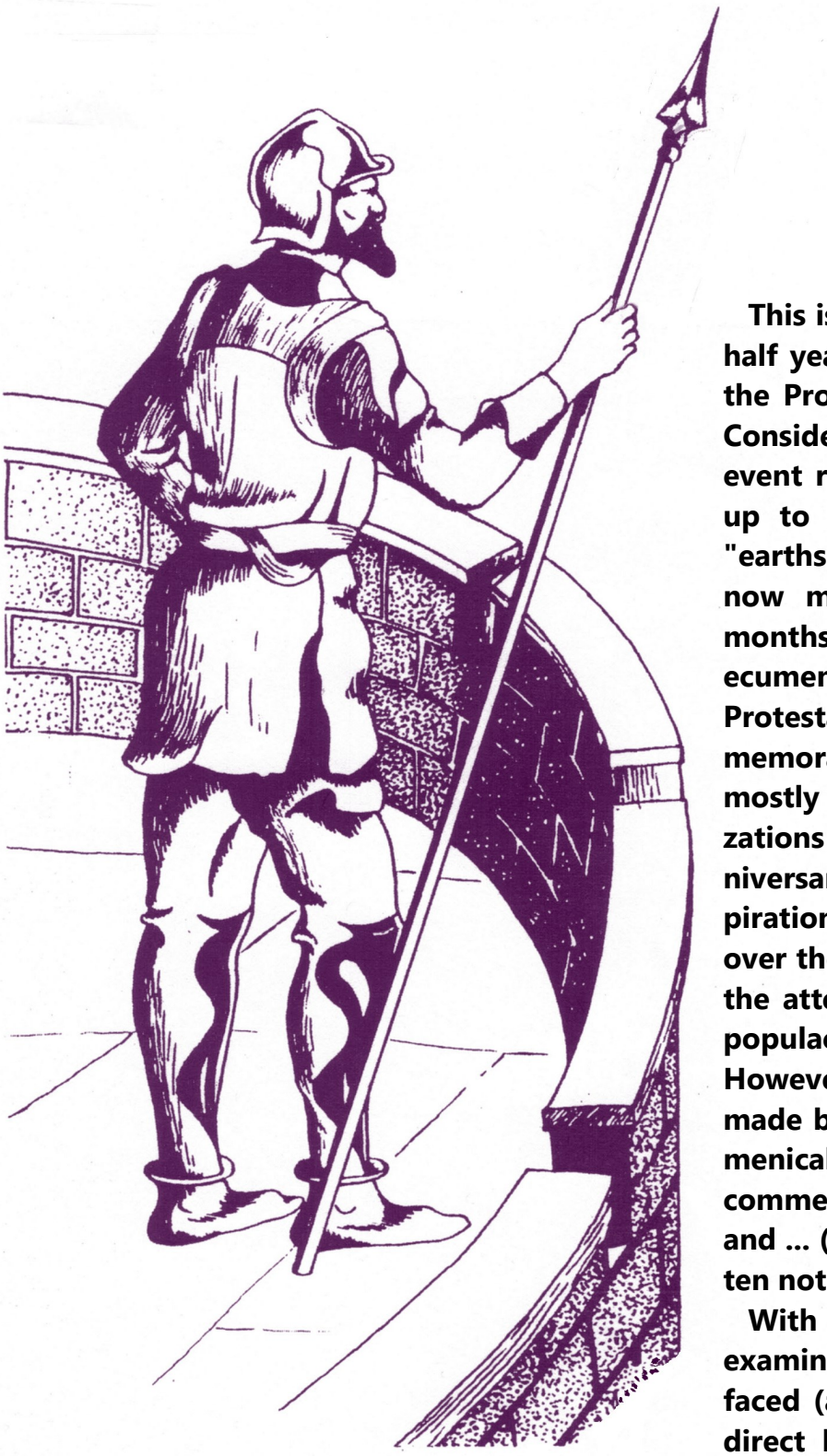
Issue # 28 ◆ April / May 2018

"Watchman, what of the night ?"

