



# "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*

## WHY?

As one reads the Divine evaluation of what took place at Minneapolis and afterwards, he cannot fail to note the comparison made between the reaction of the Jewish leaders to the message and life of Christ, and the reaction of many of the responsible brethren of the church to the message of righteousness by faith, and the messengers who brought it - Elder A. T. Jones, and Elder E. J. Waggoner. Here are a few of the statements which have been written:

In Minneapolis God gave precious gems of truth to His people in new settings. This light from heaven by some was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ, and there was much talk about standing by the old landmarks.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord is at work seeking to purify His people, and this great work is retarded by unbelief and stubbornness. Many think that had they lived in Christ's day, they would have been among the believing followers; but if all the miracles of Christ were presented before those whose hearts are not subdued by the Spirit of God, their convictions would not be followed, nor their faith increased. Light has been shining upon the church of God, but many have said by their indifferent attitude, "We want not thy way, O Lord, but our own way."

. . .

Many say, "If I had only lived in the days of Christ, I would not have wrested His words, or falsely interpreted His instruction. I would not have rejected and crucified Him as did the Jews;" but that will be proved by the way in which you deal with His message and His messengers today. The Lord is testing the people of today as much as He tested the Jews in their day.<sup>2</sup>

At the session itself in 1888, Sister White warned the assembled brethren of the danger of repeating the experience of the Jewish nation. She stated that the Lord had opened before her the history of the Jewish people, and through this she was led to realize what would happen to the people of God if they refused

the light that was coming to them at that session. Then she noted the changed attitude which was being manifest toward her because of the testimonies that she had given during the conference. Of this attitude she declared, - "Just like the Jewish nation."<sup>3</sup> Then in a sermon preached on November 1, 1888, Sister White stated very plainly:- - -

When the Jews took the first step in the rejection of Christ, they took a dangerous step. When afterward evidence accumulated that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they were too proud to acknowledge that they had erred. So with the people of our day who reject the truth. They do not take time to investigate candidly, with earnest prayer, the evidences of the truth, and they oppose that which they do not understand. Just like the Jews, they take it for granted they have all the truth, and feel sort of contempt for anyone who should suppose they had more correct ideas than themselves of what is truth. . .

God has a work to do in our world that many finite minds do not see or understand, and when God unfolds truth to His people, and it does not come in harmony with their ideas, many are ready to despise and reject it.<sup>4</sup>

It is when we come to see clearly this parallel between what happened to the Jewish nation in the days of Christ, and what took place at Minneapolis in 1888, that we can discover the "WHY" of the experience, and hopefully avoid the same error this day. In the days of the first Advent, it was Christ in the flesh, Who had come to reveal the will of God to that nation and to men. But the Jews would not have Him - they rejected Him, and crucified Him. In 1888, it was Christ again, but in the Person of the Holy Spirit. What was the result? Let us read:

All the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that which the Jews treated Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Why would good men - yes, leaders of God's church - want to resist Jesus Christ in the Person of the Holy Spirit? For this answer we must note a summation given in a special testimony to the Battle Creek church. It states:

The church needs to be converted, and why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, as representatives of the church, and from a broken heart and contrite spirit make earnest supplication that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high? Let us pray that when it shall be graciously bestowed, our cold hearts may be revived, and we may have discernment to understand that it is from God, and receive it with joy. *Some have treated the Spirit as an unwelcome guest, refusing to receive the rich gift, refusing to acknowledge it, turning from it, and condemning it as fanaticism.*

*When the Holy Spirit works the human agent, it does not ask us in what way it shall operate. Often it moves in unexpected ways. Christ did not come as the Jews expected. He did not come in a manner to glorify them as a nation. His forerunner came to prepare the way for Him, by calling upon the people to repent of their sins, and be converted, and be baptized. Christ's message was, "The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." The Jews refused to receive Christ, because He did not come in accordance with their expectations. The ideas of finite men were held as infallible, because hoary with age.*

*This is the danger to which the church is now exposed, - that the inventions of finite men shall mark out the precise way for the Holy Spirit to come. Though they will not care to admit it, some have already done this. And because the Spirit is to come, not to praise men or to build up their erroneous theories, but to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, many turn from it. They are not willing to be deprived of the garments of their own righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth. The Holy Spirit flatters no man, neither does it work according to the devising of any man. Finite, sinful men are not to work the Holy Spirit. When it shall come as a reprove, through any human agent whom God shall choose, it is man's place to hear and obey its voice.<sup>6</sup>*

Because the leading brethren in 1888 would not accept the means and method that God chose to use in bringing to the church the message of righteousness by faith, they became instruments in the hand of the enemy to deprive the people of God from "obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of *our own brethren* has been in a great degree kept from the world."<sup>7</sup>

In drawing this conclusion from the record of the facts connected with 1888, however, is not saying that the men who opposed the message and the messengers

were bad men. But they were deceived men, - deceived by their own hearts.  
And many when convinced of their own deception were not willing to acknowledge  
the mistake because it required humiliation and crucifixion of self.

