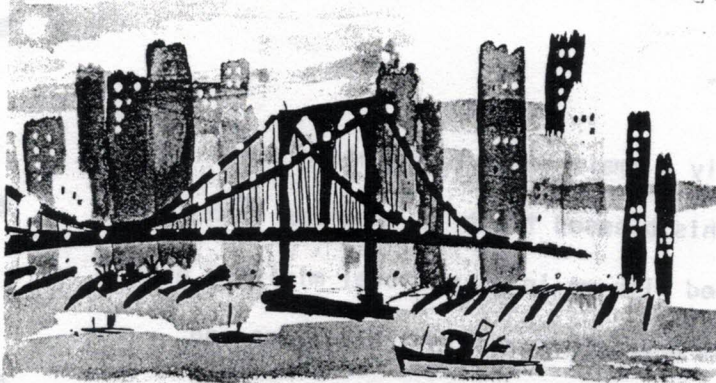


JAN '65



# "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*

## WHAT AND WHY?

For the past decade, I have been concerned about the drift within our church. My concern was first awakened by articles appearing in the Ministry magazine which indicated a change in doctrine in the areas of the incarnation and the atonement. I wrote at that time to a vice-president of the General Conference asking what was taking place. In his reply, he indicated that a group of men were studying together in Washington, and that a book would soon be published which would clarify the situation. That book was issued and was entitled, Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine. I ordered one immediately, but its teachings only increased my growing apprehension.

Soon I became aware that others too, shared my deep concern. Letters to the Churches, by the late M. L. Andreasen came to my attention. About this same time, I obtained a copy of 1888 Re-Examined by Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short. All of this led me to a study in depth of our church history and doctrine. I reread the book, Christ Our Righteousness, by A. G. Daniells with new interest and perception. It was very clear that Wieland and Short had only amplified the basic conclusions that Daniells had determined from his research. Light began to dawn as to how the drift in our church might be arrested, and the church return to the channel toward port and home.

But the question now comes forcibly to my mind - How can the rank and file of our membership - the laity - become aware of these important matters and contribute their influence intelligently to a positive program of revival and re-

formation. I realize that I can reach only a small segment of this group. Over the years in evangelism, I have brought this blessed truth to hundreds - they need to know. Others who have fellowshipped with me in my pastoral ministry need to understand. Then, students with whom I have dialogued in the college and academy classrooms need to become aware so as to exert their influence, and devote the vigor of their youth to a constructive program of reform. In contemplating a solution, I have decided to write, as time and funds permit, a monthly Thought Paper, on some aspect of our church's condition and need.

There is no question that some will immediately label this objective as a "tearing-down" process, rather than a "building-up" endeavor. Some will seek to show that instead of using my time to rescue souls from "Babylon", I am now turning "weapons" of warfare inward against the church. I will no doubt be accused by others as an "accuser of the brethren", or a disgruntled heretic. The best answer that I know for these libelous epithets is to quote from an editorial reprint that appeared in a college student paper. It read:

Some persons really never utter a word of criticism simply because they don't care one way or the other what happens, as long as they don't have to worry about it.

Have you ever noticed that the person or group that "criticizes" is often the one most concerned for the object of criticism? The person who really doesn't care about the school (or company, or country [or church]) won't say a thing.

The stockholders in a company question the management - not the janitors. The janitor doesn't care as long as he gets paid. The stockholders feel involved - and are involved - with the company.<sup>1</sup>

In short, I believe that my responsibility to my church is no longer that of a "janitor", but rather a stockholder. My tithe and my offerings go to the church that is mine, and which I love. It may be that I should have called these thought papers, "A Stockholder's Viewpoint", rather than, "Watchman, What of the Night?". (Or may it be that I have received a new infilling of the love

and concern of my Saviour, who says to Laodicea, "As many as I *love*, I *rebuke* and chasten: be zealous therefore, and *repent*"<sup>2)</sup>

There is a deeper conviction, and basis for these thought papers than a worldly figure of speech can convey, hence the concept of a watchman on the walls of Zion. We believe that God has a church - His remnant people - who have a task to do, and who by the grace of God will complete that task. Once we have agreed on that point, we can read with understanding these words:

*Just so long as God has a church, he will have those who will cry aloud and spare not, who will be his instruments to reprove selfishness and sins, and will not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear.*<sup>3</sup>

Not only is there a responsibility on the part of the watchman - "His instruments" - to cry aloud and spare not, but the eternal welfare of all - laity and clergy alike - is involved. Of this we read:

Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by a man in linen, are those "that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done" *in the church*. Their love for purity and the honor and the glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying.<sup>4</sup>

Now I realize that some sincere people believe that all the sighing is to be done in the prayer closet. This, however, fails to coincide with the description of the "sighing and crying" ones as given in the Spirit of Prophecy. In speaking of this group, the servant of the Lord writes that "these sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated." Their soul anguish was "expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evils, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent", these who have a zeal of God's honor and a love for souls, "will not hold their peace to obtain the favor of any."<sup>5</sup>

This then brings us to the challenge of the Lord through the prophet,

Isaiah - "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, *what* of the night?"<sup>6</sup> The reply is specific:

"The morning cometh" -

When she [the church] resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility, and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth, and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives.<sup>7</sup>

"Also the night" -

Great things shall come to pass after I [Ellen G. White] am gone. Satan will work as never before. All that can be shaken will be shaken out. We must draw near to God, for we cannot lean upon man or the crowd. We must know the Lord deeply as never before.<sup>8</sup>

"If ye will enquire, enquire ye" -

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and *His teaching in our past history.*<sup>9</sup>

"Return, Come."

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<sup>1</sup>Southern Accent, March 10, 1966, p. 2

<sup>2</sup>Revelation 3:19

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 2, p. 284

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 3, p. 267

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 210

<sup>6</sup>Isaiah 21:11-12

<sup>7</sup>Op cit., Vol. 8, p. 250-251

<sup>8</sup>Ellen G. White, Asiatic Mission News, Shanghai, China, July 1, 1915

<sup>9</sup>Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 196

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If you have any comments, or if you would like for a friend or relative to receive a copy of these monthly thought papers, send all comments and requests to:

Elder Wm. H. Grotheer  
P. O. Box 237  
Florence, Ms., 39073