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



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Editor's Preface

This issue of WWN marks the passing of about a half year since the 500th year commemoration of the Protestant Reformation on October 31, 2017. Considering the amount of public attention this event received during the preceding year leading up to the celebration - though admittedly not "earthshaking" by any means, the tepid interest now manifested in all societal circles in these months since the anniversary appears to belie the ecumenical zeal toward visible unity between Protestants and Catholics anticipated in the commemoration's aftermath. Granted, this goal was mostly promoted by ecclesial groups and organizations which specifically used the 500th year anniversary to focus on the advances toward this aspiration made by Lutherans and Roman Catholics over the last 50 years since Vatican Council II. That the attentiveness of the larger, highly secularized populace has waned is probably not too surprising. However, the apparent lack of any follow-up being made by the faith communities fostering this ecumenical endeavor appears strange. Simply put, the commemorative event has come, it has gone and ... (seemingly), *nothing!* Even so, things are often not the way they look.

With this in mind, the lead article presents and examines some key developments that have surfaced (albeit with little public notice) that have a direct bearing on the post-Reformation celebra-

tion objectives. The time of ecumenical pleasantries and platitudes is drawing to a close. To actually achieve the visible unity envisioned between Protestants and Catholics, genuine compromises and concessions will absolutely be needed in order for it to become a present reality. Watchfulness by God's people, particularly in view of the prophesies in the book of Revelation (specifically chapters 17 and 18), will be our only safeguard against the overwhelming surprise that this union will spring upon an unsuspecting world.

The second article is our ongoing continuation of *The Sanctuary Truth,* drawn from previous WWN publications written by Elder William Grotheer, with minor corrections, embellishments, and extensions to the text added by the present editor.

POST-REFORMATION ANNIVERSARY ADVANCEMENTS TOWARD UNITY

On October 31, 2017, the very day of the 500th year commemoration of the Protestant Reformation, The Catholic News Service (CNS) released a press report which stated in part the following:

"The official Catholic-Lutheran dialogue will begin a deeper exploration of common beliefs and differences on 'church, Eucharist and ministry,' the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation announced ...

"The Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation announced Oct. 31 [2017] that the next task of their formal dialogue would be 'to discern in a prayerful manner our understanding on church, Eucharist and ministry, seeking a substantial consensus so as to overcome remaining differences between us.'

"The announcement was part of a statement marking the end of a yearlong joint commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

"After 500 years of division and even violent opposition, Catholics and Lutherans and many other Christian communities commemorated the Reformation together, acknowledging their past sins and pledging to work for full unity, said the statement published on Reformation Day ...

"Over the past year, the statement said, 'We begged forgiveness for our failures and for the ways in which Christians have wounded the body of the Lord and offended each other during the five hundred years since the beginning of the Reformation until today.'

"But, 'for the first time Lutherans and Catholics have seen the Reformation from an ecumenical perspective,' it said. 'This has allowed new insight into the events of the 16th century, which led to our separation.'

"The mistakes of the past cannot be changed, the statement said, but 'its influence upon us today can be transformed to become a stimulus for growing communion, and a sign of hope for the world to overcome division and fragmentation.'" [1]

Clearly, the objective of "the official Catholic-Lutheran dialogue" in the aftermath of "a yearlong joint commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation" is to seek "'a substantial consensus'" concerning their "'understanding on church, Eucharist and ministry ... so as to overcome remaining differences between (themselves).'" They along with "many other Christian communities commemorated the Reformation together ... and (pledged) to work for full unity." This pledge is being presented as based upon the realization that "'for the first time Lutherans and Catholics have seen the Reformation from an ecumenical perspec-

tive ... (allowing) new insight into the events of the 16th century, which led to (their) separation.'" While "the mistakes of the past cannot be changed," the Reformation's "'influence ... today can be transformed to become a stimulus for growing communion.'"

Without a doubt, the religious, political, social, and economic intolerance and tyranny of the medieval church-state union which the Reformation exposed, stood against, and was instrumental for bringing into disrepute continues to be practically ignored. The schism that occurred between the Papal system and the Reformation movement which resulted from this action is essentially the only thing that is stressed in the present day ecumenical campaigns. And since this separation is almost universally viewed as negative, i.e., divisive, violent, unsuccessful, offensive, mistaken, regrettable, and even sinful, etc., the only thing that is actually being "commemorated" about the Protestant Reformation is its projected demise through the current ecumenical efforts at achieving full visible unity between Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and (ultimately) the rest of professed Christendom along with the non-Christian faith groups. This is increasingly being advanced as a model, as an example, and as "'a sign of hope for the world to overcome division and fragmentation.'"

