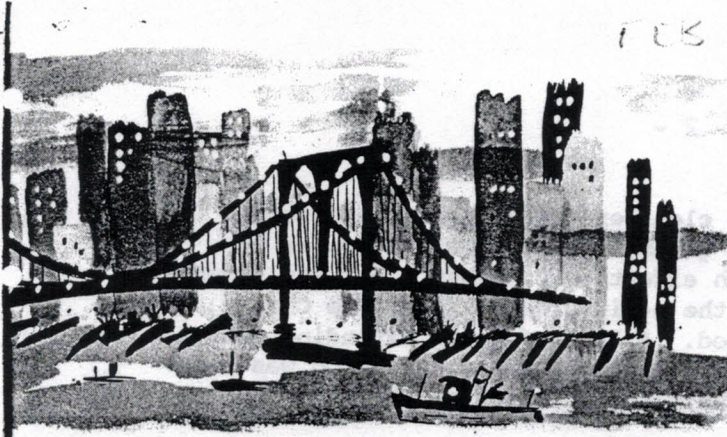


FEB 68



"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

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, found it necessary to exhort the early church that they "should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."¹ This admonition is not less needful today. In 1905, through the Spirit of Prophecy came this warning:

One thing it is certain is soon to be realized, - the great apostacy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith, and go forward from strength to increased faith. *Ever we are to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from the earlier events of our experience until the present time.*²

Over 120 years have passed since the Advent Movement was established by God, and the foundations of our faith were laid. These foundations were founded upon a prayerful study of God's word, and *Divine Revelation*. This latter aspect dare not be subjugated. Our movement bears the impress of the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit in the formation of its doctrines and teachings. Concerning this formative period, Sister White wrote:

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often times we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to a point in their study where they said, "We can do nothing more," the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would

be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.³

There are certain vital points that should be carefully noted from this statement. 1) The founding fathers of this movement thoughtfully and prayerfully studied the Word of God. 2) When human understanding failed, the Holy Spirit intervened with a correct interpretation of the Scriptures that were being studied. 3) A line of truth was vindicated by revelation, that if followed, would serve as a guide to the people of God from that time till the end. Concerning this third basic premise, Sister White testified:

*That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of time, in our great disappointment, is the solid foundation of truth. Pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are - Seventh-day Adventists, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus.*⁴

Why is it important that we have a clear understanding of the fact that the foundation of this movement was sanctioned by *direct revelation*? Because:

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision the people perish." (Prov. 29:18) Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways, and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony.⁵

This movement either stands or falls over the attitude taken toward the Spirit of Prophecy. A former General Conference president recognized this fact. George I Butler wrote:

Our position on the Testimonies is like a key-stone to the arch. Take that out, and there is no logical stopping-place till all the special truths of the message are gone. Our enemies, and the master they serve, realize this; but some of our people are so blind that they do not. But some of us do, having seen these things developed over and over again during the history of this work.⁶

If the Testimonies were true at the beginning, and our founding fathers recognized in them the direct leading of the Lord, then, the counsels, warnings, and reproofs that were given over the years by Sister White, not only to individuals, *but to boards and other administrative agents and agencies*, are likewise valid. And if valid, they need to be followed with the same spirit of simple faith that marked those pioneers who studied and prayed for light and truth. This is an absolute necessity, and "for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in delusions if the warnings and the reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded."⁷

From the warnings given in regard to Satan's last deception, we can understand that he will not openly attack the gift of prophecy. Lip service will be given to the writings, even as the Jews gave lip service to Moses. But Satan will through different agencies, and in different ways, seek to make the Spirit of Prophecy of "none effect." Its force will be blunted, and its objective will be circumvented.

This deception is not some future, far-off experience, but is now present in the midst of our church. It has been manifest in the following ways: 1) Attempts have been made to redefine the clear-cut wording of Sister White so that certain doctrinal positions can be made more palatable to the religious leaders of "Babylon." 2) It is declared that the formative period of the church extended from 1844-1888, and that all the writings of church leaders including Sister White prior to 1888 must be taken with a grain of salt. 3) The Divine purpose in bestowing the gift - the Holy Spirit's interpretation of previous revelation - is being subjugated to human reasoning. And 4) The written statements of certain pioneer church leaders are placed out of context so as to convey an impression of doubt in regard to the writings and acceptance of Sister White by these leaders and others. ⁸

These citations are not to be considered exhaustive, for "a hatred will be kindled against the testimonies that will be satanic."⁹ Without doubt more insidious ways will be devised as the church moves into the omega apostacy; but these ways that have been cited should cause us to pause and do some serious reflection.

The whole issue can be summarized in the words of Sister White herself:

The testimonies either bear the signet of God, or that of Satan. A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruit ye shall know them. God has spoken. Who has trembled at His word?¹⁰

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper."¹¹

¹Jude 3

²Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, pp. 56-57

³Ibid., No. 2, pp. 56-57

⁴Ibid., No. 7, pp. 57-58

⁵Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 48

⁶George I Butler, "The Visions: How They Are Held Among S D Adventists", Review and Herald, August 14, 1883

⁷White, loc cit.

⁸The March issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?" will present documented evidence to support the four ways noted.

⁹White, loc. cit.

¹⁰Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 5, p. 98

¹¹II Chronicles 20:20

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