To better understand this rejection of the Holy Spirit, we need only to examine the experience of the Apostle Peter - *a good man!* Consider the answer which Peter gave when Christ asked the disciples the question, "But whom say ye that I am?" The confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, did not come to Peter through his own insights, but was given to him by the Father in heaven. Yet in a few moments, Jesus turned to *this same Peter*, and stated, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."<sup>8</sup> What happened in Peter's experience that from a man inspired of God, he became a man inspired of Satan? The answer is very simple. Peter was not willing to accept the fact that attainment of "the keys of the kingdom" involved the cross. Before the exaltation at the right hand of the throne in heaven, Christ would accept the ignominy and the offence of the cross. So likewise, for His apostles, and for His church, before the glory of heaven, would come that other glory - even the glory of the angel who lightens the whole world - the glory of the cross!<sup>9</sup>

In 1888, not only were the instruments which God chose to use, "only men"<sup>10</sup> but the leading brethren who opposed the message and the messengers were likewise only men. Why should God pass by Elder Uriah Smith, editor of the church paper since he was 23 years of age, and use a man who had only been an Adventist for 14 years? Why should God pass Elder George I Butler by, one who had revived the work in Iowa after the defection of the Marion Party, and who had served with distinction as president of the General Conference on two different occasions for a total of 11 years. And after all, Elder Isaac D. Van Horn, president of the

Michigan Conference, Elder R. M. Kilgore, president of the Illinois Conference, and Elder J. H. Morrison, president of the Iowa Conference were not novices. Why did these men, leading brethren, oppose Elders Jones and Waggoner in 1888?<sup>11</sup> The Holy Spirit did not come in the precise way and through whom these leading brethren believed that it should have come. But the Holy Spirit does not come "to praise men or to build up their erroneous theories" but "when it shall come. . . through any human agent whom God shall choose, it is man's place to hear and obey its voice."<sup>6</sup>

Can it be that this is likewise the danger to which the church is *now* exposed? Or have we learned the lesson of 1888? Have we?

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Counsels to Editors, p. 30

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, "Address to the Church", Review & Herald, April 11, 1893

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Ms 9, 1888, Morning Talk, Oct 24, 1888. See Appendix A  
A. V. Olson, Through Crisis to Victory

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, Ms 15, 1888. See Appendix A, Through Crisis to Victory

<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series A, No 6, p. 20

<sup>6</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 64-65

<sup>7</sup>Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk i, p. 235

<sup>8</sup>Matthew 16:13-25

<sup>9</sup>Compare Rev. 18:1-4 with Gal 6:14. To free God's people from their captivation with Babylon will require a true understanding of the cross. What Paul included in his use of the word, "world", and what is comprehended in the prophetic symbol, "Babylon" are synonymous. In our thinking of "glory", we too often associate the word with the materialistic worldly viewpoint, when in the Bible true "glory" during the period of the Kingdom of Grace, is the fulness of grace and truth. John 1:14.

<sup>10</sup>Ellen G. White, "Living Channels of Light", Review and Herald, May 27, 1890

<sup>11</sup>In 1888, there were no Union Conferences as we know them today. Michigan was the Conference, and the presidents of other leading conferences exercised influence similar to the Union Conference presidents of today. This gives some indication of the strength of the opposition, and why many dared not to voice their approval of what Elders Jones and Waggoner presented.

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With this issue we begin our third year of publication. Before us are many interesting and vital topics from our church history. The lessons to be reviewed are important for we have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the lessons the Lord has sought to teach us in our past history.

## PREPARATION FOR THE LATTER RAIN

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These booklets may be obtained - 8 for \$1.00 - by writing direct to Elder B. E. Wagner, 24978 Lawton Ave., Loma Linda, Calif., 92354. Why not order a copy for yourself, and have seven to give to fellow church members with whom you fellowship each week. (Fifty copies or more - 11¢ postpaid.)

The following letter by Elder Neal C. Wilson of the North American Division was sent to the union and local Conference Presidents.

May 10, 1967

Dear Brethren;

Enclosed you will find a copy of material compiled and prepared by Elder B. E. Wagner, formerly of the General Conference Publishing Department. A number of us have gone through this material and find that it contains a most timely message.

There is desperate need in the homes and churches of North America for individuals to make preparation for the outpouring of the latter rain and the closing events. The Lord has given us simple, helpful, practical counsel as to how this may be done, but only a few understand what is involved.

The Union Presidents have had this material for some time and they concurred in sending a copy to you. It may be that this outline could be used as a basis for a series of studies in workers' meetings or by pastors as a series for prayer meetings, et cetera.

May the Lord bless and keep you as you lead our people into closer relationship with one another and with the Lord.

With kind regards, I am,

Sincerely your brother,

(Signed)  
Neal C. Wilson

This material has been printed in our German church paper, and is now being printed in our French denominational publication. It is also ready in booklet form in the Spanish language at the same price as quoted above for the English language edition.