In the March 2018 edition of First Things magazine, a review entitled *Ecumenical Incorrectness* by Mats Wahlberg was published. [2] Wahlberg is a Roman Catholic convert from Lutheranism and is an associate professor of systematic theology at Umeå University in Sweden. His review is a critique of the book Roman but not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years after the Reformation, by Kenneth J. Collins and Jerry L. Walls (Oct. 2017). [3] The Publishers Description of this book states in part:

"Two leading evangelical thinkers in church history and philosophy summarize the major points of contention between Protestants and Catholics, honestly acknowledging real differences ... The authors address key historical, theological, and philosophical issues as they consider what remains at stake five hundred years after the Reformation. They also present a hopeful way forward for future ecumenical relations, showing how Protestants and Catholics can participate in a common witness to the world."

Wahlberg, overall, finds much to agree with and commend in this book. He especially praises the notion that "Unlike classical Protestant controversialists, the authors do not want to prove that the Catholic Church is a 'false church.'" Thus, even though "Collins and Walls criticize a number of Catholic dogmas" they are "In line with ecumenical correctness on this one point." Considering "Roman Catholicism's main error ... (as) making exclusive claims on behalf of itself - most notoriously that 'the Church of Christ, despite the divisions that exist among Christians, continues to exist fully only in the [Roman] Catholic Church,'" the authors affirm that "Behind this claim lies a false insistence on hierarchical priesthood, apostolic succession, and the papacy. This ecclesiology causes 'division and lasting separation within the body of Christ.'" Prominently, this "false insistence" of Roman Catholicism is the main issue that Wahlberg disagrees with. He aptly demonstrates throughout the review the inconsistencies and even contradictions of Collins and Walls in regard to this point.

The reason why Wahlberg is able to so successfully refute much of what the authors present centers precisely in their understanding of *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone). Ac-

cordingly, "Protestants recognize - and have good reason to recognize - the importance and authority of tradition, the Church Fathers, and the ecumenical councils. Here Collins and Walls join a current trend within Protestant theology that emphasizes 'catholicity' (with a small *c*), historical rootedness, and community. Protestantism is not essentially individualistic and historically shallow, and those who think so have misunderstood or vulgarized the celebrated standard of *sola scriptura*." Herein lies a cleverly masked step toward the Romanist view of authoritative faith and practice - one which reflects "a current trend within Protestant theology." Wahlberg continues and explains, "Collins and Walls attribute 'binding authority' to the early councils, but it is a bit unclear what they mean by the term. If they ascribe authority to the statements of the early councils simply because they happen to be true - because those statements correctly capture what the Bible teaches - then their position reduces to what we might call 'vulgar' sola scriptura: an individualistic form of Protestantism that acknowledges the Bible and private judgment as authoritative ... Such an attitude does not entail a respect for authorities other than the Bible - it simply entails a general respect for truths the Bible teaches. Since Collins and Walls reject vulgar sola scriptura, we can assume that they mean something more when they ascribe binding authority to [the Council of] Nicaea." Wahlberg then chronicles the basis of their "binding authority" concept apart from (so called) "vulgar sola scriptura." Predominantly, it amounts to little more than majority consensus within Christendom. He then rightly points out that if this is the criterion for determining binding authority, then Collins and Walls would have to accept much of the Roman Catholic dogma as such which they are unwilling to do - and in fact strongly criticize in their book!

