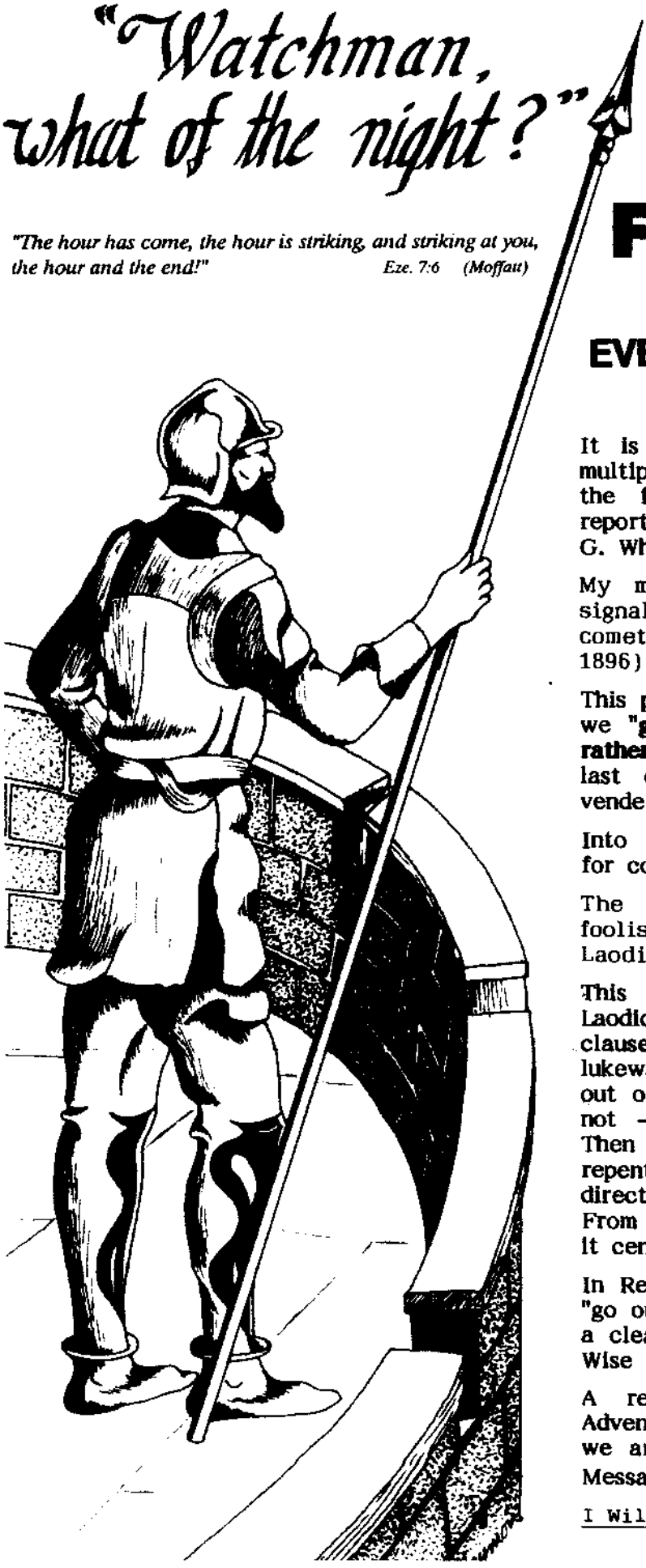
"Watchman, what of the night?"

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



THE ROAD FORKS THRICE

EVERY ADVENTIST MUST CHOOSE!

It is decision time in Adventism. The options are multiple. The road forks thrice. Once down two of the forks, there are various by-paths. In 1896, reporting on the first campmeeting in Tasmania, Ellen G. White wrote:

My mind was carried into the future, when the signal will be given, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." (R&H, Feb. 11, 1896)

This parable presents two forks. (Matt. 25:6-9) Either we **"go out"** to meet the Bridegroom, or else we **"go rather** to them that sell and buy for" ourselves. This last option is fatal. If we go and buy of the venders, on us "the door" will be "shut." (25:10)

Into this picture must be projected another concept for consideration from the Writings. It reads:

The state of the Church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state. (R&H, August 19, 1890)

This introduces consideration of the message to Laodicea. (Rev. 3:14-20) There are two "because" clauses in these verses: 1) Because Laodicea is lukewarm, the True Witness declares, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." 2) Because "thou sayest," and are not - corporate deception - divine counsel is given. Then comes the call - "Be zealous therefore, and repent." (v. 19) This is followed by a change of direction for the appeal - "if **any man** hear my voice." From a corporate approach with the "thee" and "thou," it centers on the individual - tis (Greek) - "anyone."

