



*"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

ANALYSIS OF QUESTION # 1

**"Do You Affirm as Truly Representative of YOUR Confession
of Faith, the STATEMENT of FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS of
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS as Voted at the 1980
General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas?"**

Editor's Note: On April 20, 1983, we sent a Questionnaire and a Cover Letter to 13 men who profess to stand for historic Adventism. (See WWN, June 1983, p. 2) Of these thirteen - Lewis Walton, Charles Wheeling, Elder R. D. Spear, Vance Ferrell, Dr. James D. Wang, Dr. Colin Standish, Russell Standish, M. D., Elder W. D. Frazee, Lowell Scarborough, Wendell W. Gibbs, Elder W. L. Santee, Lloyd Rosenvold, M. D., and Elder R. J. Wieland - only two responded by answering Question #1. This issue of WWN sets forth the vital importance of this first question to truth, and the relationship of the Dallas Statement to historic Adventism. In the light of the evidence, the failure of eleven men to commit themselves should come through as clearly as the flashing red light at a railroad crossing. To ignore the implications of such a flashing light could prove fatal.

If one believes his doctrinal position to be in harmony with historic Adventism, then he should not have difficulty answering this question. One may be publishing quantities of facts concerning the apostasy in our schools, whether PUC, or SMC; one may be producing tapes telling of the circle of apostasy; one may be lecturing on current "happenings in the world and in the Church," telling people to "Wake up;" or one may be a part of a publishing association which purports to publish "Historic Truth," yet if one cannot take a stand either, yes, or no, on what the Church professes to be officially their fundamental teachings, then there is something desperately wrong with what one is trying to accomplish.

When Elijah challenged the whole nation on Mount Carmel - and this included the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal

- the text states - "And the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21) What fear grips the hearts of men so they cannot take an unequivocal stand for truth?

Jesus and truth are inseparable. He said, "I AM the truth." (John 14:6). Thus we can paraphrase a testimony concerning an evaluation of relationship to Jesus which comes near to answering the question as to why men professing historic Adventism are afraid to commit themselves on Question #1. Paraphrased, John 12:42-43 reads thus: "Nevertheless among the chief advocates of historic Adventism are many who know the Dallas Statement of Beliefs is heretical, but because of the hierarchy, they do not confess this fact, lest they be put out of the Church: for they love the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Two of the 13 men to whom the Questionnaire

was sent, did respond forthrightly to the first question. Both Dr. James D. Wang and Elder R. J. Wieland answered this question with a check in the "No" blank.

In the "Cover Letter," I promised to go on record as to my position, and to state, why. I join the two courageous men who were not afraid to take a stand for truth. The Dallas Statement of Belief does not reflect my faith, nor belief in fundamental areas of truth. While some of the statements have become confused in the transition from the Andrews University Statements of Belief voted by the hierarchs at the 1979 Annual Council, to the Statement as finally voted at Dallas, there is still sufficient evidence of departure from the truth committed to the Church to warrant a forthright denial of the Dallas Statement by those professing to be upholding historic Adventism through books and papers, tapes and public lectures.

Let us now examine the Dallas Statements of Belief in specific areas of fundamental truth. This is the basis for Question #1.

The Godhead

All - and note the word, All - Statements of Belief issued by the Church either in the Yearbook, or in general Church papers from 1872 through 1914, stated the belief concerning the Godhead in the same way, and in the same words. It read:

"That there is one God, a personal, spiritual Being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit.

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the One by whom He created all things, and by whom they do consist. . ."

The Statement voted at Dallas introduced a phraseology concerning the Godhead, which had not appeared previously, not even in the 1931 Statement of Beliefs which had been the first to introduce the idea of the "Trinity" - a non-Biblical terminology. The new phraseology reads:

"There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons." We need to ask - From where was the phraseology of this concept derived? In a textbook, obtainable at the Loma Linda Book Store, J. N. D. Kelley, Principal of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, wrote:

