has been mostly silent. The Americans have protested, the Brits have protested, the Canadians have protested, the Vatican has protested and so have some others. But if there has been a holler of protest from anywhere in the Muslim world, it has not reached my ears. That is appalling.

The murder of a person for his religion ought to be inconceivable.

It is something we in the West stopped doing hundreds of years ago and, while Americans continued to kill on account of race (lynchings) deep into the last century, the right of the government to take a life on account of religion has not even been argued in the longest time. We are way beyond that.

Afghanistan was once under Soviet occupation and it may have learned something from those days. Just as the Soviets sometimes pronounced political dissidents to be insane (why else could they question a perfect system?) so have the Afghans decided that Rahman is nuts (Why else would a Muslim choose Christianity?). Now that the case has been dropped and he has been released, he will probably be spirited out of the country. To remain in Afghanistan is to remain in great peril of death.

Rahman's troubles began, as they do for so many, with a divorce. In contesting his attempt to gain custody of his children, his wife told the court that Rahman would be an unfit father because he had converted to Christianity about 16 years earlier. This is what's known in football as a late hit. Nonetheless, when the prosecutor heard of the conversion, he promptly charged Rahman with apostasy, which is punishable by death. Rahman's choices were (either) to repudiate his conversion or plead insanity. The latter would have been the more sane choice.

"The world is too much with us," Wordsworth once wrote. This is certainly the way I feel. To be confronted on almost a daily basis with the horrors of Iraq is profoundly disturbing. The torture and decapitation of huge numbers of people, the casual homicides, the constant suicide bombings - all of this makes you wonder about your fellow man. It is no longer possible, as it once was, to see the world from your front porch, being disturbed only by the ringing of the of the bell on some passing ice cream truck. Africa, Asia, too much of the world - it is Joseph Conrad much of the time: "The horror! The horror!"

But you can say that these horrors are usually being inflicted by a minority. You can say it is a few crazed terrorists in Iraq who are doing the killing. It is not most Iraqis. You can say the same about suicide bombers and torturers and rogue governments, like the one Saddam Hussein once headed. You can take solace in numbers. Most people are like us.

Then comes the Rahman case and it is not a solitary crazy prosecutor who brings the charge of apostasy, but an entire society. It is not a single judge who would condemn the man, but a culture. The Taliban are gone at gunpoint and their atrocities supposedly a thing of the past. In our boundless optimism, we consign them to the "too hard" file of horrors we cannot figure out: the Khmer Rouge, the Nazis, the communists of the Stalin period. Now, though, this awful thing returns and it is not just a single country that would kill a man for his beliefs, but a huge swath of the world which would not protest. There can be only one conclusion: they were in agreement.

The groupthink of the Muslim world is appalling, frightening. I know there are exceptions – many exceptions. But still it seems that a man could be killed for his religious beliefs and no one will say anything in protest. It is also frightening to confront how differently we in the West think about such matters and why the word "culture" is not always a mask for bigotry but an honest statement of how things are. It is sometimes a bridge too far – the leap that cannot be made. I can embrace an Afghan for his children, his work, even his piety – all he shares with much of humanity. But when he insists that a convert must die, I am stunned into disbelief: Is this my fellow man?

How will this writer react when the following verse of Scripture is fulfilled?

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:15).

The context of this verse in Revelation is the time of the second beast who came up "out of the earth" (ver. 11), the area designated by Richard Cohen as "the Christian West."

A few months back, we quoted Ann Coulter of the Religious Right. The advertising folder for the *American Compass* had singled out a statement from her book, *How to Talk to a Liberal* which parallels the very concepts noted by Richard Cohen. We repeat the statement:

I am often asked if I still think we should invade their countries, kill their leaders, and convert them to Christianity. The answer is: Now more than ever" (p. 21).

Isn't this Islamic thinking in "Christian" garb? --- And coming out of the "Christian West"?

The Holy Spirit

The April issue of *Old Paths* was received this week, not from its editor, Allen Stump, but from a friend. Stump has removed our name from his free mailing list because of challenges to his teachings on the Godhead. (We still send him WWN, as we have no fear of an open discussion of truth.) In his current issue he informs his readers that he is going to show that the position taken by the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* that the Holy Spirit is a divine part of the Trinity "to be totally false" (p. 1). Three parts on the Holy Spirit with random comments are presented in this issue, and we shall await further issues to see what direction Stump will ultimately take. Our objective will be to simply point out Scriptures which help one to define the nature and work of the Holy Spirit as well as to ask some questions.

First, we need to state clearly that we do not believe, nor teach, the Roman doctrine of the Trinity; however, we also recognize that the Messenger of the Lord used the concept of "the Heavenly

Trio" to describe the Godhead. More than that, she listed this Trio as "living Persons," - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (*Evangelism*, p. 615). We could simply refer our readers to the previous studies found in WWN on the Godhead and let them speak as an answer to Stump's position. The latest such issue was December 2005, first article, "God - Who Is He?" We prefer this time to set forth the facts which certain texts of Scripture reveal, and let each reader draw his own conclusion.

