



*"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

THERE IS POISON IN THE POT

Served by Editor
ADVENTIST REVIEW

During the first Quarter of this year, the Adult Sabbath School Lessons written by Dr. Norman Gulley, professor of religion at the Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, sent tremors throughout Adventism. The volume of response was such that the editor of the lessons in the General Conference Sabbath School Department prepared a "form letter" to reply to the adverse reaction from the field. The Teacher's Helps for that Quarter's lessons were prepared by Dr. Wm. G. Johnson, Editor of the Adventist Review. Now the editor and Dr. Gulley again "team" up to serve the same "poison" through the columns of the Adventist Review. In the official organ of the Church, (June 30, 1983, pp. 4-8), Dr. Gulley summarizes his concepts of the Incarnation as taught by the Church. He wrote:

"Seventh-day Adventists look at the humanity of Jesus in two ways. (1) The pre-Fall view, that seeks to preserve the fact that He came as the second Adam. The emphasis is on the sinless nature of Jesus. (2) The post-Fall view, which seeks to preserve the fact that He came as the son of Mary. The emphasis is on Jesus' identity with fallen human nature. In its 23 different Statements of Fundamental Beliefs the church has never taken a stand for or against one or the other view.

This is because both views are found within Scripture and in the writings of Ellen White. If even inspired writers wished to preserve both truths about Jesus, it seemed right for the church to do the same. Therefore both views are found in historic Adventism." (p. 4)

This undocumented paragraph presents "poisonous error" in several categories. (1) The church never has had "23 different Statements of Fundamental Beliefs." (2) Both views of Christ's incarnation are not to be found in Scripture - only one view. And (3) Both views as noted by Gulley are not found in "historic Adventism" - again only one view.

To merely reply to Gulley's assertions, and his arrangement of Scripture, and the writings of Ellen G. White, would be to confuse the issue. Gulley is not approaching the subject - as he once believed it as head of the Bible Department of old Madison College - from the viewpoint of "historic Adventism," but rather from the thinking of apostate evangelical Protestantism. He presents Jesus as resulting from "the creative work of God." He writes - "There was in Him. . . the holiness of a new creation." (p. 5) We might ask in passing, is not God ever holy, and was not Jesus, God manifest in the flesh? Why then must a "holiness" be created for Jesus? Further, Gulley asks - "Did the Holy Spirit, creatively present throughout Christ's incarnation, change the corruptible into incorruption for Jesus only (not Mary) just as He will for all of us at the Second Advent?" (Ibid.) He expects an affirmative answer. These are simply

concepts from modern Apostate Protestantism being served through the Adventist Review to the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is poison in the pot!

To set the record straight and in so doing put some "meal" in the pot (II Kings 4: 41), we shall discuss in as detailed a manner as possible, some history, the teachings of Scripture and historic Adventism in regard to the Incarnation, that we might truly - "Behold the Man!"

In 1872, a fourteen page tract was printed on the Steam Press in Battle Creek presenting A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists. (A facsimile of this tract is included in the Documentary - Statements of Belief - published by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation.) This same Statement was printed as an editorial in the first issues of the Signs of the Times on June 4, 1874, edited by James White. (The Living Witness, pp. 1-8) This same Statement appeared again in the Review & Herald, Nov. 24, 1874, and once again in the Signs, Jan. 28, 1875. It was also published subsequently in pamphlet form in 1875, 1877-78, 1884, and in 1888. (SDA Encyclopedia, p. 346)

A second Statement of Beliefs was included in the Yearbook for 1889. It was not inserted again till 1905, and continued till 1914. There were no Yearbooks published from 1895 - 1903, the General Conference Bulletins, taking their place. This 1889 Statement written by Uriah Smith was "only slightly revised and expanded" into 28 sections while the one Elder White helped author had 25 sections. A comparison of the two Statements (See, "Watchman, What of the Night?", June, 1980) reveals that 12 sections were identical; 11 sections had only a word differentiation such as "second coming" for "second advent," or contained an additional explanatory phrase. Only two sections were reworded and these conveyed the same fundamental teachings. Smith added three sections numbered 14-16, dealing with Christian standards of conduct and tithing. While a second Statement of Beliefs, it was not a new nor different Statement, nor did it in anywise alter the fundamentals as printed in the first tract in 1872.

The third Statement of Beliefs appeared in the 1931 Yearbook. This was later made official by the 1946 General Conference Session with two sentences added to section 19 on the subject of Spiritual Gifts at the 1950 Session. It was different in several aspects, both in what was stated and in what was omitted.

