

December 70.



"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 DID ELDER A. T. JONES TEACH? - V

Before turning our attention to other areas of thought, we need to consider what Elder A. T. Jones declared the Latter Rain to be. This concept is vitally connected with the experience of 1888. During the ninth study at the 1893 General Conference Session, Jones asked the congregation to read the marginal notation on Joel 2:23. As he read the verse, he emphasized the words, "the former rain", and asked the question, "What is the margin?" Answering his own question, he stated - "A teacher of righteousness." This comment follows:

When He gives the latter rain what will it be? "A teacher of righteousness." How? "According to righteousness." Then is not that just what the testimony has told us in that article that has been read to you several times? "The loud cry of the third angel", the latter rain has already begun, "in the message of the righteousness of Christ." Is not that what Joel told us long ago? Has not our eye been held that we did not see? Did we not need the anointing? Brethren, what in the world do we need so much as that? How glad we ought to be that God sends His own Spirit in the prophets to show us, when we did not see.¹

In using the margin, Elder Jones was on solid ground. The Hebrew word, *moreh*, translated, "former rain" means "literally - 'teacher' - and is so translated in Proverbs 5:13, and Isaiah 30:20."² The Hebrew word - *lišedaqah* - translated, "moderately", sustains the marginal notation, and should be rendered, "with respect to righteousness."²

After establishing the point, the whole issue of 1888 was set in this framework. *The rejection of the message of 1888 was the rejection of the Latter Rain.* Jones stated emphatically:

What did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain - the loud cry of the third's angel's message.¹

But Jones did not stop at this point. As the study progressed, he asked those attending the session to eradicate from their hearts any of "the roots from Minneapolis" which might still be lingering over the four years since 1888, and that confession be made as to the wretched condition that caused such a spiritual tragedy.³ Jones was calling sin by its right name, and asking for a genuine repentance in the name of the Lord. A teacher of righteousness with respect to righteousness was again being heard at a General Conference Session!

At the beginning of the eleventh study, Elder Jones again returned to Joel 2:23. After reading the verse, a dialogue ensued between him and the congregation:

What is the margin? He hath given you the former rain." What is that? - "A teacher of righteousness." "given you the former rain moderately." What is that, moderately? What was the former rain at Pentecost? - "A teacher of righteousness." "He hath given you a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness." Was that the former rain? And He will give you "the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain", as at the first. What will the latter rain be? - "A teacher of righteousness" again. According to what? [Congregation: "Righteousness"] But what is another expression for the latter rain? [Congregation: "The outpouring of the Spirit"] What is another one? [Congregation: "The times of refreshing"]⁴

In this study, Jones emphasized the significance of what is meant by the expression - "according to righteousness". He stated:

When we receive the teaching, that teaching of righteousness "according to righteousness", we must receive it according to God's idea of righteousness, and not according to our own measure of it. And he who thinks of receiving that message of Christ's righteousness according to his own idea of it, will miss it entirely. We are to receive it according to God's idea of it, and nothing else than God's idea of righteousness, nothing else than that, is righteousness.⁵

There is no question that Elder Jones conceived the latter rain experience to be the presentation by a teacher or teachers of righteousness, of the loud cry message according to God's concepts of righteousness both in the church and to

the world. Had he held to this concept, he would not have joined Elder W. W. Prescott near the close of the 1893 Session in making some extreme predictions as to what the reception of the Holy Spirit would enable the receiver to do. This sad ending to the 1893 Session of the General Conference has been well documented by Elder Wieland and Elder Short in their re-examination of 1888.⁶

We have lessons that we need to learn both from the teachings of the prophet Joel as to what constitutes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - "a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness" - and from the failure of the 1893 Session. We are prone to associate the evidence of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders that will glorify the church in the eyes of the world, and overlook the necessity of giving the message of righteousness by faith according to God's ideas of righteousness. The tragedy of this type of evaluation is the fact that we are plainly warned in the Scriptures that the devil will also work signs and wonders, so deceptive, that if possible the very elect could be deceived.⁷ To build on a false premise could lead to a denominational disaster - the acceptance of a false latter rain! And many would know it not, but accept the false manifestation for the genuine.

Jesus declared that when the Spirit of Truth would come, His first work would be to reprove sin.⁸ There is no substitute for this approach. Sin in the church and in the world must be recognized for what it is - SIN - and called by its right name no matter how disagreeable the task. Such a course will lead to true repentance on the part of those whose hearts will yield to the pricking of the Spirit.

