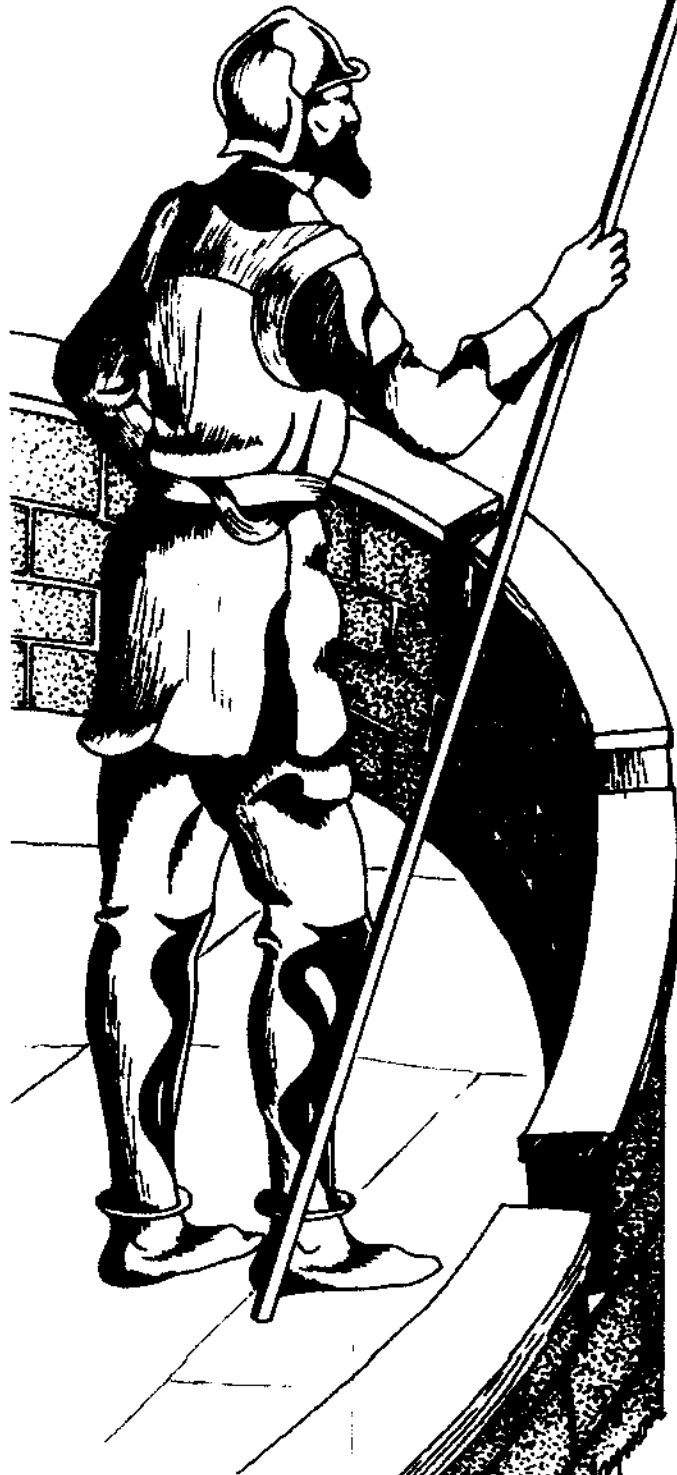


*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"*

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



THE AGENDA OF DECEPTION

"Holy Flesh" Teaching Being Revived

The entrance of sin into this world was by deception and by continued deception it has been maintained. The Laodicean state is the final exhibit. Its self-perception seeks to cover the reality. Those in that state believing themselves to be in need of nothing, fail to hear the voice of the True Witness declaring them to be in need of everything. It is this revealed danger of deception which should cause us to tremble exceedingly.

We have been warned that "the power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles." (SG, II, p. 277) The intensity of the deception is in inverse proportion to the time remaining. We are now being buffeted "with every wind of doctrine" for the very objective "to deceive." (Eph. 4:14) Yet we seem oblivious to the fact that the "many voices" sounding today in the community of Adventism are discordant even though they share the same platform. Let us face the fact that "church bashing" is not a safe criterion by which to judge the truthfulness of those "voices" sounding in the community of Adventism, each declaring that he or she has a message from God for Laodicea. Such "bashing," manifest in headlining the latest sensational episode or questionable position voiced by the Church, may in reality cover spiritual deception on the part of the "voice" with resultant eternal consequences.