In Revelation 3, the figure of speech is changed from "go out" to "let Jesus in." In each reference, there is a clear distinction in regard to the two classes - the Wise and the Foolish.

A recognized pioneer writer and editor of the Adventist Church didn't teach the concept of Rev. 3:16 as we are hearing it today in connection with the 1888 Message. Uriah Smith wrote:

I Will Spue Thee out of My Mouth. - Here the figure

is still further carried out, and the rejection of the lukewarm expressed by the nauseating effects of tepid water. And this denotes a final rejection, an utter separation from His church. (Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation, p. 373, 1899 edition)

Beyond these two distinct options is a third which a poet has put into verse:

> The high soul climbs the high way;
> The low soul gropes the low, and
> In between on the misty flats, the
> rest drift to and fro.
> But to every soul there openeth a
> high way and a low,
> And every man determines which way
> his soul shall go.

These "misty flats" present the greatest problem and the greatest deception today for every concerned Adventist. The banners flying today on these "misty flats" proclaim, "Historic Adventism," "Our Firm Foundation," "Vital Truths," "Waymarks," and a host of other names. There is no question, the pillars of our faith remain steadfast. They are what they have always been: 1) "The cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and **having a decided relation to God's people on earth.**" 2) The Three Angels' Messages. 3) "The temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God." 4) "The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment." 5) "The nonimmortality of the wicked." (See Counsels to Editors and Writers, p. 30)

How we have perceived these pillars, and the way we have proclaimed them have failed us. In 1952, an historic Bible Conference was convened at the Sligo Park Church in Takoma Park. The fundamentals were proclaimed forthrightly according to the historical teachings of the Church. Yet, just three years later in 1955-56, we were unable to meet the challenge of the Evangelicals and caved in with a deadly compromise of basic concepts which had been the heart of the Church's teaching from its inception.

In 1979, Dr. Desmond Ford crystallized the challenge to our sanctuary teaching which the Evangelicals had introduced. Ford was given a leave of absence with pay to put into writing his challenge, and his reasons for such a denial of faith. In 1980, the "venders of oil" worked out a Statement of Beliefs which confirmed the compromises of 1955-56, but they also prepared an "out" in the Statement by which they could meet Dr. Ford's challenge. Following the General Conference session, the theologians and administrators of the Church gathered at Glacier View in Colorado to hear Ford defend his teachings which challenged the very core of historic Adventism. This conference was reported in a "Special Sanctuary Issue" of the Ministry magazine (Oct. 1980). This issue also reported Ford's perception of the Church's response to his defense. Asked if "his doctrinal positions were more than tentative," Ford replied that -

> the brethren had made tremendous progress in the past few days and that the church's position was closer to his than it had ever been before. He expressed the thought that if we have come this far in four days, imagine how far the church will go in four years in changing its position. (p. 9)

At this point the Church hierarchy put the brakes on. They resorted to the "out" prepared in the 1980 voted statements - a position never before taken by the Church. In Statement #17, on "The Gift of Prophecy," had been inserted this sentence - "As the Lord's messenger, her [Ellen G. White's] writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth." So this position could be taken, the same Statement of Beliefs omitted the word, "only" which had been included in **all** previous statements in regard to the Bible as "the **only** infallible rule of faith." So then if the Church hierarchy could not respond to Ford with a Biblical, "Thus saith the Lord," they could quote Ellen G. White as equal authority with the Bible, and if necessary as an addition to the Bible.

As if anticipating this new position, or perhaps even suggesting it, in the liberal publication of the Church, Spectrum, Raymond F. Cottrell in an article - "Sanctuary Debate: A Question of Method" (Vol. 10, #4) - indicated that the New Testament was a reinterpretation of the Old and "Ellen G. White provides a continuing reinterpretation appropriate for our time." (p. 20) Such a perception was sustained and written into the 1980, 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief.