"The doctrine of one God, the Father and creator, formed the background and indisputable premise of the Church's faith. Inherited from Judaism, it was her bulwark against pagan polytheism, Gnostic emanationism and Marcionite dualism. The problem for theology was to integrate with it intellectually, the fresh data of the specifically Christian revelation. Reduced to their simplest, these were the convictions that God had made Himself known in the Person of Jesus, the Messiah, raising Him from the dead and offering salvation to men through Him, and that He had poured out His Holy Spirit upon the Church. Even at the New Testament stage ideas about pre-existence and creative role were beginning to take shape, and a profound, if often obscure, awareness of the activity of the Spirit in the Church was emerging. No steps had been taken so far, however, to work all these complex elements into a coherent whole. The Church had to wait for more than three hundred years for a final synthesis, for not until the council of Constantinople (381) was the formula of one God existing in three co-equal Persons formally ratified." (Early Christian Doctrines, Revised Edition, pp. 87-88)

Thus, now appears, instead of a Scriptural summary of our Belief in regard to God, a "formula" worked out by the Fathers of the Catholic Church, and ratified by a Church Council, three hundred years after the Apostles. But we need to go a step further, and ask, why this "formula"?

Besides this statement reflecting the thinking of a Church Council, the Dallas Statement included a statement on the Church, which had not appeared in any previous Statement of Beliefs. It read in part:

"The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour."

One has only to turn to the Constitution of the World Council of Churches to find the reason for the formulations on God and the Church as appeared in the Dallas Statement of Beliefs. The first Article of the Constitution which is noted as the "Basis" of its objectives, reads (Note the underscored parts, and compare with the previous quoted statements from the Dallas Statement of Beliefs):

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." (So Much in Common, p. 12)

The second article of the WCC Constitution reveals the subtlety woven into the Dallas Statement. It reads:

"Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis [First Article, quoted above] upon which the Council is founded. . ." (Ibid.)

How then can anyone remain uncommitted in regard to the Statements of Belief as voted at Dallas which express the basis for membership in the World Council of Churches? To express ignorance of this point as a justification for refusing to answer Question #1, is to confess, blindness. How can the blind lead those seeking the light of historic Adventism amid the darkness of the Omega Apostasy? And if you follow the blind, you are also blind!

The Incarnation

The 1980 Dallas Statement of Beliefs reads concerning the Incarnation as follows:

"4. THE SON - God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. . . Forever truly God, He became truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God."

The recent controversial lessons for the Sabbath School - the first Quarter of this year - revived the issue as to which nature Christ took in the Incarnation, the

pre-Fall, or the post-Fall nature of Adam. The editor of the Adventist Review, Dr. W. G. Johnsson, writing the Teaching Aids for the Lessons, correctly stated the Church's stand in regard to the Dallas Statement, while failing to do his home work on the other part of the summation. He wrote:

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not spelled out a definitive stand in this matter. Neither the previous 22 statements of belief nor the more recent 27 Statements of Fundamental Belief voted at Dallas in April 1980 take up this matter." (Adult Teaching Aids Quarterly, January-March, 1983, p. 40) The 22 article, 1931 Statement does state concerning Jesus Christ - "While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on earth as a man."

However, the statement on the Incarnation in the previous statements from 1872 on through 1914 (except the Battle Creek Church Directory statement) read that Jesus Christ "took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that He dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, lived our example. . ."

Our spiritual forefathers did speak in their confession of faith in regard to the Incarnation, and declared that Jesus did take upon Himself "the nature of the seed of Abraham." This is the post-Fall nature. The 1980 Dallas Statement does not so confess this historic position of the Church. Why then could not those men who received the Questionnaire - and who profess in their writings, and public addresses to stand for the historic faith - commit themselves? How long will we continue to halt between two opinions?

The Atonement and High Priestly Ministry of Christ

In the Dallas Statement one finds that "Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death and resurrection" is stated to be "the only means of atonement for human sin." This is declared to be the "perfect atonement." It is further noted that those who accept this "atonement" are assured "final victory over sin and death."

Lest there be any misunderstanding, it should be stated that the sacrifice made by Christ on Calvary was in every way complete - ample - for the sins of the whole world. His life and death met "the condition of the atonement" (AA, p. 29). But, does the mere acceptance of this fact assure me of "final victory over sin and death"? In the Hebrew sanctuary service, was there nothing beyond the Altar in the Court? Even if an individual came to the Brazen Altar during the year, did this assure him of cleansing on the great Day of Atonement?