There has been in our Church history a short-lived movement which never reached full fruition, but concerning which we have been warned will repeat itself. This was the Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana which began in 1899 and ended in 1901. In replying to a letter from S. N. Haskell, Ellen White wrote - "The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation." (SM, bk. ii, p. 36) The things taking place were two-fold, involving forms of worship adopted from Pentecostalism, and aberrant doctrinal positions in such sensitive areas as the incarnation and Christian perfection. Ironically, the first manifestation - Pentecostal musical extravaganza, using various loud-sounding instruments - has invaded the regular Church

by the introduction of the "celebration" type of worship.

The doctrinal positions as taught by the "Holy Flesh" men of Indiana are being reintroduced and widely accepted among many of the major "independent ministries."

The keystone doctrine of the Gospel is the Incarnation. Without Bethlehem, there would have been no Calvary. Only by "dying in humanity" could Jesus destroy him that had the power of death. "He could not have done this as God, but coming as man Christ could die." (Letter 97, 1898) That life lived in human flesh was sinless, or else there would have been no resurrection. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power [over all flesh - John 17:2], according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4) Without the resurrection, there would be no High Priestly intercession to bring an end to sin. (Heb. 9:28)

We have become familiar with the stated positions current in the official Church through the Tithes "Supplement" in the Adventist Review in 1991, written by Dr. Roger W. Coon of the Ellen G. White Estate. One in the Church can either believe that Christ in assuming humanity took the pre-Fall nature of Adam, or that He took the post-Fall. If you do not prefer either of these, you can accept the position advocated in Seventh-day Adventists Believe...., the thinking of the Anglican divine, Henry Melvill. (See pp. 47, 57) But few are aware that the Church's ministry were given a resume of two of the above positions, with a third alternative being the Holy Flesh teaching on the doctrine.

In the Ministry (June, 1985) two parallel articles were published. One - "What Human Nature Did Jesus Take? Unfallen" - was written under the pseudonym of "Benjamin Rand;" the other - "What Human Nature Did Jesus Take? Fallen" - with the pseudonym of "Kenneth Gage." One year later - June, 1986 - the Ministry published an article by Thomas A. Davis - "Christ's Human Nature: An Alternative View." (pp. 14-17)

Davis is forthright in stating that he believes that the view he is propounding "could bring together the two viewpoints discussed in Ministry" (June, 1985). Davis holds "that Jesus was not incarnated with a nature common to all men. He did not come to this world to be in all respects like all men. His human nature was common only with those who have experienced a spiritual rebirth. Let us express this another way: Of Mary, Jesus was born, 'born-again.'"

(Was Jesus REALLY Like Us?, p. 30; emphasis his) He holds in common with the editor of the Adventist Review that Jesus had "a fully human nature (while also being fully God)." (Ministry, June 1986, p. 15) All of this is impossible to reconcile. If Jesus had a "fully human nature," that nature would be "a nature common to all men" which Davis denies. Further a "fully human" nature, the only nature known since the Fall, is a nature that has been defiled by sin. Jesus took a "fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin." (YI, Dec. 20, 1900) But He did not yield to the forces of the flesh; He did no sin. Whether a man is born again, or not born again, there is still resident in all human flesh, the potential to sin. That human nature "defiled by sin," Jesus took.

Davis' teaching in regard to the incarnation is identical to the teaching of the "holy flesh" men of Indiana. Let it be clearly understood from the beginning that the men of Indiana did not believe that their flesh was holy. One minister in the conference who opposed the leadership described the teaching as "the sinless flesh doctrine." (See, The Holy Flesh Movement, p. 27) It was finally dubbed the "Holy Flesh" Movement. While Ellen White used the term, "Holy Flesh," she described the doctrine as teaching "perfection in the flesh." (SM, bk. II, p. 32)

Now what did the "holy flesh" men of Indiana teach in regard to the Incarnation? R. S. Donnell, titular head of the Movement, wrote while president of the Indiana Conference, a series of articles in the Indiana Reporter on the subject. The internal evidence of these articles suggests they were a response to another series published in the Review & Herald by A. T. Jones on the same subject. Later, after being removed from the presidency of the conference, he published these articles in a booklet - What I Taught in Indiana. Included with these articles were his answers to a series of questions which the newly elected president of the Conference propounded to him. These articles and the answers to the questions give the evidence of the teaching of the men of Indiana by which comparison can be made with the teaching of Thomas and Margaret Davis today.