The fourth Statement of Beliefs was that which was voted by the 1980 General Conference Session. There was also the Andrews University Statement of Beliefs which was voted by the 1979 Annual Council to be referred to the 1980 General Conference Session for adoption. This, however, was not done, and a substitute statement was given to the delegates as a working copy from which the voted Statement was derived.

In 1894, when the Battle Creek Church published its Directory, they included a section of 31 paragraphs explaining "Some Things Which Seventh-day Adventists Believe." This summary contained some added concepts, and deviations, but was basically in line with the two Statements that had been first published in 1872, and 1889. The importance of this Statement is that the Battle Creek Church was at that time the headquarters Church with about 1500 members, out of a world membership of about 40,000. While this represents only about 3.5% of the total Church membership, it did have the college, sanitarium, publishing house, and General Conference staff represented in its membership directory. The name of O. A. Olsen, President of the General Conference at that time, heads the lists of local elders for the Church.

To obtain "23 different Statements of Beliefs" as alleged by Gulley, one has to count as separate statements every issuance of the 1872 and 1889 Statements, the 1931 Yearbook statement, and its final form in 1950, plus the 1980 Statement, and then include the 1894 Battle Creek Statement, plus the 1979 Andrews University Statement. The question arises as to what advantage did Gulley feel was to be achieved by such devious counting, and inaccuracy of historical fact? There are only three basic Statements of Belief that could be counted as "officially" setting forth what Seventh-day Adventists believe. Two of these were so voted in General Session.

The basic issue involved in Gulley's use of the Statements of Belief is "that the church has never taken a stand for or against one or the other view," of the Incarnation as he presents them in his summary article of his belief on the subject. This simply is not true. What do the early Statements of Belief declare on the subject of the Incarnation? Keep in mind that the 1889 Statement was prefaced with this assertion - "The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principle features of their religious faith, upon which there is, so far as is known, entire unanimity throughout the body." All Statements of Belief published in general publications of the Church, including the Yearbook, from 1872 to 1914 read:

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, . . . that He took upon Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; . . ."

Even the 1931 Statement - voted official in 1946 - declared - "That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family." Nowhere in any of these statements is to be found the suggestion that Christ took the pre-Fall nature of Adam. The concept that He took the pre-Fall nature is neo-Adventism, not historic Adventism!

The only time in our history where we find the doctrine of the pre-Fall concept of the Incarnation taught by a segment of the Church was during the Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana in 1899-1901. Elder S. N. Haskell in a letter to Ellen G. White (Sept. 25, 1900 [2]) wrote:

"Their [Holy Flesh Leaders] point of theology in this particular respect seems to be this: They believe that Christ took Adam's nature before he fell; so He took humanity as it was in the Garden of Eden, and thus humanity was holy, and this is the humanity which Christ had; and now, they say, the particular time has come for us to become holy in that sense, and then we will have 'translation faith' and never die."

It is interesting to observe in regard to this Movement, G. A. Roberts quoted

Ellen G. White as saying before the special called session of the Indiana Conference to deal with the problem - "When I am gone from here, none are to pick up any point of this doctrine and call it truth. There is not a thread of truth in the whole fabric." (EGW Estate Document File #190) Now lo, and behold, the Holy Flesh teaching on the Incarnation has been resurrected by Gulley, and served to the members of the Church in a pot of poisoned "pottage" by the editor of the Adventist Review. [See manuscript - The Holy Flesh Movement - 1899-1901, pp. 27-34, obtainable from the Adventist Laymen's Foundation.]

What Saith the Scriptures?

We turn now our attention to the second major point raised by Gulley, that the Holy Scriptures teach both views of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Bible declares - "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." (I Tim. 3:16). The word "mystery" is a Greek word - μυστήριον - transliterated into English. As used in the New Testament, it does not carry the concept of incomprehension that is often associated with its use in English. Quoting J. A. Robinson, Moulton and Milligan state that "in its New Testament sense a mystery is 'not a thing which must be kept secret. On the contrary it is a secret which God wills to make known and has charged His Apostles to declare to those who have ears to hear it.'" (The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 420, Emphasis Robinson)

While the inspired writers make no attempt to explain how God was manifest in the flesh, these same writers do define explicitly the nature God assumed in the flesh. The process remains a mystery as the word is used in our language, but the end result is no mystery - God was manifest in the flesh; and the "flesh" is clearly defined.

