



# "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? - 11

An appraisal of the message of 1888 written in 1962 and carrying the "imprimature" of the General Conference president at that time, states that the sermons given by Elder A. T. Jones at the General Conference session of 1893 "are of immense importance to the investigator today because they reveal exactly what Jones taught, and they also reveal his attitude, as expressed in public discourse, toward the issues of 1888."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pease concludes that Jones's utterances at this session were "pointed, vehement, almost vitriolic."<sup>2</sup> There can be no question as to the value of the sermons which Jones gave for the purpose of investigation; but as to whether he was vehement and caustic, that is open to question. One's answer might be colored by his own personal reaction to the issues of 1888 and the men involved. One thing is certain from a study of the sermons, that Elder Jones did not mince words in setting before the people and the leaders of the church just what did occur at the 1888 Session. He was pointed!

In the ninth sermon, Elder Jones called attention to the testimony that had been received just a few months prior to the Session which stated that "the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ."<sup>3</sup> Equating the loud cry and the latter rain, which he declared to be "the teaching of righteousness according to righteousness", there followed a dialogue between him and the congregation. Note carefully the verbatim report of this exchange, and the conclusion drawn:



Now brethren, when did *that* message of the righteousness of Christ *begin* with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: "Three or four years ago."] Which was it, three? or four? [Congregation: "Four."] Yes, four. Where was it? [Congregation: "Minneapolis"] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some of the congregation: "The Loud Cry."] What is *that* message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry - the latter rain. Then 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 angel's message.<sup>4</sup>

What Elder Jones *did not* say is as equally important as what he did say. He did not say that the church had never taught the subject of righteousness by faith prior to 1888, nor that the church rejected as a doctrine, righteousness by faith. But he did say, with the concurrence of some in the congregation, that the brethren did reject "that" message of righteousness at Minneapolis which was "the latter rain - the loud cry." And "that" message did "begin" in 1888!

The sermon continues:

Of course the brethren did not know they were doing this, but the Spirit of the Lord was there to tell them they were doing it, was it not? But when they were rejecting the loud cry, "the teaching of righteousness", and then the Spirit of the Lord, by His prophet, stood there and told us what they were doing, - what then? Oh they simply set this prophet aside with all the rest. That was the next thing. Brethren, it is time to think of these things. It is time to think soberly, to think carefully.<sup>5</sup>

Have we really as a people thought "of these things"? Is it not time now, yes in 1970, to think soberly, and to think carefully about what took place in 1888?

In this same sermon, Elder Jones notes that the reaction to the message when given in 1888 produced three different groups. He states, "I know that some there [Minneapolis] accepted it; others rejected it entirely. . . Others tried to stand half way between, and get it that way. . . They thought to take a middle course, and although they did not exactly receive it, or exactly commit themselves to it, yet they were willing to go whichever way the tide turned at the last."<sup>6</sup> But the spirit of compromise, calling for a "middle of the road" course will never produce the revival and reformation necessary for a finished work in the earth.



Jones realized this and commented, that "every man needs to get the righteousness of God nearer to him than simply weighing up things and compromising between parties, or he will never see or know the righteousness of God at all."<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand some gave lip service to the message which God was sending through Elders Waggoner and Jones; but when in the presence of leading men who opposed the message and messengers, they yielded their convictions, and in an apologetic way began to make excuses for those who were preaching the message. This attitude Elder Jones scored heavily. Note his words:

Brethren, the truth of God needs no apology. The man who preaches the truth needs no apology. The truth of God wants your *faith*; that is what it wants. All that the truth of God needs is that you and I shall believe it, and receive it into our hearts, and stand by it in face of all attacks that can be made upon it; and let it be known that you do stand by the messengers whom God sends to preach, not because they are certain men, but because *God sends them* with a message.<sup>6</sup>

There has been much discussion as to whether a vote was taken at Minneapolis in regard to the message presented by Elder Waggoner. It is a known fact that some present at the Session in 1888 were desirous that a decision be made at once as to whether Elder Waggoner's view of Galatians was correct.<sup>7</sup> In his eleventh sermon at the 1893 General Conference Session, Elder Jones clearly states that those who stood in opposition to the message of the righteousness of Christ "voted with uplifted hand against it."<sup>8</sup> Now it may well be that there is no recorded vote in the minutes of the 1888 Session. But neither is there any evidence that this declaration of Jones was challenged by anyone present at the 1893 Session, which included many of the leading brethren who were present in 1888.

Did Elder Jones present any plan whereby the mistake of 1888 might be rectified? During the latter part of the ninth sermon, he read a testimony entitled, "The Danger in Adopting Worldly Policy in the Work of God" which stated in part - that "some are moving away from the safe paths, which at every step is a path of humility. God has committed to His servants a message for this time; but this



message does not in every particular coincide with the ideas of all the leading men, and some criticize the message and the messengers. They dare even reject the words of reproof sent to them from God through His Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup> Then this personal comment follows:

You know who it was. I do not mean for you to look to somebody else. You know whether you yourself were at it, or not. And, brethren, the time has come to take up tonight what we there rejected. . . Each one for himself knows what part he had in that thing; and the time has come to root up the whole business.

A few moments later, Elder Jones read a special testimony which indicated that the "prejudices and opinions that prevailed at Minneapolis" were "not dead by any means." The tops had been cut down, but the roots had not been eradicated. However, "when by *thorough confession*, you destroy the root of bitterness, you will see light in God's light. Without this thorough work you will never clear your souls." He then asked the question - "Brethren, will you *thus* clear your souls, and open the way for the Lord to send His Spirit in the outpouring of the latter rain?"<sup>9</sup>

Another testimony was then read -

There has been a departure from God among us, and the zealous work of repentance and return to our first love, so essential to restoration to God and regeneration of heart, has not yet been done. Infidelity has been making its inroads into our ranks; for it is the fashion to depart from Christ, and give place to skepticism. . . The true religion, the only religion of the Bible, that teaches forgiveness only through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, that advocates righteousness by the faith of the Son of God, has been slighted, spoken against, ridiculed, and rejected. It has been denounced as leading to enthusiasm and fanaticism. But it is the life of Jesus Christ in the soul, it is the active principle of love imparted by the Holy Spirit, that alone will make the soul fruitful unto good works. The love of Christ is the force and power of every message from God that ever fell from human lips. What kind of a future is before us, if we shall fail to come into the unity of the faith?

Elder Jones then commented - "When the early disciples came together as one and prayed as one, and saw eye to eye, then the Holy Spirit came upon them and that



is the thing that is set before us now. Brethren, I do not say these things to find fault, or to condemn; but I say them in the fear of God, that each of us may know where we stand. And if there be any of those roots from Minneapolis lingering these four years. . . let us see that we here and now root up the whole thing, and prostrate ourselves at the feet of Jesus with only that one plea, - 'I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and I do not know it.' That is where we are."<sup>10</sup>

Is this not also where we are in 1970? When shall we begin to make "thorough confession" and enter into a true revival and reformation experience?

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<sup>1</sup>Norval F. Pease, By Faith Alone, p. 157

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, "The Perils and Privileges of the Last Days", Review & Herald, November 22, 1892

<sup>4</sup>A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message - No 9", General Conference Daily Bulletin, 1893, p. 183

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 185

<sup>7</sup>Ellen G. White, Ms 15, 1888

<sup>8</sup>A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message - No. 11", General Conference Daily Bulletin, 1893, p. 244

<sup>9</sup>A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message - No 9", General Conference Daily Bulletin, 1893, p. 184

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 184-185

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