Question 4 of the interrogatives reads - "Please state in a few words your views on the nature of Christ?" To this Donnell replied - "Christ's nature was a divine human nature. [It was] a nature which, prior to the new birth, has not been possessed by a single son or daughter of Adam since the fall." (p. 20)

Not only did Donnell teach, as Davis does, that Christ came born, "born again," but to support this teaching, he used the same identical arguments which the Davises employ today. Donnell quoted Hebrews 2:11 - "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified [not those He is going to sanctify, but they who are sanctified] are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Then he commented - "Notice that it is the sanctified ones who He is not ashamed to call brethren. Further, it is the sanctified ones of whose flesh He partakes." (Donnell, op. cit., pp. 4-5)

In the Ministry article noted above, Davis likewise quoted Hebrews 2:11. Then he enlarges on the Scriptural use of the word, "sanctified." The logic appears to be without flaw. Then he concludes, "We read in Hebrew 2:17 that Jesus was 'made like his brethren [the born-again, sanctified ones] in every respect.'" (Emphasis his) Defending a hermeneutic which he uses, he summarized - "In the light of the foregoing we may conclude that there was something important about the incarnate nature of Christ that was like born-again people but unlike unregenerated people." (p. 14) This is "holy flesh" teaching even using their arguments to the dotting of the "i" and the crossing of the "t."

After the 1901 General Conference session which ended the Holy Flesh Movement, Ellen G. White went to Indianapolis to be present for the reorganization of the Conference. During this called session, she bore a decided testimony to the delegates concerning the experience through which they had just passed. At the close of her discourse she said - "When I am gone from here, **none** [and this includes the Davises] are to pick up **any points** of this doctrine and call it truth. There is not a thread of truth in the whole fabric." (E. G. White Estate Document File #190; emphasis supplied)

Today, we see a revival, as prophesied, of this doctrine among the major "independent ministries," led by Tom and Margaret Davis. This deception is disturbing many sincere concerned Adventists with baleful results. I have seen devoted seekers for truth become so discouraged in the application of this doctrine to "perfection" so as to doubt whether they were Christians. I have also seen fine young people after assimilating this deception, reach the conclusion they are no longer sinning. This later experience is exactly the results which Ellen G. White declared would have occurred back in 1901 had the "holy flesh" teaching been carried to its ultimate conclusion. (SM, bk. ii, p. 32)

At the 1901 General Conference session, the night before Ellen G. White bore her decided testimony against the "Holy Flesh" Movement, Dr. E. J. Waggoner spoke to a question which had been given him to answer. The question read - "Was that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary born in sinful flesh, and did that flesh have the same evil tendencies to contend with that ours does?" (1901 GC Bulletin, p. 403) Dr. Waggoner told the delegates that in the very question itself was the idea of the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Then he stated - "We need to settle, everyone of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not. There are a great many that have got the marks yet." (ibid., p. 404)

What are these marks? The whole of the problem revolves around the meaning of a dream given to a man fleeing the wrath of his brother. The first night away from home, and with stones for a pillow, the Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream. He saw a ladder which connected earth with heaven bridging the gulf which sin had created. The text reads - "Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Gen. 28:12) This ladder was a symbolism of Jesus Christ, and so recognized by Him. (John 1:51) The ladder not only reached to heaven but it was set up **on** the earth. It was not short on either end. Any theory, or concept which cuts short the ladder bears the marks of Rome.

Rome rests this "ladder" in Mary declaring that "unlike the rest of the children of Adam, the soul of Mary was never subject to sin, even in the first moment of its infusion into the body. She alone was exempt from the original taint." (The Faith of Our Fathers, 88th rev. ed., p. 171) The Evangelicals rest that ladder in the sanctified womb of Mary: "As the dust of the ground was enlivened by a miraculous act, and the result was the individual body of Adam, so the substance of Mary was quickened and sanctified by a miraculous act, and the result was the human soul and body of Jesus Christ." (Quoted in Ministry, Dec. 1957, p. 39) The "Holy Flesh" teaching rests the "ladder" on a "born again" nature. However, "the base of this ladder rests firmly on the earth, brought to the very level of humanity." (ST, Jan. 6, 1898) "If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame." (DA, pp. 311-312) "Made 'in the likeness of sinful [not born again] flesh,' He lived a sinless life." (ibid.)