Ellen G. White correctly stated that "Christ, at an infinite cost, by a painful process, mysterious to angels as well as to man, assumed humanity. Hiding His divinity, laying aside His glory, He was born a babe in Bethlehem." (Ms. 29, 1899; 7BC:915, Emphasis supplied)

Observe, the text in I Timothy states - "God was manifest in the flesh" - not God created something in the flesh. He did not need to create an holy nature, for He is ever holy. Being Himself holy, He condescended to become truly man, by taking upon Himself the genetic inheritance of the human race. This is clearly set forth in the Gospel of John. It reads - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) This Eternal Word "became flesh." (John 1:14 ARV) His glory was the manifestation of the character of God - grace and truth - not the flesh He assumed. Thus the Gospel teaches us that the same Word which ever was (ἦν - Greek imperfect, denoting continuous action in past time) took upon Himself - became - flesh. The flesh the Word took was formed in the womb of Mary. The angel Gabriel told her - "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." (Luke 1:31) It needs to be realized and kept in mind that "the power of the Highest" which overshadowed Mary was not there to create "a new human spirit" as taught by Brinsmead (Decade II),¹ or as suggested by Gulley that in Jesus was "the holiness of a new creation." That power, God's supreme power, nothing greater, was called into action not to create, but to effect the transition of God into flesh so that salvation might be achieved for the human race. [How infinitesimal are any works which men may attempt to merit so great a salvation, if such there could be, compared with the infinite power of God manifest to accomplish this great gift.] Lest one would assume that in the womb of Mary, He was held exempt from the blood stream of the human race, John writes - "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." (I John 5:6) While the birth of Jesus wouldn't involve the inner play of the natural process by which a human being is conceived, yet His birth would be as every other human child.

Now we are ready to look at the further statement of the angel Gabriel to Mary that the "being" born of her would be called "the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) Much

emphasis is placed on "that holy thing" as descriptive of Jesus at His birth to indicate that He possessed the pre-Fall nature of Adam. Since, however, He was ever holy, this expression is not as unique as it might appear. He did not receive from Mary "holy flesh" and since the operation of the power of the Highest was not to create but to effect a transition of an Eternal Being from the "form of God" to the "form of a servant," what then is the force of the expression "that holy thing"? First, "thing" is not in the Greek text. Jesus did not come into humanity, neutered. John was shown in vision that the woman "clothed with the sun" brought forth "a man child." (Rev. 12:1,5) The Greek word for man in this text is arsen, and means sexually a male. Christ was not exempt from the sex drives of humanity. The word for "holy" in Luke is hagion, an adjective in the neuter gender. Also in the verse, the same word is used of the Spirit - Pneuma hagion - which was to come upon her. How aptly did Ellen G. White describe the Incarnation when she wrote - "He [Christ] united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united Himself with the temple." (4BC:1147) In other words, the Divine Spirit which would be born of her in a body formed in her womb would be called the Son of God. A Spirit-born, or a Spirit-indwelt person is called in the Bible, a holy one. To the churches at both Ephesus and Philippi, Paul referred to the members as hagioi, holy ones or "saints." (Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1) Why should not then He who was to "be the first born among many brethren," (Rom. 8:29) be also called "holy"? He was to be made sin for us (II Cor. 5:21); yet the "sin offering" laden ceremonially with the sin of the individual confessor, and which typified the work and ministry of Jesus as the great "Sin Offering," was itself called "most holy." (Lev. 6:25) To force a text to seek to prove something not intended by the text, destroys the true meaning conveyed in that announcement of the One who was to come as the Saviour of mankind.

The Incarnation is basic to the Gospel. Paul wrote of his call - "Separated unto the Gospel of God. . . concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh." (Rom. 1:1, 3 ARV) Here

¹Present Truth, No 2, p. 13, (1968)

is no mystery. The humanity of Jesus was of the seed of David. I am wondering if Dr. Gulley would be willing as his next project to write a book on the impeccability of David. Such a defense would greatly enhance his position in regard to the Incarnation. But let Gulley, and every one else who espouses neo-Adventism take heed that Paul declares this basic in the "gospel of God." Further Paul states that to preach another Gospel other than the one he himself was proclaiming, is to be accursed. (Gal. 1:9) It is sad indeed for one who would assist in the provision of "food" for a professed "school of the prophets" to be unable to discern between good gourds and the wild variety, and through the pages of the Adventist Review "shred them into the pot of pottage." Would to God that all who have read this poison would cry out in a voice loud and clear - "There is death in the Adventist Review!" (II. Kings 4:38-40)