If the perfect life Christ lived, and His death on Calvary constitutes the Act of the Atonement, and is "perfect" in the sense of completed, then what further need is there for what we call "the final atonement"? To even make a doctrinal statement about it as we shall note the Dallas Statement did, is merely an exercise which only tends to obscure what has really been said.

The Statements of Belief published from 1872 through 1888 declare that Jesus "died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only Mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, with His own blood, He makes the atonement for our sins." The Yearbook statements, 1889, 1905-1914, word this statement as follows:

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ. . . that He. . . died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, through the merits of His shed blood, He secures the pardon and forgiveness of the sins of all those who penitently come to Him; and as the closing portion of His work as priest, before He takes His throne as king, He will make the great atonement for the sins of all such, and their sins will then be blotted out and borne away from the sanctuary, as shown in the service of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in heaven."

The contrast between what we once stood for, and what was voted at Dallas should be obvious to all. Why then should one be reluctant to commit himself in a simple yes, or no question, such as Question #1 is?

When we come to the doctrine of the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, we obtain a confused picture. The Dallas Statement does indicate that "there is a sanctuary in heaven," and that "in 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He [Jesus] entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry." However, in the same paragraph is to be found a wording that has never appeared in any previous statement of beliefs. Speaking of the sanctuary in heaven, it reads: "In it Christ ministers in our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross." Where did this phraseology come from and what does it mean? I am not indicating, what does it mean to you, but what does it mean to those reading it, for example the theologians of spiritual Babylon?

We need to keep in mind that when Elder Neal C. Wilson introduced the item of our Statement of Beliefs to the delegates at the 1980 General Conference Session, he stated among other things the following:

"There are a great many individuals, for instance, who write to the General Conference Ministerial Association requesting a simple statement of our fundamental beliefs. We would like to feel that when such a statement is sent to those who are theologically educated or who are proficient in stating Biblical truth simply, they will understand not what they see but what we see and what we believe. It is one thing for me to apply a certain set of values and theological-doctrinal principles to a statement and find that it all fits together. Someone else reading the same statement might not perceive the same truth." (1980 GC Bulletin, #5, p. 9)

It should also be remembered there was an Anglican Bishop at the Session, listening to the discussion on the Statement of Beliefs, and reading the working paper given to the delegates. When given an opportunity to address the Session, he said:

"As I have read the beliefs set before you for revision, I had hoped to find some degree of disagreement. I had the most awful disappointment. I found increasingly that we are together in our faith. Therefore, the unity that we share is not

simply a unity of good will and fellowship but unity in faith increasingly, a unity in Christ." (Ibid. #9, p. 16)

The question now to be considered is - What is the never-before-to-be-found statement in our beliefs concerning the heavenly ministry of Christ really saying?

While many of us are aware of the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-56, and the effect on our doctrinal teachings, we have not given sufficient attention as to why certain things were worded as they were, and what these phraseologies actually equate. The clause under discussion from the Fundamental Beliefs is a prime example of what took place. Elder T. E. Unruh, who chaired these fateful conferences, tells us something that went in revising the wording of our beliefs. He wrote:

We came to see that many misunderstandings rested on semantic grounds, because of an inbred denominational vocabulary. Our friends helped us to express our beliefs in terms more easily understood by theologians of other communions." (Adventist Heritage, Vol 4, #2, 1977, p. 40)

The importance attached to this has been highlighted in a recent interview given by Walter Martin to staff writers of Adventist Currents. In telling of his experience during the publication of the results of these conferences, Martin said:

"I wrote my book in 1960, three years after Questions and Answers. I had already done the articles for Eternity Magazine. They [Adventist Conferees] read the articles. We went over them together. Not that they were going to censure what I had said (they wouldn't even suggest that). They wanted to be certain what I said was such that Adventists who read Eternity, and read the reprints of the articles, would understand where we were coming from because we had two different vocabularies. And - this was a terribly important point historically - we were actually at that juncture synchronizing vocabulary structure between Adventism and evangelical Christianity, which had never been done before. That was a major semantic breakthrough. You have no idea of how much time went into making sure we used terms that were mutually under-

standable." (Vol. I, No. 1, p. 19)

With this background then, what does the clause - "making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross" - equate?

The answer is found in Questions on Doctrine, pp. 354-356. It reads:

"When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature - even in the writings of Ellen G. White - that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests." (Emphasis theirs).