The "independent ministries" which sprung up after the 1980 General Conference - and 97% of them have - sought to reaffirm "historic Adventism," and one even adopted the title of the official report of the 1952 Bible Conference - "Our Firm Foundation." But all have run, as it were, with the "new theology" regarding the Writings voted at the 1980 session even going to the extent of declaring that you cannot know that the Bible is the inspired word of God unless you accept Ellen

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G. White. Standish writing in Spear's "official organ" stated:

The acceptance of the prophetic gift in the ministry of Sister White is essential not only to the preparation of God's people for the eternal kingdom, but also to the acceptance of the Scriptures as inspired. (OFF, April, 1989, p. 15)

This is nothing more than pure Roman Catholic teaching garbed in the nomenclature of Adventism. Note the Roman Catholic position:

The only authority which non-Catholics have for the inspiration of the Scriptures is the authority of the Catholic Church. If the latter is rejected, there remain no logical grounds for retention of the cardinal tenet of all Protestants - the inspired character of Scripture. (The Faith of Millions, p. 145)

In answer to the question, "Can we not prove the inspiration of the Bible from 'the inward testimony of the Spirit'?" the Catholic Church replies:

No, this criterion is no criterion whatever, as Dr. Eck told Luther at the Leipzig Disputation, when he [Eck] argued that the inspired and canonical character of the books of the Bible could be known only by the divine authority and tradition of the Catholic Church. (The Question Box, p. 66, 1929 ed.)

Keep in mind that the Roman Catholic Church believes that "tradition" - and they do not use the term as we use it - is one of two sacred streams of divine origin flowing from Paradise. To them, "tradition" is "not human opinion, but the divine teaching of an infallible Apostolate established by Christ Himself." (ibid., p. 78) Why should any Jesuit want to penetrate an "independent ministry" when so many are proclaiming Catholic teaching clothed in the "new theology" of Adventism?

Our problem - and we have not perceived it, or else are unwilling to perceive it - is the failure to understand the progressive nature of truth. Truth parallels Christian experience. We are to "grow in grace **and** in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Peter 3:18) Stagnation of either is spiritual death, plus holding to a fossilized theology and calling it historic Adventism. We have been clearly warned of this condition. The servant of the Lord stated:

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. (5T:706-707)

What does God indicate He will do? In fact, it is evident that He has already permitted it to happen. Note carefully:

God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. ... God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the Word of God, so when the testing time shall come, and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith, they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. (5T:707-708)

"Historic" Adventism as proclaimed on the "mysty flats" is not the answer to the present crisis in Adventism, but a progressive understanding of truth is. Well did the servant of the Lord write:

"The Lord has made His people the repository of sacred truth. Upon every individual who has had the light of present truth **devolves the duty** of developing **that** truth on a higher scale than it has hitherto been done." (Ms. 27, 1897)

This concept is not something new given to Seventh-day Adventists, but is a principle stemming from our Protestant heritage. When the Pilgrims were about to embark for the New World, their pastor, John Robinson, charged them:

I charge you, before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has yet more truth to break forth out of His Holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, remember it - 'tis an article of your church covenant - that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God. (Source Book, p. 528, 1940 edition)

When the Puritans first chose to separate from the English Church, they covenanted together, as the Lord's free people, "to walk together in all His ways made known or to be made known to them." This is "the true spirit of reform,

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the vital principle of Protestantism." (GC, p. 291) It is not only America that can repudiate the principles of Protestantism. We can do the same in our own experience and lose our souls on the "misty flats."

Observe again the "high road." The admonition of the parable of the Ten Virgins is "Go ye **out** to meet the Bridegroom." (Matt. 25:6) This parable pictures two "going outs." The first brought the "virgins" together. Jesus began the parable by stating - "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." (Matt. 25:1) The verb, "went forth" is exēlthon, the aroist, or passive of exerchomai, meaning to "go out." At the beginning of the parable, all ten went out together. In the midst of their corporate experience comes another call - "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." (25:6) Here the word for "go out" is exerchesthe, a present form of exerchomai, and carries the force of "be going out" to meet the bridegroom. This second call to "go out" separates the virgins, five respond, and five "go rather" to the venders of oil. On them the door is shut!