The problem these authors face is that throughout the Christian era most of the extra-biblical tenets held by the Catholic Church were also accepted by the majority of professed Christians. Since their concept of non-vulgar (?) sola scriptural authority is actually (at best) Scripture *plus* other sources outside of Scripture, this principle is virtually identical with the Romanist position! Therefore, the determinate factor centers in exactly who or what *decides* which extra-biblical precepts are authoritatively binding. And Wahlberg correctly evaluates this as the real crux of the entire matter. He rejects Collins and Walls' majority consensus answer for its demonstrably inconclusive and contradictory stance, particularly in the overall context of achieving visible unity between Protestants and Catholics. Then he proceeds, "My assessment of the prospects for Christian unity is different. Who decides ... which doctrines are essential, acceptable, intolerable?" Now, notice carefully his summary as he concludes the review, "Whatever the body of Christ might look like in the future, and however successful the strivings for Christian unity will turn out to be, there is one thing that remains certain: Doctrinal disputes will continue to arise. The traditional model for resolving disputes - a college of bishops with apostolic succession in which the pope has the final word - might have its problems, but it is an internally coherent system with a clear theological rationale and the weight of long-standing tradition behind it. What alternative can Protestants suggest for the universal church? ... I do not find a satisfactory answer to this question in Collins and Walls' book."

Briefly, it requires little foresight to see

where all of this will end up. The "current trend within Protestant theology" which rejects "vulgar sola scriptura" is in reality a deceptive rejection of *genuine* sola scriptura in order to supplant it with essentially the Roman Catholic principle. Having cast-off Scripture alone - the pure "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," which is "truth" (compare Ephesians 6: 17 with John 17: 17), the only real question remaining is *when* will Protestants abandon the pure unadulterated truth of Scripture alone to adopt (at least in some fashion) the truth compromised principles of Papal Magisterial authority in order to forge a visible union between themselves and ultimately the world. The servant of the Lord has rightly pinpointed the consequences of such an action:

"Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees [see Matthew, chapter 23] would not cease with the dispersion of the Jews. He had a prophetic view of the work of exalting human authority to rule the conscience, which has been so terrible a curse to the church in all ages ...

"The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the self-same principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings *as interpreted by the church* ...

"Notwithstanding the Bible is full of warnings against false teachers, many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy." (GC, pg. 596, emph. by author). [4]

Despite outward appearances, the command of our Lord to His disciples concerning events leading up to His return is as pertinent now than ever before:

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is ... Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you *I say unto all, Watch.* (Mark 13: 33, 36-37, emphasis added). ❖ GLP

THE DAILY HEBREW TABERNACLE SERVICE: The Courtyard Ministrations - Sacrificial Offerings [continued]

The Sin Offerings --

The appeal of the Gospel was based upon the superior ministration of Jesus Christ because "through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13: 38-39). Jesus Himself declared that there was only one sin which could not and would not be forgiven "in this world" nor "in the world to come" and that was the sin of "blasphemy against the Holy (Spirit)." (Matthew 12: 31-32).

While the law of the sin and trespass offerings are one (Leviticus 7: 7), the steps of the ritual are given only for the sin offerings. (Leviticus 4). It is through this outline that we catch glimpses of the reality of the provision made for man to receive victory over the sin problem. The sin offerings pertained to two categories of sin - corporate and individual - and to two groups in each category; namely, the high priest in his official capacity and the entire congregation; the rulers and the ordinary individuals. It was under the category of "ruler" that the priests as individuals were covered. In Numbers 3: 32, the word translated "chief" (נָשִׂיא, *"nasi"*) is the same as translated "ruler" in Leviticus 4: 22. In the sin of-

ferings, the kind of animal sacrificed, the disposition of the blood, and the status of the priest who ministered, differed depending whether the sin was corporate or individual. Being a burnt offering, rules governing the basic burnt offering as first outlined in Leviticus applied. It was to be offered "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (Leviticus 1: 3; 4: 4). The offerer was to place his hand upon the head of the sacrifice. (Leviticus 1: 4; 4: 24). The sacrificial animal was to be accepted for him to make "atonement for him." (Leviticus 1: 4; 4: 26). In each instance, the one bringing the sacrifice, slew the animal. (Leviticus 1: 5; 4: 29).

