

JUNE '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

## UNITY FROM DISUNITY - A PARADOX

The High Priestly prayer of Christ was a prayer for unity among those who profess His name.<sup>1</sup> This unity is three-fold.

It is *historical*. Our faith and practice must be the same as the faith and practice of the true church in all ages. Kneeling with the little band of eleven men, Jesus prayed, "Neither pray I for *these* alone, but for *them also* who shall believe on Me through their word; that they *all* may be one."<sup>2</sup> The realization of this historical unity will bring to us that revival of primitive faith and godliness not seen since apostolic times.<sup>3</sup>

It is *vertical*. This unity involves a deep spiritual relationship that finds its source in the Father-Son accord of the Godhead. Jesus continued His prayer - "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be *one in us*."<sup>4</sup> This is the ultimate realization of the new covenant, when will be fulfilled in the life of each believer, the promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."<sup>5</sup>

It is *horizontal*. When the historical and vertical unity is experienced the horizontal follows. Christ bestows the same glorious privilege on His followers that He received, "that they may be one" even as He and the Father are one.<sup>6</sup> That motivating glory which pervaded the life of Christ and caused Him to finish the work given Him to do, will bind the hearts and lives of all believers into one all-consuming objective - to glorify God on the earth.<sup>7</sup> Self will be forgotten; the Cross alone will be exalted.

This is the three-fold unity which God designs that His church on earth shall possess. We read:

God designs that His people shall be a unit; that they shall see eye to eye, and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. This cannot be accomplished without a clear, pointed, living testimony in the church.<sup>8</sup>

We long for the hour when such unity shall be manifest, for it will herald the coming of the power of the Latter Rain. But we stumble over the means to the objective - the giving of the straight testimony. Why? Because its results seemingly will evidence a state of disunity, and discord between so-called brethren. The clear, pointed testimony calls for a high standard of conduct and pure unadulterated truth. "Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people."<sup>9</sup> While we with our blurred perceptions conceive that the pointed testimony is the cause for disunity, it is rather those who rise up against its clear warnings and reproofs who are the real cause for the discord. Because of this spiritual blindness, we silence reproof, and seek to mute the voice that dares to speak out against the apostacy and deception within the church. Note what the servant of the Lord states the results will be:

According to the light that God has given me in vision, wickedness and deception are increasing among God's people who profess to keep His commandments. Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God's people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them.<sup>10</sup>

Take time to check your membership lists - envision each member. On some church records are smokers; beer drinkers (maybe something stronger); Sabbath breakers. Divorced persons are numbered there - even holding church office. One pastor states it this way - "We have a Manual, but what church is there that has clean enough officers to take on the expressed-clearly duty to purge itself of smokers, Sabbath-breakers, etc. It is seldom done anymore." A sister writes,

"I still believe that if we were to get all those names off that do not belong there, God could and would bless our church. But with all the sin in the camp He cannot. But of course if the names came off that would lower the goals so they [conference] wont let us take them off."

What is the divine answer? Let us continue the same testimony quoted on the previous page:

The straight testimony must be revived, and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God's people should come nearer to Him, and wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Then they will see sin in its true light, and realize how offensive it is *in the sight of God.*<sup>11</sup>

This calls for the members of the church to come into that vertical unity for which Christ prayed. To have fellowship with Christ, our lives must be conformed to His life - "washed in the blood of the Lamb." He hated sin with an intense hatred, for He had seen its devious workings in the courts of heaven.<sup>12</sup> We do not have this hatred for sin because of our failure to walk in unity with Him by faith where He is in the presence of God. Thus we do not see "the necessity for the plain testimony."<sup>13</sup>

Our High Priest is dwelling in the light of the Father's presence. The prophet, beholding in vision the heavenly sanctuary with the veil swept aside, saw the Lord upon a throne, high and lifted up. He heard the voices echoing back and forth through the temple courts, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."<sup>14</sup> This same vision of God would cause us to cry out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."<sup>15</sup> However, the remedy is prepared and waiting. The Live Coal from the alter of God will purge our sin, and take away our iniquity.<sup>16</sup> Then through unfeigned lips we could pour forth the straight testimony. Sin would be called sin with

no fear of reprisals from obdurate sinners. We would speak the message of God from guileless lips, and with our lives freed from the conscious guilt of sin.

A living experience resulting from a *full view* of the work of our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is our great need. He is there to cleanse not only the record, but to free us from the very guilt of sin itself. It is this guilt complex that makes our testimony against sin so weak. True we have sinned, and <sup>we</sup> will always remember that we have sinned. But such an experience should make us merciful to the sinner who heeds the straight testimony, rather than making us hesitant to speak the truth.

The intercession of Christ will change one from a cringing coward into a valiant soldier of the cross. Where once reigned hatred and enmity against God, there will reign hatred and enmity against all things sinful. A conflict? Yes! Disunity? Yes! There never can be harmony between those who walk in the light as Christ is in the light, and those who hold on to sin. Will there ever be unity? Yes! All those who heed the straight testimony called forth by the True Witness will be a unit. They will see eye to eye, and be of the same mind and judgment. O Glorious Day! May God anoint our eyes to see clearly His way into that experience.

<sup>1</sup>John 17:9

<sup>2</sup>John 17:20-21

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 464

<sup>4</sup>John 17:21

<sup>5</sup>II Cor. 6:16

<sup>6</sup>John 17:18, 22-23

<sup>7</sup>John 17:4

<sup>8</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 3, p. 361

<sup>9</sup>Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. 270

<sup>10</sup>White, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 324

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. i, p. 254

<sup>13</sup>White, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 361

<sup>14</sup>Isa. 6:1-3

<sup>15</sup>Isa. 6:5

<sup>16</sup>Isa. 6:6-7

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