In the beginning all ten desired to go to the wedding. In the end the ten chose different routes. Jesus is the Bridegroom of the parable. He is the truth, pure and unadulterated. The issue that separates is truth. To respond to truth and truth alone is a lonely path, and tragically, "few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14) On this high road, there are no by-paths, and no "hobby horses" are trotting along its path. Truth alone as it is in Jesus marks every step of the route. And that truth is a progressive understanding of that light which lit up the beginning of the entrance to the high road.

The road forks thrice, which fork have you taken? The high soul climbs the high way, and the low soul gropes the low, and in between on the misty flats the rest drift to and fro.

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We may divide thinkers into those who think for themselves, and those who think through others. The latter are the rule, and the former the exception. The first are the original thinkers in a double sense, and egotists in the noblest meaning of the word. It is from them only that the world learns wisdom.

Schopenhauer

"AnchorPoints" - III

As the previous article was being prepared from the "Notes" of a monthly Convocation message presented at the Foundation Chapel, the Adventist Review (June 4, 1992, pp. 8-11) published another article in the on-going series on the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief which were voted at the 1980 General Conference session. It has become obvious that these analyses are not following the order as found in the Statements, but rather a picking here and there through the list for reasons known only to the editors. The one in the June issue concerned the role of Ellen G. White as a "prophet" in the Adventist Church.

The writer, an associate editor of the Review, sought to reconcile the newly formulated concept set forth on the role of Ellen G. White in Statement #17, and the Protestant tenet of sola scriptura - an impossibility! He rightly stated that the New Testament teaches the doctrine of "spiritual gifts" - He uses the term, charismata - and, therefore, the acceptance of that gift in the ministry of Ellen G. White is valid. But to assign a "canonical" role, as the editor did, invalidates the Protestant position of sola scriptura. It was so obvious that the thrust was directed toward Dr. Desmond Ford that he should have come out forthrightly and named him.

How do we reconcile the Adventist position in the 1980 Statement and the Protestant position? We don't. It is just a part of the "new theology" injected into this 1980 Statement along with other concepts. Previous Statements of Belief created no problem of the proper relationship between the Bible and "spiritual gifts." Both the original 1872 Statement, and the one published intermittingly between 1889 through 1914 stated - "that these gifts ["as enumerated especially in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4"] are not designed to supercede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation,..." In other words, the original position of the Church was the teaching of "the primacy of the Scriptures," and the recognition that these same Scriptures taught that "gifts" (plural) from Jesus would be a part of the heritage of God's true people till the end of time. Ellen G. White's name never occurred in any statement of belief until 1950 when the General Conference in session added it to the 1931 Statement.

In The White Truth, an answer to Walter Rea's, The White Lie, Dr. John Robertson

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THE PLAGUE OF PUBLIC IMMODESTY

DARE WE BE CAUGHT UP IN IT?

Eby W. Burkholder

The enjoyable summer weather intensifies the problem of people appearing in public with abbreviated clothing. This plague of public immodesty has accelerated the breakdown of morals in our society, and tends to also condition our minds to accept what God has declared sinful.

Many forces are at work, propelling this demoralizing situation. First of all, the nominal church has gone down the road of shameful immodesty. The tolerant attitudes and acceptance of this perversion by many professing Christians have undoubtedly weakened the conscience of society. From a secular viewpoint, many of the clothing designers, commercial advertisers, Hollywood producers, television programmers, and magazine publishers seem to be, for a profit, intent on removing all modesty and decency from our society. Also, the current emphasis on physical fitness and beauty has planted the notion that the body is for public attraction and display.

The Bible speaks very explicitly about clothing. In the context of end-time developments, the child of God is commanded, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 16:15) A curse is pronounced upon those who bare the leg and uncover the thigh. (Isa. 47:2-3) Women are commanded to adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety (I Tim. 2:9). Sinful women are pictured in gay, gaudy clothing that draws attention to their bodies and reveals their sinful motives (Proverbs 5; Revelation 18). In contrast, God's people are always pictured modestly and fully clothed.

The Bible equates nudity with moral degeneracy and demon possession. The demoniac of Gadara dwelt among the tombs, had an unclean spirit, and "wore no clothes." (Luke 8:27) After the devil was cast out of him, and he came to know the Lord, he was found "sitting...clothed, and in his right mind."