It must be re-emphasized that the potential to sin is not eradicated at the "new birth." We still remain in the flesh until this vile body is fashioned "like unto (Christ's) glorious body." (Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23) Recognizing ourselves as sinners, we repent - change our mind - and we are to ever remain in that state of repentance. I am to die daily. (I Cor. 15:31) I must remain at the foot of the cross - set up on earth - and there find "my hope and stay." It is the highest place that I can attain. (AA, p. 210) All that follows in life is but the outworking of my heartfelt appreciation of what the crucified One provided for me. I, a slave to the enemy of God, willingly become a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, but His matchless love lifts me up, and I become a son of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (I John 3:1) But the theories of man wish to remove that Christ from us, and supplant an "antichrist" who did not come all the way down and set up on earth that ladder back to God.

These false theories of the Incarnation produce with varying emphases a salvation by works program which negates the very message which God brought to this people in 1888. Justification by faith "is the work of laying the glory of man in the dust and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ." (Spec. Test. to Ministers & Workers, p. 62)

We need to review just what took place at the Incarnation, when the Lord of glory stooped low to set up the ladder on the earth. Basic is the fact that He who was born at Bethlehem had pre-existed as God. "There is light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible." (R&H, April 5, 1906) This pre-existent Self-Identity took upon Himself a body formed in the womb of Mary.

It is at this point that the question of Mary enters the picture. Was Mary immaculate? Was a section of her womb sanctified? Did she produce a born-again body in which Christ was to dwell? Each individual in formulating an answer to these questions must decide as Waggoner suggested that night long ago at the 1901 General Conference

session - am I out of the Church of Rome or not? Tragically as he also stated - "There are a great many that have got the marks yet." These words were directed to the "holy flesh" men at the session.

You and I have an earthly father. From that father and that mother, we receive not only our body, but also our unique identity. We are fully human. Having by and from birth a fallen nature, we are unable to resist the forces inherent in the flesh. "The result of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist." (Education, p. 29) While the flesh of itself cannot sin, our weakened wills cannot resist the flesh's demands. We sin. Christ on the other hand recognized the power of the fleshly cravings, and admitted - "I can of mine own self do nothing." (John 5:30) Giving us this example, He let God work in Him of His good pleasure. (John 14:10; Phil. 2:13)

The problem with our theology is that we have in one form or another adopted the "holy flesh" concept of a "divine human nature." There is no such thing on earth. Even in Christ the two natures - His pre-existent Identity, and the humanity He received from Mary - were distinct. "The two expressions 'human' and 'divine' were in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality." (ST, May 10, 1899) We, too, can become partakers of the "divine nature" through the acceptance of the precious promises of God. (II Peter 1:4) The promise is His word to fulfill to us the provisions of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24) Accepting His word by faith, this becomes my "treasure" held in an earthen vessel "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of [me]" (II Cor. 4:7) The "treasure" and "the earthen vessel" are as distinct in us, as the "divine" and "human" were in Jesus. Never does the "earthen vessel" become divine, so that we can say we have a "divine human nature." Neither can it be said of Jesus in the incarnation.

Jesus carried that body with its nature to the very end, to the cross itself, and there let it be crucified. When He arose, his was a glorified humanity which He has carried into the highest heaven. It is a body like unto that "glorious body" which we will receive in exchange for our "vile body." (Phil. 3:21) We, too, carry our fallen human nature to the very end. Daily it must be crucified.

"THE GREAT MEDICAL MISSIONARY"

Because of sin, sickness, disease, and death have been the lot of humanity. Throughout time men have sought to alleviate the effects of sickness, cure disease, and prolong life. Various methods have been used in seeking to combat these results of sin. In the Hebrew economy, the priest was given diagnostic authority in the recognition and determination of certain diseases. See Leviticus 13. There are illustrations in the Old Testament where the power of God working through natural means brought recovery. (II Kings 5:10-14; 20:7)

In the New Testament Jesus recognized the work of the doctor. He declared they that were sick were in need of a physician. (Matt. 9:12) He himself combined natural means with divine power for restoration. (John 9:6-7) The limitations of medical practitioners are also noted. (Mark 5:25-26) Yet Luke, companion of Paul, is described as "the beloved physician." (Col.4:14)

