



June/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? - I

In these studies to determine what Elder A. T. Jones taught, we shall apply the same criteria that was used in presenting what Elder E. J. Waggoner taught. The period of time from which we shall draw our source material will be the same years:- 1888 - 1893. And only that material which can be determined beyond a shadow of a doubt to represent Jones' thinking during that period will be used. As in the case with Elder Waggoner, this limits the source material available. It will be seen, however, that the message of righteousness by faith has a much broader base than the mere theological concepts which we associate with 1888.

From a strict theological viewpoint, it was Elder Waggoner's presentations on righteousness by faith from the book of Galatians at the 1888 General Conference Session that came under severe criticism and rejection by the leading men. The attacks made on these studies are specifically recognized by Sister White in her messages during the Session. Dr Waggoner is named, and the pros and cons in regard to him are discussed at length.¹ There is no doubt that Elder Jones supported Elder Waggoner's position as he is also named by Sister White as one of a trio of men with whom she had not discussed the subject previously.² Yet there is no record where Jones presented any studies on the theological aspects of the question at the 1888 Session. However, in summarizing the workings of the Lord at the Session, Sister White, wrote - "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones."³ What

then did Jones present at the General Conference Session in 1888?

In studying this specific era of our church history, some have concluded that Elder Jones' book - The Consecrated Way - "is possibly the best presentation of the essence of the message of Jones in 1888."⁴ Even though this book has the copyright date, 1905, there is no question but that it does ring true in regard to the two fundamental doctrinal concepts upon which the message of 1888 rests. Note these clear concise conclusions of Jones in that book:

He [Christ], coming in the flesh, identifying Himself with mankind in the flesh, has, for us who are in the flesh, consecrated a way from where we are to where He now is, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens in the holiest of all. . .

And this "way" He has consecrated for us. He, having become one of us, has made this way *our* way; it belongs to us. He has endowed every soul with divine *right* to walk in this consecrated way; and by His having done it Himself in the flesh - in our flesh - He has made it possible, yea, He has given actual assurance, that every human soul *can* walk in that way, in all that that way is; and by it enter fully and freely into the holiest of all.⁵

We have, however, no indication from Jones himself that the studies in this book were presented at the 1888 Session. We must keep in mind that Elder Jones was a student of history and prophecy, and vitally interested in religious liberty. A brief survey of his published works indicate this emphasis.⁶ This in no wise casts any reflection on his theological presentations, but does need to be noted. Because of this emphasis, Elder Jones would tend to look at the subject of righteousness by faith against the backdrop of fulfilling prophecy. [This phase of the 1888 picture will be presented in future thought papers.]

In 1894, the International Religious Liberty Association published as a part of its Religious Liberty Library a book by A. T. Jones. This was a reprint of a work by Jones first published in 1889.⁷ An interesting fact about this book is that it has a preface initialed - "A. T. J." In this preface, Elder Jones states:

This little book is the outgrowth of several lectures upon the relationship between religion and the civil government, delivered in Minneapolis, Minn., in October, 1888.⁸

In the very first paragraph of this book, Jones sets forth the practical out-working of the doctrine - Righteousness through Faith in Jesus Christ. He writes:

Jesus Christ came into the world to set men free, and to plant in their souls the genuine principle of liberty, - liberty actuated by love, - liberty too honorable to allow itself to be used as an occasion to the flesh, or for a cloak of maliciousness, - liberty led by a conscience enlightened by the Spirit of God, - liberty in which man may be free from all men, yet made so gentle by love that he would willingly become the servant of all, in order to bring them to the enjoyment of this same liberty. This is freedom indeed. This is the freedom which Christ gave to man; for whom the Son makes free, is free indeed.⁹

To understand the thoughts expressed in these few sentences, is to understand better the man - A. T. Jones - and understand why in the years that followed 1888 he took some of the positions that he took. This also helps us to comprehend Jones' position at the 1901 and 1903 General Conference Sessions, when the subject of General Conference re-organization was so vigorously agitated. Liberty was not just something which the church was to advocate in order to secure its own existence and activity, but something which the church was to possess and exemplify in all of its internal relationships between and among brethren. As an able minister of the new testament, Elder Jones grasped the truth that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."¹⁰