But some will reply that Adam and Eve were unclothed in the Garden. True, but in their unfallen state, they were clothed as God is clothed, "with honor and majesty." (Ps. 104:1-2) They were clothed with a veil of purity and light, which was lost in the Fall. Immediately after they had sinned, they were ashamed of their nakedness and hastily prepared aprons of fig leaves. Adam said, "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Gen. 3:10) God was not satisfied with their makeshift aprons, but made coats of skins and completely clothed them. (ver. 21) This act of God carries redemption types, but it also reveals His will for the covering of the body.

Satan is the father of the "undress" parade of our day. ... Satan, like Adam and Eve, was made naked through transgression, but no covering was provided for him. In contrast to Satan, Christ is portrayed modestly dressed in His earthly life, and in heaven He is pictured with a full garment down to the foot. (Rev. 1:13) Immodesty and undress are most prevalent where Satan is most active. This is the reason people do not wear clothing in some dark, superstitious, heathen cultures of the world. It is also the reason our society is rapidly approaching this same point. Although immodesty is now considered acceptable and cultured in Western society, it is no less satanic than before, and God is no less tolerant of sin, but will surely bring judgment upon it.

There is a definite relationship between immodesty and the moral corruption of our day. The eye gate is a direct route to the mind and the soul. The power of sensory perception is well understood and utilized by the devil. David, the man after God's own heart, committed adultery by first of all lusting with his eyes. The Proverb writer gives many warnings against the allurements of the "strange woman" attracting her prey by her clothing and her body. (Prov. 5:3-6; 7:10) Social and moral sins, such as infidelity in marriage, adultery, and sex crimes, can often be traced to perverted visual exposures. This does not excuse the person sinning with his eyes, but the seducer is likewise guilty.

Much of what we have discussed here will not be changed. The ungodly world is headed on a downward course toward judgment. But the Christians outlook must remain positive. God has placed the believers here in our day for a purpose. Jesus has already prayed for us, that we may be kept from the evil of this world. He has given us His Word as the sanctifying agent in our life. (John 17:15-17)

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The following guidelines will help us in properly relating to the problems we have discussed:

1. **We must continue to testify against the immodesty of our day rather than adopt it.** We will live our testimony by dressing modestly ourselves, and by explaining Bible principles and applications to others. The tendency to become insensible to unscriptural practices is real in our own lives.

2. **We must maintain the needed reserve and protection in our own homes.** Careless, rather than planned, immodesty may be a danger for us. Children learn social and moral values in the home. For this reason, family members should be well-clothed. Catalogs, magazines, newspapers, and advertising flyers should be closely guarded. Clothing advertisements have become extremely sensual, and they must not become an influence in our homes.

3. **We must guard our exposures to the world.** We cannot isolate ourselves completely from the prevalent immodesty of our day, but we should not intermingle unnecessarily with the world. Attending or viewing places such as swimming pools must be strictly avoided. Occupational exposures must also be guarded. In the past, many employers had dress regulations for their employees, but today it is different. The intermingling today of men and women on the job actually requires more caution, and more, rather than less, regulation.

4. **We must maintain a Scriptural community of believers that continues to speak to the dress issue of our day.** Bible teaching and Ministerial leadership are needed to maintain a standard of modesty. If a community of believers does not regulate the standard of modesty, the world will. Even in regulated groups, the tendency is to follow the standards of the world at a measured distance, rather than maintaining a truly Biblical standard. The hemline of the Christian woman's dress will not go up and down with the current style; it will stay down.

5. **We must implore the power of God in resisting temptation and lust.** We cannot help seeing some of the immodesty around us, but as Christians, we must not look for it, but must close the mind and the soul to it. Sinful imaginations must not be allowed to fasten themselves to the mind. Victory and cleansing can be experienced through prayer, Bible reading, and meditation on "whatsoever things are pure."