When God raised up a people to proclaim His last warning to the inhabitants of earth, He connected with the giving of the Three Angels' Messages, a health reform program, and assigned to them a medical missionary work. It is stated thus:

"The medical missionary work is to be the work of the church as the right arm to the body. The third angel goes forth proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The medical missionary work is the gospel in practice." (8T:77)

This presents two important factors: 1) The medical missionary work is as the right arm. This does not mean that it becomes the whole body. Herein many have erred. 2) The medical missionary work is the **gospel** in practice. Dare we preach a false gospel? Then dare we practice a false gospel? What corrupts a true gospel? Is it not the mingling of error with truth? Was not the gospel as proclaimed by the Apostles corrupted when mingled with paganism?

We have been clearly warned that in these final hours "Satan will come in to deceive if possible the very elect. He claims to be Christ, and he is coming in, pretending to be the great medical missionary. (Series B, #6, p. 33) The same means he has used to corrupt the gospel, he will

also use to corrupt the medical missionary work - pagan philosophy and the occult. This very combination is noted as the basis for God's rejection of those professing to be His people in the last days. Describing these last days, Isaiah wrote:

"Therefore, thou has forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines." (2:6)

Received from the east is the diagnostic tool of iridology. Kurt E. Koch, Th.D. in his book, Occult ABC, wrote that "historically, iris diagnosis... goes back to ancient Chinese methods of healing," and is "associated with astrology." (p. 100) He stated further:

"In the case of iris diagnosis, the eye was originally (in ancient China some three thousand years ago) divided into five concentric zones, alterations in which were evaluated in making the diagnosis. The later division into twelve fields corresponds to the astrological signs of the zodiac: (list given) ... In the last century, new shoots began to sprout from the primitive, superstitious roots of iris diagnosis." (*ibid.*)

Dr. Koch referred to a detailed work on Iridology by Professor P. A. Jaensch - Irisdiagnostick. He noted that he was surprised to find in this work a chapter on "Eye Diagnosis and Occultism," and commented - "I would hardly have expected to find such a subject dealt with by a university lecturer." Professor Jaensch called iris diagnosis, "Afterwissenschaft, meaning a pseudo-science, or fantasy under scientific guise. (*ibid.*, p. 102) Seeking to give a balanced discussion, he noted that there are psychic, occult methods of diagnosis, but that many iris diagnosticians have nothing to do with spiritism, however, "the medical value of their diagnosis is extraordinarily thin. In many cases it is meaningless." (p. 103)

Dr. Koch summarizes his experience in two observations:

"1. Eye diagnosticians who are not occult cause no harmful effects on their patients. The medical value of their treatment, however, is very small.

"2. Eye diagnosticians who work by occult means bring their patients under bondage. Their diagnoses are often accurate." (p. 104)

This should tell us something. Only those, wittingly, or unwittingly, who are working under

the psuedo-"great medical missionary" can give the most accurate iris diagnosis.

In America, the leading proponent of the use of Iridology in the diagnosis of disease is Dr. Bernard Jensen, who holds doctorates in Chiropractic, Naturopathy, and Clinical Nutrition. His Iridology chart which is widely used by those practicing this form of diagnosis is patterned according to the twelve signs of the zodiac. Though semi-retired, he is still lecturing and writing books on the subject of health and nutrition. He also has developed an advanced system for photographing and recording the iris by television in color permitting both the doctor and patient to view the diagnosis at the same time. For his work and research, he has received many citations and awards.

In 1974, Dr. Bernard Jensen published a book - The Science and Practice of Iridology. The second chapter, "The Philosophical Phase," gives some insight into the thinking of Dr. Jensen. He quotes with fond recollection a statement of one of his "old teachers" that "the white areas in the iris are likened to the angels of heaven, while the dark or black areas are compared to the devil of hell." (p. 5) Further, he asserts that doctors employing natural methods of healing are aware of the forces and sources which affect the individual health. Besides the food we eat, the air we breathe, "there are vibrations that are around (us), which are food for (our) 'feeling' body." (p. 6) In another chapter, noting that "our seasons and our lives are considerably under the influence of our sun," and that "in the past some races of peoples were sun worshippers, Jensen suggests, "We should all be sun worshippers because all life comes from the sun and we could not live without it." (p. 336)

Seventh-day Adventists who are enlightened in regard to the origin of sun worship, and who have been warned that the enemy in his final deception would come as a "great medical missionary," should be extremely careful to avoid all methods originating with, and philosophically based in the occult. We need to keep in mind that in this final conflict between truth and error -

"The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error." (Series B, #2, p. 52)

LETS TALK IT OVER

In the articles of this issue, there are two important factors involved, one having to do with faith, and the other doctrinal, which is directly related to one's Christian experience.