Paul doesn't stop with merely telling the church at Rome that Christ was born of the seed of David according to the flesh for the redemption of man, but also that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8:3) In other words - "It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man. . ." (SP, II, p. 39) Now Gulley emphasizes in his article as well as in the Sabbath School lessons he wrote, when commenting on this reference in Romans, that "likeness" is not "sameness." We would simply ask - "Does the same reasoning hold true where Paul uses the same identical prepositional phrase in Philippians 2:7 - "in the likeness of men"? Was not Jesus "truly man"? Gulley goes so far as to declare Him, "fully man." How can one be "fully" something, and not be identical to that same something? You cannot interpret Paul when he uses the same prepositional phrase, one way in one text, and a different way in another text. The phrase - εν ὁμοιωματι - means the same in each text. So which way does Gulley want it? - a phantom Jesus devoid of the fallen nature of man, or a truly human Jesus with our fallen nature upon Him in all that it implies. O give me the real Jesus - the One who can be touched with all the feelings of my humanity, who was

tempted in all points even as I am - yet who was victorious in that He did not sin! Yes that One is my Saviour, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness," and God has given "assurance to all men in that He raised Him from the dead." (Rom. 1:4; Acts 17:31)

The reference in Romans 8:3 has a two-pronged approach to the Incarnation and the nature Christ assumed in the flesh. It not only states that Jesus was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, but He "condemned sin in the flesh." If He had taken the pre-Fall nature of Adam, He could not have condemned sin in the flesh. Adam could be tempted only from without in Eden. No so after the Fall. His fallen nature also became subject to the assaults of the enemy. With Christ, He was assailed both from within and without, but He held the integrity of His unblemished character - condemning sin in the flesh. "By experiencing in Himself the strength of Satan's temptation, He would know how to succor those who should put forth efforts to help themselves." (EGW, Review, March 18, 1875, emphasis mine)

Turning to Paul's letter to the Philippians, we read - "Christ Jesus: who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking a form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." (Phil 2:5-7 ARV) The Greek word, translated "servant" - doulos - can also be rendered, "slave." It does not require a great mind, nor the possession of a doctor's degree in theology to know that God did not create Adam with a slave-nature. Adam became a slave when he sinned. That form Christ Jesus took, when He emptied Himself of "the form of God." Here again one finds the basic elements of the Incarnation. It was One equal with God in every way - the Logos - who, divesting Himself of the form of God, appeared as a real man in the slave form of man. There was no creation, merely a substitution. He who as God was ever holy, now became man, accepting an existence in that which had been defiled by sin. What a condescension, what an humiliation! "He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. . . because by so doing He

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could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam." (4BC:1147) In the slave form of man, He entered the strong man's house, and bound the strong man. See Matt. 12:29.

One more text describes the nature Christ took in the humiliation of becoming a man. Paul writing in the Essay to the Hebrews stated - "Since the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also himself in like manner partook of the same. . . For verily not to angels doth He give help, but He giveth help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren. . ." (Heb. 2:14, 16-17 ARV, margin) The whole of this passage in Hebrews is to stress the oneness between the One who sanctifies and those being sanctified. They come into human existence in the same manner, birth; they receive in that birth the same things, blood and flesh; and the reason for this identity is that help might be bestowed where it is needed - to the fallen sons of men, not to angels, nor to an Adam in Eden.

Those who try to see in the Bible, the concept of Christ taking the pre-Fall nature of Adam, use the texts which tell us that Christ is the "second Adam." (I Cor. 15:45) So He is. But Who is He? Paul clearly states - "The second man is the Lord from heaven." (verse 47) The second Adam is not a "new creation" by which the "image of God" is again formed in the womb of Mary, encased in a physical body of the "likeness of men." But rather "the Lord from heaven" through "a painful process" accepted the inheritance of the fallen race - "the form of a slave" - in which to exist and conquer. It is the conquering Christ - defeating the one who usurped the rights and dominion of the first Adam - who became the second Adam. It was not the Jesus of Bethlehem who was the second Adam, but the resurrected Jesus from Joseph's tomb who has been highly exalted, and who now stands at the head of the human race. Humiliation and a death struggle preceded the restoration of the "first dominion." (Micah 4:8)

The Bible presents but one position on the Incarnation. The eternal Word took the nature of fallen man, and in that nature sustained the character of God.