The first category of corporate guilt concerned the high priest, the spiritual leader of the people. The instruction was that "if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people" (Leviticus 4: 3, NKJV), [5] he was to bring a bullock, the largest of all the sacrificial animals, and equal to that required for the whole congregation. (Leviticus 4: 3, 14). While the priest brought the offering as a corporate individual, he ministered the sacrifice in his office as high priest. (Ibid. 4: 4-5). The blood was brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled seven times before "the vail of the sanctuary." It was fingerprinted "upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord," and the remainder of the blood was poured at the base of the altar of the court. (Ibid. 4: 6-7). The fat was removed from the inwards, the kidneys and the folds above the liver. The fat and the kidneys were burned upon the Altar of Burnt Offering. (Ibid. 4: 8-10). The rest - "the whole bullock" - was carried "without the camp" and there "burnt." (Ibid. 4: 12). The same procedure was to be followed when the whole congregation sinned. (Ibid. 4: 13-21). Note again - it was the high priest who ministered the sacrifice, and the blood was brought into the sanctuary. It is important to note these two basics in the law of the sin offering. These applied to *corporate* sin; *individual* sin was dealt with differently.

When a ruler or a "common" person sinned, the sacrificial animal became a goat instead of a bullock. Three other distinct differences need to be noted. For the individual, be he a ruler or a common person, one of the sub-priests ministered the sacrifice. The blood was not taken into the sanctuary, and the whole animal was not burned without the camp. Instead, the blood of the sacrifice was placed on the horns of the altar of the court, and the balance of the blood poured at the base of the altar. (Ibid. 4:22-26). The officiating priest was to eat of the victim in the *court*, designated in this instance as a "*holy place*." (Leviticus 6: 25-26). This was explained by Moses to mean that by this act these common priests were to "bear the iniquity" of the individual members of the congregation "to make atonement for them before the Lord" (Leviticus 10: 17-18).

The result to the individual and to the congregation as a whole of the mediation of the sin offering was *forgiveness*. (Leviticus 4: 20, 26, 31). Only in the case of the high priest, when he sinned in such a way as to cause guilt to come upon the whole congregation, is it omitted that forgiveness resulted. The significance of this difference in the mediating of forgiveness needs to be pondered long by those who stand as spiritual guardians of the people. The record of confession was marked on the horns of the altar of incense (Ibid. 4: 7), but how God related to it in type, and how He will relate in reality is not given. Christ spoke fearful woes upon the spiritual leaders of His day who caused the people to reject truth. (Matthew 23: 13-33).

The Law Of The Sin Offering --

"This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy. The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: *in the holy place* shall it be eaten, *in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation*". (Leviticus 6: 25-26, emph. added). So full of meaning was this law that when the sons of Aaron violated it, Moses became "angry" with them. (Leviticus 10: 16). He asked emphatically - "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in *the holy place* [i.e., out in the courtyard], for it is most holy, and He has given it to you to take away the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement of them before Jehovah? Behold, its blood has not been brought in to *the holy place inside* [i.e., the first apartment]. You should certainly have eaten it in the holy place, as I have commanded." (Leviticus 10: 17-18, Lit., [6] emph. added; bracketed text supplied). The offering was a "goat," thus a sin offering for an individual. (Leviticus 4: 23, 28). Such being the case, the common priest ministered the blood (Ibid. 4: 25, 30), and because it was not brought into the sanctuary's first apartment, he should have eaten of the sacrifice, so as to bear in himself the sin. » To be Continued.

1. Cindy Wooden, *Vatican, Lutheran federation announce study on church, Eucharist and ministry* (Washington, DC: Catholic News Service, Vatican City office, Oct. 31, 2017), http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2017/vatican-lutheran-federation-announce-study-on-church-eucharist-ministry.cfm

2. Mats Wahlberg, *Ecumenical Incorrectness* (New York, NY: Publishing Management Associates, First Things Magazine, March 2018), https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/03/ecumenical-incorrectness

3. Kenneth J. Collins and Jerry L. Walls, *Roman but Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years after the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, October 2017), http://www.bakerpublishinggroup.com/books/roman-but-not-catholic/377441

4. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 596.

5. *The New King James Version Bible* (New York, NY: American Bible Society, 1990 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.).

6. Jay P. Green, Sr., *The Interlinear Bible / A Literal Translation of the Bible, vol. 1* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985), 283.

* All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

"Watchman, what of the night?" is published by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., P.O. Box 665, Nora Springs, IA 50458-0665, USA.

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