Let us consider the matter of faith. First, faith is the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) Secondly, faith is based on the word of God. (Rom. 10:17) There are things in life which may appear good, and blessed by God. We may even attend a campmeeting, or some revival, and experience a good feeling. The evidence as seen may indicate that God's presence was there. Do we then judge by the feeling received, or do we judge by the Word of God? As the Holy Spirit is being withdrawn from the earth, it is being replaced by another spirit. The final walk on earth will be by faith and not by sight!

The enemy was successful in the very first temptation to challenge the Word of God, and substitute sight and feeling as the basis for the acceptance of that which was projected by him as truth. This he has successfully repeated over and over again. His final attack will be no different. Why should he substitute something different when he has used this approach so successfully for milleniums? So when we "see" and sense a "feeling" of exhilaration, we take the fruit, and partake, and tell others what a blessed experience we had, not stopping to ask, is it all according to the word of God.

We may boast of successes in medical missionary work. We may even point to documented results - the evidence seen! Yet if what we do is not according to the Word of God, but is based in methodology invented by the enemy, it is not of faith. It was not without reason that two questions are asked in The Great Controversy. Speaking of those only who "will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive," it is asked - "Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible, and the Bible only." (P. 625) Let us not put this off as speaking solely of some future day, that time is upon us now.

Turning to the second point - the doctrinal, which involves the incarnation, determines what I believe about sanctification and perfection. If, as in Catholicism, I believe that "the Ladder" reached down only to Mary, who in turn was

preserved free from all sin, then I must find some means to reach the bottom rung. To find this means whether the Roman Catholic teaching is believed, or one of the others - Evangelical or "Holy Flesh" - results in some perversion of the Everlasting Gospel. Either we fall into the abyss of "cheap grace," or we plunge into the chasm of human works to accrue merit. The question in simplest terms is - "Do I come to Jesus "just as I am without one plea," or do I come to Him after I have demonstrated my worthiness to be accepted?"

Ellen G. White addressed this very point in her beautiful summary of the 1888 Message. She wrote:

"Some feel that they must be on probation and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help in their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to Him **just as we are**, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come to Him with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in His arms of love, and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity." (Steps to Christ, pp. 56-57, 1940 edition)

This coming to Jesus must be a daily matter, for we carry with us our fallen nature to the very end. It is never eradicated, as was taught by the "Holy Flesh" men of Indiana, until these vile bodies are exchanged for a body like unto Christ's glorious body. (Phil. 3:21) It is by God's power that we are kept day by day from falling into acts of sin. (Jude 24) As a glorious climax to the plan of redemption, God proposes to have a people who will stand "without fault" as a final demonstration of HIS power to save to the uttermost. This He will accomplish through the final atonement. But this is another subject - a much neglected subject by those inventing theories of the incarnation other than the Biblical, for they must devise a way to reach the first rung of the Ladder which they have removed from the earth.

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Note: For those interested in a further study of the Final Atonement, send for the tape - "The Last Act of the Final Atonement." US\$ 2.50 postpaid. To Canada, US\$3.00, postpaid. In Australia write P. O. Box 520, Albury, 2640, Au\$3.50 postpaid.

The Agenda of Deception - from page 4, col. 2

But now the supreme question: Do we continue to sin to the very end? The answer is - No!. It is at this point that the uniqueness of the gospel committed in sacred trust to Adventism enters the picture. There is a final atonement. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit without measure there is to be realized in a victorious group the same experience as was demonstrated in Jesus. (John 3:34) Basic to that experience is a correct understanding of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Mariology in any form is a deception.

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Note: Those who wish to study more thoroughly into the "Holy Flesh" history may obtain the manuscript - The Holy Flesh Movement - 1899-1901 from the Adventist Laymen's Foundation - US\$3.00 postpaid.

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Editor

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer

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"The worst sort of hypocrite and liar is the man who lies to himself in order to feel at ease." - Hilaire Belloc