This Spirit - the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth - was not just to be understood as a Door Keeper in the house of God, to woo and invite men and women into church fellowship. It was to be the Vicegerent of the Son of God to preside at all of the assemblies of the church. And only thus can the true differentiation be seen between the forces of the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. It was Jesus who declared:

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you.*¹¹

The rejection of the message of 1888 was more than a rejection of a doctrinal concept, it was also the rejection of the organization and authority that God designed should mark the church as it entered its final crisis. Only as the church could be brought to the place where it would rely wholly and solely upon the Divine could the combined powers of the forces of earth in alliance with Satan be overcome. This became the burden of Jones's preaching. At the 1893 General Conference Session, after presenting the evidence of fulfilling prophecy, Jones declared that the events then taking place forced upon the church "this one thing, that we need therefore, in order to stand at all, in order to stand a minute, we need a power that is greater than all the power of this world put together."¹² The Holy Spirit is the answer; but Jones well knew that unless men could understand that this Holy Spirit was to be the Head of the church, and all members were brethren, there could be no practical reception of the Spirit. The papal idea of men looking to men must be supplanted by men looking to God for guidance and direction. This lesson we have not yet learned. How then can we expect the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain, until we do learn this principle?

In 1889, another General Conference Session was convened, this time in Battle Creek from October 18 to November 5. Elder Jones had the eight o'clock service each morning, and spoke on the subject of justification by faith. What he said is not recorded. Commenting on these morning studies, Sister White wrote:

Great interest is manifested. There is a growth in faith and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There are quite a number who have not had an opportunity to hear upon this subject before, but they are taking it in, and are being fed with large morsels from the Lord's table. The universal testimony from those who have spoken has been that this message of light and truth which has come to our people is just the truth for this time, and wherever they go among the churches, light, relief, and the blessing of God is sure to come in.¹³

During the intervening period between 1889, and 1893 General Conference Session, Elder Jones's ministry was devoted to religious liberty work, because of the growing agitation for a national Sunday law. He was editor of the American Sentinel, a journal dedicated to Christian liberty. At the 1893 General Conference Session, Elder Jones was invited to speak at the evening meetings. He presented twenty-four studies on the Third Angel's Message. These studies not only summarized his teachings in many areas of thought, but also reveal his judgment on what transpired during the 1888 General Conference session at Minneapolis. These considerations must await the next thought paper.

¹Ellen G. White, Ms 15, 1888. See Appendix A, Crisis to Victory, pp. 294-295.

²Ibid.

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91

⁴Publisher's Preface, The Consecrated Way, Facsimile edition, Hudson Printing Co., Baker, Oregon

⁵A. T. Jones, The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection, pp. 82-83

⁶Illustrative of this point are two works, The Great Nations of Today, Review and Herald Pub. Co., (Battle Creek, Mich.) 1901, and The Two Republics, Review and Herald Pub. Co., (Battle Creek, Mich.) 1891.

⁷A. T. Jones, Civil Government and Religion, (Atlanta, Ga.) 1889

⁸A. T. Jones, Civil Government and Religion, (Battle Creek, Mich.) 1894, p. 3

⁹Ibid., p. 5

¹⁰II Cor. 3:6, 17

¹¹Matthew 20:25-26

¹²A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message - No 3", General Conference Daily Bulletin, p. 72

¹³Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk i, pp. 361-362

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ITEMS OF INTEREST -

There has recently come across my desk two items of interest which the readers of these thought papers might also enjoy with profit.

1) The Health Evangelist - Editor, Lloyd Rosenvold, M. D., F. A. C. S. You, too, may receive a complimentary copy of the first issue by writing to Dr Rosenvold, Box 330, Hope, Idaho, 83836. Thought provoking articles which relate medical research with the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy appear in the first issue, and according to the editor, this will be the major thrust of the publication. Well worth reading!

2) "The Fourth Angel's Message and the Seal of God" - A. L. Hudson. This is "a general outline prepared for and presented to a special committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, . . . March 15, 1970." This study evidences real thought and presents a challenge. If you wish to sink the shaft of your thinking deep into the mine of truth, send for a copy - P. O. Box 408, Baker, Ore., 97814. Include some expense for postage and mailing.