The plague of public immodesty need not effect us - it must not. God is looking for a separated

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LET'S TALK IT OVER

The Bible clearly pictures the followers of Christ as sheep among wolves. When Jesus sent out the disciples, He instructed them to "go not in the way of the Gentiles,... but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ... Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." (Matt. 10:5-6, 16) The inference is clear that the lost sheep of Israel are also in the midst of wolves. Paul warned that men would arise from among the very leadership, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves. (Acts 20:30) Peter refers to such as false prophets and teachers. (2 Peter 2:1) Jesus warned that inwardly these false prophets are ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. (Matt. 7:15)

In Jesus's day, the disciples and people saw an organized Jewish Church, but the discerning eye of Jesus saw a people "scattered as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9:36) When sheep become scattered, they are in most danger from predators. But predators that can be seen are not the most dangerous; it is the wolf disguised as a sheep, that conceals his real purpose so that he can ravage the flock.

This is the very problem of the Church today. Every wind of doctrine is blowing, and people, like sheep, are drinking from the poiluted potholes of just about every false doctrine imaginable. One concerned brother from Maryland stated aptly today's dilemma in a telephone conversation, when he said, "I don't refer to myself as a Seventh-day Adventist anymore because I don't know what it means -- historical, Evangelical, or Pentecostal." When searching for the truth, how does one recognize the disguised wolf; how does one expose the wolf, and then what does one do when encountered by one?

Recognition

"Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." (I John 4:1; I Thess. 5:21) There is more Biblical admonition in this area; however, it must be applied to our lives to be useful. "God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms." (GC, p. 595) The Seal of God is not merely attending religious services on a certain day of the week. It is having God's written word, the Bible, in the

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mind, through diligent study. By studying the Bible and being obedient to the light revealed, we, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will be prepared to recognize wolves disguised as sheep.

Exposure

The Bible has clear instructions on how to approach a fellow believer who is in error. It is not my intent to repeat these basics. But what about a wolf? A wolf disguised as a sheep would be someone professing truth and teaching error. If I understand what Jesus meant when He warned the disciples that they would be among wolves, He was describing someone who disguises himself under a garb of truth. Being in sheep's clothing, he could be a Sabbath School teacher, a minister of the Church, or even an independent minister who professes to be concerned about the apostasy in the Church. He may quote frequently, or print profusely from the Writings of Ellen G. White. Outwardly, he professes truth, but inwardly he is a ravening wolf. The Scriptures say that the Devil has come down with great wrath, but this is a disguised wrath. We are told that he is transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers profess to be ministers of righteousness. (II Cor. 11:13-15)

A few years ago as a reader of WWN, I was occasionally up set over Elder Grotheer's method of exposure of those teaching error. I thought he was being unusually harsh and critical of them. Then, I began to think about how little time there is left for this world and how vitally important it was for every individual to receive the straight truth and facts that would enable sincere searchers for truth to quickly investigate and make decisions. Also, I looked at Jesus' example in Matthew 23. It was during His last week of public ministry. It was time to be plain spoken. Jesus revealed what the laity did not see. He called the Jewish Church leadership hypocrites seven times, murderers three times, inferred they were liars five times, and called them blind five times. He also called them fools twice, extortioners once, and serpents/vipers twice. Would you say that Jesus was being unjust or harsh because He was forthright? You might also note carefully what Jesus did next. (Matt. 23:38-24:1)

Do you believe the end is near? Would you appreciate knowing if someone you had placed confidence in spiritually was teaching error? We need to **know** those which labor among us. Those who teach "in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught," you are to "avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded." (Romans 16:17-18, RSV)

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Anchor Points - from p. 4, col. 2

quoted George I. Butler as giving "the natural relationship" between the Bible and the Writings. Butler had written:

We do not hold them [the visions] to be superior to the Bible, or in one sense equal to it. The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as other things. That rule, therefore, is of the highest authority; the standard is higher than the thing tested by it. If the Bible should show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand, and the visions would be given up. (R&H, August 14, 1883)

This position would solve many of our problems, and place Ellen G. White in her proper role as a "messenger" of the Lord. Tragically, most of the "independent ministries" have embraced the "new theology" in the 1980 Statement on Ellen G. White and carried it to even further extremes, clothing it with Roman Catholic teaching.

Editor's Note: It is our plan to set forth in a future issue of WWN the Biblical teaching on "Spiritual Gifts" and let "the chips fall where they will." One should not be afraid of truth, if he himself is honest.

Plague of Public Immodesty, from 6, col. 1

people to convey a consistent witness to the world. As one person has wisely said, "If we want men to see the image of God in our faces, we will need to keep our bodies clothed."

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"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854-0069, USA.

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