This is merely putting a "semantic interpretation" on what historic Adventism meant when they stated - "Christ is making atonement now." What the writers of Questions on Doctrine indicate this statement means, and how it is understood in the context of historic Adventism is not the same. A surrender of truth could only account for such an interpretation. This is what happened:

Barnhouse reported that both he and Walter Martin heard the Adventist conferees repudiate their belief that "Jesus' atoning work was not completed on Calvary but instead that He is still carrying on a second ministering since 1844." Now note carefully the conclusion Barnhouse drew: "They [Adventist leaders] believe that since His ascension Christ has been ministering the benefits of the atonement which He completed on Calvary." (Eternity, September, 1956) Did the Adventist really say this to the Evangelicals? YES! Unruh so admits. He wrote: "We affirmed our belief. . . in His priestly ministry before the Father, applying the benefits of the atonement completed on the cross." (Adventist Heritage, op. cit., p. 38)

Observe now, carefully, how these Church leaders in Questions on Doctrine describe the heavenly ministry of Christ:

"How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we

realize that Jesus our surety entered the 'holy places,' and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it all for us on the cross. And now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice for us." (p. 381, Emphasis theirs)

This quote is important not only for what the authors emphasized, but also for what they did not emphasize. First, what they did emphasize stands in direct contradiction to the position of our spiritual forefathers as they expressed themselves in statements of belief. The Yearbook statements from 1889, 1905-1914, all clearly declare that Christ ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, through the merits of his shed blood, He secures the pardon and forgiveness of the sins of all those who penitently come to Him; and as the closing portion of His work as priest, . . . He will make the great atonement."

The part they did not emphasize - "Now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice for us" - is incorporated as a part of the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists as voted at Dallas. The context of this sentence as it appears in Questions on Doctrine clearly indicates that this language with which the Evangelicals helped us phrase our beliefs, is saying that we now believe in a completed atonement at Calvary, and Christ secures nothing for us either presently, or at some future time. Why then all the verbage even mentioning 1844? So one can halt between two opinions - and still be a good Seventh-day Adventist along with the neo-Adventists?

This is not the only double-talk to soften the impact of the surrender of historical truth which has taken place. When Walter R. Martin was writing his series of articles for Eternity, he had an advance copy of Questions on Doctrine before him. He quotes extensively in his second article (November, 1956) from the answer given to the third question - "Have Seventh-day Adventists changed from some of the positions advocated by certain adherents of

earlier years, . . .?" As one compares Martin's quotes with the same pages in the edition released for the laity of the Church, he finds a very interesting "Jesuitical" change. In two places where Martin's copy read concerning the death of Christ "as the complete atonement for sin" and "a full and complete atonement," the word, "sacrificial" was added in the edition appearing in the Adventist Book Centers. The statements were made to read - "as the complete sacrificial atonement for sin," and "a full and complete sacrificial atonement." (See pp. 30-31, and compare with Martin's second article in Eternity.)

Summary

In one document - the 1980 Statement of Beliefs - the Church in its General Conference Session has promulgated dogmas that harmonize both with Evangelical Protestant teaching, and requirements for membership in the World Council of Churches. Yet 11 of the 13 men to whom the Questionnaire was sent could not forthrightly answer Question #1, and declare where they stood on the 1980 Dallas Statement of Beliefs. How can any honest person seeking truth continue to support what they say or write? It was not the 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal who challenged the apostasy on Mt. Carmel, but only the one who would not halt between two opinions, and who knew who was the real troubler of Israel. It is true that to be forthright and to refuse to halt between two opinions does not bring one into favor with the hierarchy - but whose favor do we really want? God and truth, or men and error? Perhaps if those questioned had taken time to study the First Commandment, then they could have answered the first question without difficulty. When we cease to worship men, then we can worship God alone!

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"WE HAVE OUR BIBLES. WE HAVE OUR EXPERIENCE, ATTESTED TO BY THE MIRACULOUS WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. WE HAVE A TRUTH THAT ADMITS OF NO COMPROMISE. SHALL WE NOT REPUDIATE EVERYTHING THAT IS NOT IN HARMONY WITH THIS TRUTH?" (Series B, No 2, p. 55)

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