The book of Acts marks the beginning of the Christian Church with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, as "cloven tongues like as of fire" (2:3). It announced the coronation and exaltation of Jesus Christ. Not only was He exalted, but Jesus "received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Spirit" (2:33). This promise Jesus had made known to the disciples in the upper room (John 14:16-17). But there He had added another factor - "I will not leave you orphans: *I will* come to you" (ver. 18, margin). Is Jesus only a "power," just an "influence"? Or is He a real Being? In His retained humanity He could not be everywhere present, but as the Lamb He would send forth His "horns" and His "eyes" into all the earth. These are declared to be "the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 5:6). To this prophetic symbolism, we have given little study. We stand before an unfathomable mystery which the human mind cannot comprehend, even as also the incarnation. The incarnation and the Holy Spirit are interwoven (Luke 1:35), and they together constitute a great mystery (I Tim. 3:16) - "God manifest in the flesh." We need to take heed to the ground on which we walk with our minds. It is holy ground.

Returning to Acts: Note Chapter Eight. First, an "angel" instructs Philip to go to a certain place (8:26). He goes, and the Spirit (8: 29) tells him to join the man in

the chariot. He does as instructed, and the result is a baptism. Then the Spirit (8:39) snatches Philip away. An influence? Only a power directing the movement of a man?

Again (Acts 13:1-4): In the church at Antioch were men gifted by the Spirit. To them the Holy Spirit said - "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (ver.2). Do the pronouns "me" and "I" signify just an influence, or a Person in charge? The text reads - So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed... (ver. 4). Paul understood that He was called by the will of God (Eph. 1:1). Who conveyed that "will"?

Let us go back to the creation and see the revelation of God as given there. "In beginning, Gods (Elohim, plural) created (bara, singular)" [Gen. 1:1]. The Gods acted in unity, or as One. The Spirit of God, the active agent moved on the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2). The NT tells us that without the Word "not anything was made that was made" (John 1:3). Who then was the active Agent? - Who then was "the Spirit of God"? If you need another Scriptural comparison consider the giving of "prophecy." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21). Yet Peter tells us that it was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" that was testifying beforehand to "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:11).

Now back to Genesis 1. It was the Elohim who said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). What was the "likeness" of God (Elohim) as revealed in Adam and Eve? That One was a male, and the Other a female? Hardly. But the emphasis in Gen. 2:24 is that "they shall be one flesh." Two functioned as One. The incarnate Jesus echoed the same

concept when He declared – “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

Luke brings the incarnation to the same point. Gabriel tells Mary that the Πνευμα ἁγίου would come upon her and the ἁγίος (holy) one conceived would be called “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). The word, ἁγίος (hagion), an adjective, is neuter in gender to conform with Πνευμα, also a neuter. The KJV used “holy thing” to translate the word. It would have been better translated “Holy One.”

The Shema of Israel also enters the picture. It reads: “Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). Actually, the words, “our God” is “our Gods” (plural) in the Hebrew Text. See B. Davidson, *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. xxviii, col.1.

This conforms with other Old Testament texts such as Isaiah 44:6 which reads:

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no Elohim (Gods, plural).

The name “Lord” in both instances in the Hebrew is YHWH (Yahweh), a Biblical proper name of God known as the Tetragrammaton. The text states that there are Two of Them. Apart from Them, there are no Gods.

The self declaration as “the first and the last” reaches through the Scriptures and finds expression in the final Revelation. There the Almighty states – “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ... which is, and which was and which is to come” (1:8). John in the Spirit then hears behind him a “great voice” in trumpet tones proclaiming Himself also to be the “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (1:10-11). Turning, John saw “one like unto the Son of man” (1:13) who clearly enunciated the difference. While the

Almighty “was,” and “is, and “ever shall be;” the Son of man declares of Himself, “I am the first and the last. Also the Living One who was dead and behold living I am into the ages of the ages” (1:17-18, Gr.). Here is the same picture as in Isaiah. The Almighty on the throne, King of Israel, before the throne, the Lamb dispensing the blessings of His redemption through the Seven Spirits of God.

+ + + + + + + +

WEBSITES

<http://ourworld.cs.com/adventistalert>

<http://www.adventistlaymen.com>

E-MAIL

Editor – grotheer@adventistlaymen.com
 Webmaster – webmaster@adventistlaymen.com
 Webmaster,JOY – adventistalert@cs.com

+++++

“Watchman, What of the Night?” is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen’s Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854, USA.

Editor, Publications & Research

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

Regional Contacts:

Australia - 1745 Cape Otway Rd., Wurdi-Boluc, VIC 3241
 Canada - P. O. Box 8255, Victoria, BC V8W 3R9

Any portion of the Thought Paper may be reproduced without further permission by adding the credit line - “Reprinted from WWN, Ozone, Arkansas, USA.”

Current copy free upon request; previous and duplicate copies - 50c.

800-4-LAYMEN (800-452-9636)
 FAX - (479) 292-3745; Regular Calls - (479) 292-3721