

October/69.



"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

"1888"

Ever since 1950, there has been constant agitation concerning the meaning and significance of the message of Righteousness by Faith which came to the church at the General Conference session in Minneapolis in 1888. In the past decade two books have been written interpreting the message and what happened.¹ The research manuscript on 1888 and its aftermath, which sparked the present concern, has three times been rejected by a committee appointed to review its conclusions.²

Certain questions remain to haunt the sincere seeker for truth and light. Do recent books omit certain aspects that we would rather not have discussed? Does the research manuscript draw certain conclusions that we are not prepared to accept in our Laodicean blindness? Back in 1924, Elder A. G. Daniells was asked by the Ministerial Association Advisory Council to study the subject of the 1888 General Conference and "arrange for a compilation of the writings of Mrs E. G. White on the subject of Justification by Faith."³ The result was the book, Christ Our Righteousness. In this book, Elder Daniells stated:

It would be far more agreeable to eliminate some of the statements given by the spirit of prophecy regarding the attitude of some of the leaders toward the message and the messengers. But this cannot be done without giving only a partial presentation of the situation which developed at the Conference, thus leaving the question in more or less of mystery.⁴

In this late hour of human history, isn't it time that all mystery regarding the events that took place, and the message given be lifted? How can

it be otherwise, when we consider the import of the message itself. Sister White declared that the message was given because of the Lord's "great mercy", and was "most precious." Here is the full sentence:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones.⁵

Again she stated that "God gave to His messengers just what the people needed."⁶

Then she warns in another manuscript that -----

The message given us by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church, and woe be unto any one who professes to believe the truth, and yet does not reflect to others the God-given rays.⁷

How can one reflect the God-given rays of light, if he has never had the opportunity to know what they are? Ask yourself the question - How many of the messages from God through Jones and Waggoner have I read? (At the close of this thought paper, some of the writings by these men on the subject are listed. You can check for yourself what you have read.)

It will be argued that because these men apostatized from the truth following the 1888 experience and its aftermath,⁸ that what they said and what they wrote should not be reprinted. But observe the warning of Sister White on this point:

It is quite possible that Elders Jones or Waggoner may be overthrown by the temptations of the enemy; but if they should be, this would not prove that they had no message from God, or that the work they had done was all a mistake. But should this happen, how many would take this position, and enter into a fatal delusion because they are not under the control of the Spirit of God.⁹

It is also stated that the writings of Sister White in the decade following 1888¹⁰ largely reflect the basic message that God sent through Jones and Waggoner; therefore, there is no need for the writings of these men to be reprinted. However true this might be, God chose to send a message through these men. It was God who instructed His servant to declare it a "most precious message", and just "what the people needed." Who are we to pass judgment on what God declared we, as a people, need? Have we ceased to be the Laodicean church, and therefore,

do not need God's message through Jones and Waggoner? Is not the Laodicean state more pronounced in the church today than yesterday? Does this not mean, therefore, that we have a greater need than those of 1888 - 1900? Or can we, at least, agree that our need is as great as theirs?

Besides this we need to know without interpretation just what Sister White wrote concerning the events that transpired at Minneapolis and afterwards. Elder Daniells summarized this need in these words:

A careful, connected study of the writings of the spirit of prophecy regarding the subject of righteousness by faith, has led to the settled conviction that the instruction given presents two aspects: primarily, the great, amazing fact that by faith in the Son of God, sinners may receive the righteousness of God; and secondarily, the purpose and providence of God in sending the specific message of receiving the righteousness of God by faith to His people assembled in General Conference in the city of Minneapolis in the year 1888. *This latter aspect cannot be disregarded by Seventh-day Adventists without missing a most important lesson that the Lord designed to teach us.* It is this conviction that has made it seem necessary to include in the compilation the instruction given concerning the experiences and developments connected with and following the Minneapolis Conference.

The major portion of our membership today has been raised up since these experiences came to us. They are unacquainted with them; but they need the message; *also the lessons which those experiences were designed to teach.* Hence the necessity of reproducing *a portion*, at least, of the instruction then given, and accompanying the same with a brief explanation of what took place.¹¹

Note carefully, the full import of what Elder Daniells wrote. There are two aspects to 1888! -- 1) The message of Righteousness by Faith; and 2) The lesson God designed to teach, in the manner and the way He chose to bring the message to the Church. Much has been written and said about the message itself; but has the second aspect been given the research in depth that is required?

In his book, Elder Daniells admits that he only included "a portion" of the statements to convey the import of what took place. But now in this crucial hour a portion will not do, we need a full disclosure! Is it not, therefore, incumbent upon the Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate to give us a full and com-

plete release of all that Sister White wrote concerning the General Conference Session of 1888 and its aftermath? And is it not necessary for the officers of the General Conference to authorize a reprint of those messages given by Elders Jones and Waggoner which the people need? "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.*"¹²

¹Norval F Pease, By Faith Alone, (Pacific Press, 1962) and A. V. Olson, Through Crisis to Victory, (Review and Herald, 1966)

²R. J. Weiland and D. K. Short, 1888 Re-Examined. The dates of the reviews by appointed committees are as follows: December, 1951, September, 1958, and June, 1967.

³Arthur G. Daniells, Christ Our Righteousness, p. 9 (1926 edition)

⁴Ibid., p. 59

⁵Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91

⁶Ibid., p. 95

⁷Ellen G. White, Ms S-24-1892

⁸See Crisis to Victory, Appendix B

⁹Ellen G. White, Letter 24, 1892

¹⁰Steps to Christ, Desire of Ages, Christ's Object Lessons, and Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, were all printed following 1888.

¹¹Daniells, op. cit., pp. 10-11

¹²Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 196

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- E. J. Waggoner, The Glad Tidings, (Pacific Press, 1900)
Christ and His Righteousness, (Pacific Press, 1890)
Bible Studies on the Book of Romans, (General Conference Bul., 1891)
- A. T. Jones, The Consecrated Way, (Pacific Press, 1905)
The Everlasting Covenant, (England, cir. 1892)
The Third Angels Message, (General Conference Bulletin, 1893)

Note: At the present time, I can add a limited number of names to the present mailing list. If you know some one who would be profited by these thought papers please send me his or her name. If the name is received soon enough, they will receive a copy of this issue. (Next month's subject - "Rejected or Accepted?")

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