

February 1970.



"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 WAS THE MESSAGE OF 1888?

In the study of the controversy that surrounds the General Conference Session of 1888, the question - What was the message brought by Elders Jones and Waggoner? - must be considered. There are those who contend that the message of righteousness by faith could not have been rejected, because it had always been taught by the church. Others consider that the message of 1888 was merely a renewal in emphasis of the Reformed teaching on justification. It is stated thus:

The greatest event in the eighties in the experience of Seventh-day Adventists was the recovery, or the restatement and new consciousness, of their faith in the basic doctrine of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

Those who know that as a church we have never denied, but have plainly taught the basic doctrine of Christianity - the just shall live by faith - prior to 1888, even from the very beginnings of the Movement in 1844, have sought to explain that this doctrine had been stated in the creeds of Protestantism along with errors. Thus to these, the explanation is simply that in 1888 through Jones and Waggoner, God rescued this doctrine from the setting of Protestant errors, and placed it firmly in the framework of truth with the other basic tenets of the Three Angels' Messages.<sup>2</sup>

In all of these explanations, there is a failure to note one cardinal point in the divine description as to what the message was that came to the church in 1888. The message given by Elders Jones and Waggoner was declared to be "the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and

attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure."<sup>3</sup> And when this message was resisted by "our own brethren", it was declared that they resisted "the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory."<sup>4</sup> Simple honesty would recognize that if the message of Jones and Waggoner, declared to be the loud cry of the third angel, the glory of Revelation 18, was simply a re-emphasis of the Protestant teaching on justification by faith, then the Protestant world had been teaching the third angel's message long before the Adventist Movement came into existence. For what purpose then did God raise up this Movement? If only to restate or to obtain a new consciousness of the basic doctrine of Christainity, our separate existence is not warranted, nor the unilateral effort and sacrifice justified, that has gone into our world-wide thrust in these final hours of human history.

We need to carefully consider the history of the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith as taught in Protestantism, and then compare it with the actual teachings of Jones and Waggoner on the subject. In so doing, we need to ask ourselves some basic questions. Was the message of 1888 the same as enunciated by Luther? by Wesley? Any student of doctrinal history knows that it could not have been both, for Luther and Wesley did not speak the same language in this area of belief. While certain aspects of their teachings coincide, basic conclusions in the phase of sanctification were far apart. The message of 1888 - which was it? The doctrine as enunciated by Luther, or that which was taught by Wesley? Or was it unique? If unique, why?

Luther's famous dictum - *simul justus; simul peccator* (both a righteous man and a sinner simultaneously) - has formed the basis for the Reformed teaching on righteousness by faith. Calvin concurred and stated:

On this subject all sound writers are agreed - that there still remains in a regenerate man a fountain of evil, continually producing irregular desires, which allure and stimulate him to the commission

of sin.<sup>5</sup>

John Wesley's concepts on sanctification brought a great divide within the Protestant teaching. It is stated thus:

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made *free from original sin, or depravity*, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience *the cleansing of the heart* from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowers the believer for life and service.<sup>6</sup>

A simple comparison of these two viewpoints should enable anyone to see what is the basis for the theology expressed by Elder Jarnes, and assimilated into the Brinsmead concepts. The dictum of Luther is followed up to the "final atonement", then the teachings of Wesley as to the eradication of original sin and depravity are introduced. This compounded theology is cloaked in Adventist terminology, and called the cleansing of the sanctuary as it pertains to the individual. What Jarnes is saying in substance is that the Adventist is to live under the Lutheran ideal until the judgment of the living, and then by a "miracle of God" in the cleansing of the sanctuary, the believer is to be carried over the great divide in Protestant theology to enjoy the Wesleyan experience - the eradication of original sin!

But what is the Word of Truth on this subject? How has the Holy Spirit directed in the writings of one converted under Methodism - whose childhood training was in the Wesleyan tradition? Let us examine some of the inspired references on the subject. In Messages to Young People, we read:

When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the sufferings of the Son of God.<sup>7</sup>

This concept - "We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin" - appears to find a parallel in the statement of Calvin that there remains "a fountain of

of evil" which stimulates a regenerate man "to commission of sin." A direct rejection of the Wesleyian concept that a man can be brought in "one experience" to a life of holy obedience is to be found in these sentences:

There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last.<sup>8</sup>

It is further buttressed by the following paragraph:

The gaining of eternal life is no easy thing. By living faith we are to keep on reaching forward, ascending the ladder round by round, seeing and taking the necessary steps; and yet we must understand that not one holy thought, not one unselfish act, can be originated in self. It is only through Christ that there can be any virtue in humanity. Without Christ we can do no good thing, but with Him we may do all things. It is at this point that many stumble, to their ruin.<sup>9</sup>

While instantaneous sanctification is an empty theory, and the possibility of mistakes along the way is granted, nevertheless, there is incorporated into the body of inspired truth the fact that a man can attain a goal over and beyond what is envisioned anywhere in the Reformed doctrine as proclaimed by either Luther or Calvin. Note the following:

Everyone who by faith obeys God's commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. As we submit ourselves to Christ, we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garments of His righteousness.<sup>10</sup>

The Spirit of Prophecy nowhere countenances holy flesh, or in any way seeks to modify the fact that man's human nature is depraved; but it does teach that in spite of this handicap, man, sanctified through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, may reach in this life a state of sinlessness which Adam experienced prior to his fall. Indeed, this imparted righteousness through sanctification is "our fitness for heaven."<sup>11</sup> For "through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven, *that he would not rebel.*"<sup>12</sup>

In the light of this teaching on righteousness by faith as given in the Spirit of Prophecy, what was the message that Jones and Waggoner brought from

the Lord to His people? Inasmuch as Sister White was led of the Lord to endorse it, it must have been just as unique as her concepts on sanctification. Why was there a need for this special message and light on righteousness by faith at that time? And if subordination - rebellion - is the cause of our failure, and the delay of our Lord's return,<sup>1,3</sup> then this message and doctrine is what we need to have applied to our hearts *now* to show the Lord that we will not rebel if granted heaven. Is it not time, therefore, that the true message of 1888 be revived?

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<sup>1</sup>A. W. Spalding, Captains of the Host, p. 583

<sup>2</sup>See Norval F. Pease, By Faith Alone, pp. 138-139

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 92

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. i, p. 235

<sup>5</sup>Calvin, Institutes III, iii, 10, Quoted in The Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification, by Cary N Weisinger III, p. 21

<sup>6</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, quoted in The Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 22

<sup>7</sup>Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People, p. 338

<sup>8</sup>Ellen G. White, The Sanctified Life, p. 10

<sup>9</sup>Ellen G. White, "The Mystic Ladder", Review & Herald, Nov. 11, 1890

<sup>10</sup>Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, July 23, 1902. Partially quoted in In Heavenly Places, p. 146

<sup>11</sup>Ellen G. White, "Qualifications for the Worker," Review & Herald, June 4, 1895

<sup>12</sup>Ellen G. White, That I May Know Him, p. 292

<sup>13</sup>See November Thought Paper, "Rejected or Accepted?", p. 4

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DID YOU NOTICE that our church paper - The Review - included in its first issue for 1970 a tremendous article - "The Hushites" by Marta Uhlrick, p. 10. The last paragraph reads:

The time has come for God's professed people to stand up and be counted; to show whether they are men pleasers or God servers. It is time to put an end to Hushism."

There is hope for Israel yet. There are still those seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

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*Personal* - To our many friends whom we have known over the years who sent holiday greetings, we say thank you for thinking of us again this year. Our usual yearly letter didn't pass the "budget bureau" this year; but we hope to resume it next year.

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