Gulley concludes the paragraph quoted on page one of this Thought Paper by stating: "Both views [the pre-Fall, and the post-Fall] are found in historic Adventism." We have already quoted from the Statements of Belief, written by both James White, and Uriah Smith, long time editor of the Review & Herald, noting that these beliefs were held with "entire unanimity" throughout the body. The historic position of the pioneers of this Movement has been well summarized in Bible Readings for the Home Circle, 1915 Edition. This book stood untouched as the standard exposition of Adventist teaching till 1949, when the concept of the Incarnation was altered, thus heralding the advent of neo-Adventism. The 1915 Edition reads:

"In His humanity Christ partook of our sinful nature. If not, then He was not 'made like unto His brethren,' was not 'in all points tempted like as we are,' did not overcome as we have to overcome, and is not, therefore, the complete and perfect Saviour man needs and must have to be saved. The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is needed. On the human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, - a sinful nature. On the divine side, from His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit. And all this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that in the same way every one who is 'born of the Spirit' may gain like victories over sin in his own sinful flesh. Thus each one is to overcome as Christ overcame. Rev. 3:21. Without this birth there can be no victory over temptation, and no salvation from sin. John 3:3-7." (p. 115)

God, in Christ, condemned sin, not by pronouncing against it merely as a judge sitting on a judgment-seat, but by coming and living in the flesh, in sinful flesh, and yet without sinning. In Christ, He demonstrated that it is possible, by His grace and power, to resist temptation, overcome sin, and live a sinless life in sinful flesh." (p. 116)

Final Observation

How did the Lord of glory view His coming to earth as a man? He "knew that Adam in Eden, with his superior advantages, might have withstood the temptations of Satan, and conquered him." How did He know? He had created Adam with that power. To have done anything less, would have cast a reflection back on God when Adam fell. To take such a nature - the pre-Fall - would have presented no trial, no difficulty, for all He would have had to do was to exercise the powers thus assumed and He knew He could conquer. But fallen man had no such powers, and could not rely upon himself. Christ "also knew that it was not possible for man, out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the Fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength." What was He to do? To assume the nature of man as he was after the Fall, presented risks - eternal risks to Himself. It would be a fearful struggle. What did He decide to do? "He humbled Himself to take man's nature, that, with His divine power combined with the human, He might reach man where he is." (SM, bk i, p. 279) Thank God for such a Saviour. We need not eat of the poisoned pottage served by the Editor of the Adventist Review, but can feast at the Table of the Lord, on which has been provided the Divine Shewbread.

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TO OUR CANADIAN READERS

Arrangements have been made with the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Ontario to make available for all in Canada the same tape recordings as are obtainable by those living in the USA, at the same price, only in Canadian currency. There will be only one difference - the postage costs. With this mailing will be enclosed to our Canadian readers only, an Order Form noting the tapes available. As new tapes are made, they will be made available to the Ontario Foundation for distribution. Be sure to direct all orders to the Foundation in Canada at the address noted on the Order Form.

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A PRELIMINARY REPORT

In this issue of the Thought Paper, we planned to give the first report on the response to the Questionnaire sent out several months ago. However, due to the article appearing in the Adventist Review, by Dr. Gulley, we felt that an answer to it should have top priority. In this issue, we will give the list of names to whom the Questionnaire was sent, and a summary of the response so far in brief. The Questionnaire and Cover Letter was sent by certified mail in the USA, and by airmail to the persons overseas. The ones who received these two items were:

Mr. Lewis Walton
Mr. Charles Wheeling
Elder R. D. Spear
Mr. Vance Ferrell
James D. Wang, Ph. D.
Colin Standish, Ph. D.
Russell Standish, M. D.
Elder W. D. Frazee
Mr. Lowell Scarborough
Mr. Wendell W. Gibbs
Elder W. L. Santee
Lloyd Rosenvold, M. D.
Elder R. J. Wieland

Of these 13, two have responded to the Questionnaire, and gave their reasons for answering the first question as they did. They represent two of the most spiritually mature names on the list. Four others did not answer the Questionnaire but sent letters seeking to circumvent a direct reply to the "Yes" or "No" first question. One of these became so wrought up over the Questionnaire that he indulged in personal vendetta and insinuations of a questionable nature. The remaining seven have not responded. It reminds one of the experience on Mt. Carmel, when Elijah asked - "How long halt ye between two opinions?" - the text reads - "And the people answered him not a word." (I Kings 18:21) No doubt among this group were some of the 7000, but for individuals who profess to be giving a warning in spiritual Israel to remain silent casts a shadow over their qualifications as true voices.

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