A clear view of the events associated with Pentecost - "the former rain" - will reveal this approach. To dwell on the rushing of a mighty wind, and the cloven tongues of fire, and then to associate this manifestation with thousands being converted is deceptive. Mark you, it was not the speaking in tongues that

converted the thousands, but the witness of the Spirit through a "teacher of righteousness" who dared to call sin by its right name. The manifestation of the Spirit at Pentecost was *unique* - "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it *sat* upon each of them"⁹ and was understood by the apostles as the evidence that Jesus Christ had indeed been enthroned as High Priest in the sanctuary above.¹⁰ This caused them to testify concerning "the wonderful works of God." The attendants at the feast heard this witness spoken in their native dialects.¹¹ What was the reaction? The populace and the pilgrims were "troubled in mind",¹² "amazed,. . . in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."¹³ Any conversions? Not one! But the crowd was there.

Here now was a situation that demanded a decision. Dare the truth be spoken, and the risk taken that would decimate the crowd - or should the full weight of sensory perception be permitted to continue to intrigue the crowd, and psychological approaches be used to seduce them into the church? It was not left with men or a committee to decide. Prior to this day, the apostles had so yielded themselves that on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit could indeed sit enthroned - "it sat on *each* of them". The Spirit itself dictated the course to be followed.

Peter arose, lifted up his voice, and proclaimed conclusively from the evidence of Scripture that Jesus of Nazareth was truly the long expected Messiah of Israel. His conclusion was pointed - "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, *whom ye have crucified*, both Lord and Christ."¹⁴ What was the result? "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said. . . what shall we do?"¹⁵ The answer was - "Repent. . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."¹⁶ There can be no true repentance unless there is a recognition of *sin*, and there can be no

genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit without repentance. But we seek to avoid a confrontation with this truth, and in so doing are inventing substitute programs. Instead of permitting "teachers of righteousness according to righteousness" to move through our churches with a program of true revival and reformation - a call to genuine repentance that we might receive the Holy Spirit - we launch a multiplicity of evangelistic endeavors to add to our numbers, as if the "numbers game" were indicative of the favor of the Lord. The strength of Israel is not how many we can baptize with water, but how many will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. We may be able to "dunk" sin under the water; but the Holy Spirit will not reign co-jointly in a life where sin is cherished, and where acts of sin are indulged. If we do not have teachers of righteousness - the former rain - how are God's people going to be prepared to stand in the day of the Lord? Our present program is simply one of blindness, and deception. When are we going to alter course?

¹A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message - No. 9", General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 183

²Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 945

³Jones, op. cit., p. 185

⁴Ibid., p. 242

⁵Ibid., p. 243

⁶R. J. Wieland & D. K. Short, 1888 Re-Examined, pp. 99-107

⁷Revelation 16:14, Matthew 24:24

⁸John 16:8

⁹Acts 2:3

¹⁰Acts 2:33

¹¹Acts 2:11

¹²Acts 2:6 margin

¹³Acts 2:12-13

¹⁴Acts 2:36

¹⁵Acts 2:37

¹⁶Acts 2:38

+++++

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

III-12 (Dec 70)

November 15, 1970

DEAR READER -

With this issue of the thought paper we complete three years of publication. During the past year we have discussed at length the issues involving the Message of Righteousness by Faith, and the 1888 General Conference Session, along with the actual teachings of the two principal participants - Elder A. T. Jones and Dr. E. J. Waggoner. Holding to a single topic was rather confining, especially when other issues taking place in the church in 1970 needed discussion.

During this coming year, we are going to alter the publication schedule so as to permit a greater flexibility in discussing current trends and issues in the church. Regular monthly thought papers will be scheduled for January through May, and from September through December. This will make nine regular issues. Three more papers will be written during the year that will deal with current issues of vital interest. These may be published during the summer months, or they may come as "special" papers during the regular months of publication and will be so marked.

We have appreciated hearing from many of our readers during the past year. We welcome both the letters of commendation, as well as those that are not so favorable. If you have suggestions, comments, criticisms, or questions, please feel free to write to us. We shall reply at the earliest opportunity. We believe in answering letters which we receive, and not by proxy either. Communication helps people understand each other better, and thus tends to eliminate barriers between brethren.

May the Lord bless each of you this coming year - and may the Spirit from the Eternal Throne guide us into all Truth.

Sincerely yours,



++++++

SPECIAL - Have you read - Answers to Fourteen Questions Asked by S. D. A.s? This is by Elder Howard M. Lee. Among the questions answered are - "Is it possible to live without sinning?"-"What is original sin?"-"Where is the sinful nature in man?"-"What organ or faculty of the body sins?"- and - "What are the four basic views of the sinful nature?" All answers are from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. This is a tremendous publication. Every Seventh-day Adventist should read and study it carefully. You may obtain a copy by sending a dollar to Elder Lee at 11066 Evans St., Loma Linda California, 92354.

++++++