



May 170.

"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

MANUSCRIPT 21, 1893

In less than one year, Manuscript 21, 1893, from the pen of Ellen G. White was twice used as the lead article in the Review and Herald. In February 1969, it was captioned, "New Light or Old Darkness?", and subtitled as "An inspired rebuke to those who misuse the Testimonies, wrest the Scriptures, and denounce the church."¹ In January 1970, it was entitled, "Wolves Among the Flock", with a subheading which stated, "A letter that answers the question Should Adventists join a new movement?"² According to the editorial notation which introduced the 1969 reprint, this manuscript was "first published in full in the Review in 1956." One has only to recall the events which were transpiring "back-stage" at that time - the fraternization with the Evangelicals which culminated in the book - Questions on Doctrine, altering certain basic doctrinal positions of the church - to understand why this manuscript was first published in full at that time. It was simply an attempt to have those who were deeply concerned over the events taking place appear as evil denounciators of the church. Now this repeat performance twice within the space of one year, projects the impression that some in responsible positions believe themselves to be in a state of siege, even an uneasiness which carries with it an edge of fear.

Surely those who would use this manuscript to silence the voice of concern in regards to the apostacy developing within the church are aware that "God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities" and that "the days of the purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will

have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor."³

In the use of any of the Testimonies of the Spirit, we have clear instruction as to how they are to be considered. Note the following comment:

Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered.⁴

Along with "time and place", Elder Arhtur White in a syllabus used in a class at Andrews University emphasizes that "the counsel should be studied in its proper setting."⁵

What were the circumstances surrounding the writing of the letter noted as Manuscript 21, 1893? A tract, entitled, The Loud Cry, had been written by two men who had attended the General Conference Session of 1893. These men claimed "to have a special message from God to pronounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church Babylon, proclaim her fall, and call the people of God to come out of her."⁶ In the manuscript denouncing these base charges, it was pointed out that these men should have sensed the blessings that were coming to the Church at that General Conference Session. God's Holy Spirit was being revealed, and the windows of heaven were being opened to pour out rich blessings upon the delegates. The question was asked, "Why is this?" The answer is stated clearly - "The counsel of Christ to the Laodicean Church was being acted upon, and all who were feeling their poverty were buying gold (faith and love), white raiment (the righteousness of Christ), and eyesalve (the true spiritual discernment)."⁶ Elder A. T. Jones, who at that session presented twenty-four studies on the Third Angel's Message, observed that the Laodicean Message had come "from every side, and from every mouth" that had spoken.⁷

In evaluating the 1893 General Conference Session in the perspective of history, Elder L. H. Christian has written that at this session the "light on justification by faith seemed to gain its greatest victory."⁸ Yet in the light of all this positive spiritual experience the two men who authored the tract - The Loud Cry - wrote that the Seventh-day Adventist church was the harlot, Babylon. The stinging rebuke was well justified - "God has given *no man* any such message."⁶

The use of the manuscript at the present hour could be valid only if the church was again acting upon the Laodicean Message, and there was evidence that the Holy Spirit was again at work in the same genuine way. Then for a voice to be raised calling God's people out of such an experience would warrant the same rebuke as was given in Manuscript 21, 1893. But where are the reports in the Union (Church) papers, lamenting our spiritual poverty, and expressing our shame over our spiritual nakedness? Mere theoretical assent to the message of the True Witness, and articles so written, appearing in the Review, do not constitute a true recognition of our condition. The message to Loadicea must be acted upon!

The relationship of the Church to Babylon also needs to be clearly understood. It is just as impossible for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be spiritual Babylon, as it was impossible for the ancient nation of Israel to be literal Babylon. The Kingdom of Judah had been carried captive to Babylon, and the word of God was sent to call them forth from Babylon to return to their native land.⁹ This is the historical setting upon which the prophecy of Revelation draws its antitype. This fact of type and antitype dare not be overlooked. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is *not* Babylon, and *never can be*, yet many members of the church have been *captivated* by Babylon. These need to be strongly urged to break the bands that hold them captive to the ideology of spiritual Babylon.

We, too often, fail to realize that while the church of God on earth is the object of His supreme regard, it, nevertheless, is "needing *constantly* to be warned and counseled."¹⁰ The means that God will use to accomplish this objective is not in the hands of men to decide. This was the error of 1888 - that God's Spirit did not manifest itself in the way that the leading brethren thought that it should be manifest, and through whom they thought it should work. Therefore, they rejected the working of the Holy Spirit. To repeat the same mistake at this late hour of history is tragedy compounded!

Voices that are raised in warning to the church need to be carefully evaluated. This is the responsibility of those whom God has made overseers of the church. But to use a testimony out of context in an endeavor to silence indiscriminately that which calls sin by its right name is the epitome of ecclesiastical irresponsibility. The Great Shepherd of the church states, "As many as I love, I *rebuke* and chasten."¹¹ Doctrinal error is one thing, and needs to be squarely met, whether coming from high places in our universities, or from laymen who might be considered as "offshoots." But that counsel and reproof which comes because of wrong policies and lowered standards is an entirely different thing. Those voices by the Spirit need to be heeded no matter through whom God may choose to speak.

To use today, Manuscript 21, 1893, in such a way as to imply that the church is in such a spiritual state that it does not need the voice of stern rebuke is to lead the people of God into a fatal delusion, and to set before them a false security. And to insinuate that a voice of stern rebuke is calling the church Babylon, only compounds the delusion. Ten years after Manuscript 21, 1893 was penned, the same messenger of the Lord wrote the following words from the mouth of the Divine Instructor:

I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteous-

ness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: "Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? 'How is the faithful city [The Seventh-day Adventist Church] become a harlot?' My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking." ¹²

This is not the imagining of two men, "S & C" back in 1893, but the evaluation of the True Witness. Yet we need not despair. In the Bible, we have the example of Israel who played the harlot.¹³ We know what resulted, therefore, we need not pursue the same course. We *can return* to "the fountain of living waters."¹⁴ Before us is the General Conference Session of 1970. What will the bulletins of this Session reveal? Will they be filled with reports of boasting, of progress on all fronts, or will they reveal our undone condition recognized. Will it be revealed that spiritual Israel is indeed repenting of her harlotry? Observe:

When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing.¹²

¹Review & Herald, February 27, 1969 (Vol 146 No 9) pp. 1, 7-8

²Review & Herald, January 8, 1970 (Vol 147 No 2) pp. 1-3

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol V, p. 80

⁴Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. i, p. 57

⁵Arthur L. White, Prophetic Guidance in the Advent Movement,
A Syllabus for Course S-570, Andrews University, p. 56

⁶Ellen G. White, Manuscript 21, 1893

⁷A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message, No. 10, General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 200

⁸L. H. Christian, The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts, p. 241

⁹Jeremiah 51:8-9

¹⁰Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol VII, p. 16

¹¹Revelation 3:19

¹²Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, Vol VIII, p. 250

¹³Jeremiah 2:20

¹⁴Jeremiah 2:13

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

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