

September 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 DID ELDER A. T. JONES TEACH? - IV

At the 1893 General Conference Session, Elder A. T. Jones gave five studies which discussed events in detail that had taken place in the United States which in his judgment constituted the formation of the image of the beast. On August 5, 1892, the *first national Sunday legislation* was passed by the Congress of the United States. This legislation advanced funds for the World's Columbian Exposition and specified that "it shall be, and it is hereby made, the duty of the World's Columbian Commission, created by the act of Congress, April 25, 1890, to make such rules or modifications of the rules of said corporation as shall require the closing of the Exposition on the said first day of the week, commonly called Sunday." ¹

As editor of The American Sentinel, Jones had led the forces of religious liberty against this enactment of Congress. He was aware of the powerful interests that were sponsoring this legislation. In the studies given at the 1893 Session, he reviewed for the delegates the arguments used, and the appeals made, by the religious and secular advocates for Sunday observance. The chief argument used was a decree of the Supreme Court which stated that the United States "is a Christian nation."² The Churches brought the full weight of their influence to bear on the issue before Congress. Jones reported that one clergyman from Ohio boasted - "We have been able by our strength to use Congress as we choose."² On the basis of the facts, and from his experience in meeting the issue of a national Sunday law, Elder Jones drew some very specific conclusions:

- 1) It is clearly seen that the government of the United States is now in the hands of the hierarchy, and no longer in the hands of the representatives of the people.³
- 2) The constitution has been overridden, and now it is ignored.³
- 3) That which is done, is the making of the image of the beast.⁴

These circumstances, as Jones saw the unfolding of the prophetic scroll, brought the church to a very important crisis. They had but one duty to fulfill, and that was the giving of the third angel's message just as it read. Note his words:

There is no way out but to preach the third angel's message as it reads: "If any man worship the beast and his image." But there is a word there that comes just before that: "The third angel followed them, saying with a *loud voice*." What is that, then, but the loud cry of the third angel's message coming right in now. Does not that show us that when the time comes for the message to be given directly as it reads, that the loud cry is right at that time?⁴

In the judgment of Jones, no one prior to 1892, had any right to state that the image to the beast had been formed. The church could warn people that it was coming. But with the enactment of Congress in 1892, it had become an established fact. Jones was very intense about this matter. He was seeing prophecy fulfilled, and he wanted the church of God to arise to the hour, and fulfill her divine calling. He was conscious of the testimony that had come to the church in 1892 that "the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ."⁵ Jones could say, therefore, "We are . . . just now, at the point where the angel *has* come down with great power, and we need not be afraid."⁶ As the reader nears the end of this third study, he senses the deep anxiety that Elder Jones is feeling. Only his exact words in context can project this deep concern. Read carefully:

We stand pledged to the Lord and before the world: that we depend upon God; that He loves His people; that He manifests Himself in behalf of those whose hearts are toward Him. Brethren, there is that fearful word also that touches that very thought, that came to us from Australia. It is the testimony entitled, "The Crisis Imminent." What does it say? - "Something great and decisive is to take place, and that right early. If any delay, the character

of God and His throne will be compromised."

Brethren, by our careless, indifferent attitude, we are putting God's throne in jeopardy. Why cannot He work? God is ready. Are not God's workmen ready? But if there is any delay, "the character of God and His throne is jeopardized." Is it possible that we are about to risk the honor of God's throne? Brethren, for the Lord's sake, and for His throne's sake, let us get out of the way. The only way to get out of the way of God is to flee to Him. That is the only way to get out of His way, and that is where He calls us now.

Here we stand. He has given us the prayer. O, of all things when God has given us the prayer - how heartily and confidently can we present the prayer, and ourselves upon it. He has given us the prayer, He has told us the word; "It is time for thee, Lord to work, for they have made void thy law."⁷

HERE WE STAND! - 1970 - over seventy-five years removed from these experiences! Did Jones make a wrong judgment? Was his prophetic interpretation of prophecy in error? Did he read too much into events taking place at that time? There are many who so conclude. Typical is the comment found in a mimeographed reproduction of the 1893 messages by Jones which omits studies 2 to 5 with this observation:

The studies which we have left out had particular application to the political situation which prevailed at the time of the Conference. Because of the apparent success of the National Movement for Sunday enforcement, it was thought by Brother Jones that the image to the beast was already set up. . . The application made of these events taking place at that time proved to be premature. ⁸

Our present skepticism, however, as to the validity of Jones's deep convictions, appears to be only a lengthening of the shadow of doubt that prevailed at the 1893 Session itself in response to the presentation by Jones. He sensed the reluctance of the assembled delegates to believe what was being spoken for he adds, after the solemn appeal quoted above, these words:

Then another thing; if we needed anything to cause us to be sure that that is all so; here is that word that was read last Sabbath [January 28, 1893], from the last word that came from Australia: - "Brethren and sisters, would that I might say something to awaken you to the importance of this time, the significance of the events that are now taking place about us. I point you to the aggressive

movements now being made for the restriction of religious liberty. God's memorial *has been torn down*, and in its place *a false sabbath stands before the world.*"⁹

We cannot set aside lightly these facts from our own church history. We have two clear-cut statements from the pen of inspiration: 1) "The loud cry of third angel has already begun"; and 2) "God's memorial has been torn down, and in its place a false sabbath stands before the world." By all counts, with all factors considered, the final movements, and the end should have taken place by the close of the 19th Century. But instead, we are still here, and nearing the close of another century, with problems multiplying that have no answers, except that our Lord shall return. There has been a delay - who in all honesty can question this? Has, therefore, the character, and throne of God been compromised? Who has committed this betrayal? We have! How then can we, in the light of this great transgression, proudly boast of our advances and so-called successes? How can we, with apparent smugness, proclaim to our churches - "All is well!"

Brethren - all is NOT well! And until we can come before our God, and read with an open mind our history, and say, "Lord God, we and our fathers have sinned, in that we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord" - we will not be healed.

As we look back upon the situation in 1893, the issue appears to have been very simple. A national Sunday law was enacted by Congress. The churches of the land exerted their influence in a powerful way. To Jones, as a student of prophecy, the image to the beast was formed. All things were ready for the final swift movements which were to mark the finishing of God's work in the earth. But suddenly, the crisis cooled. Time has continued. What is the answer? Could it really be that the servant of the Lord was correct when she stated that because of insubordination, we would have to stay in this world much longer than was originally planned? How much longer are we going to continue our insubordination, and yet declare that we are not rebelling against the counsel of the True Witness?

Back in 1893, Jones told the delegates that there was only one thing for the Remnant Church to be doing, and that was to give the third angel's message just as it read to warn the world over whose head the wrath of God unmingled with mercy was hanging. But Jones's counsel was unacceptable - it would require the acceptance of a cross. Today God has not released us from the message of Revelation 14, nor has He given us another message in substitution. No amount of social gospel preaching can substitute for the loud cry of ^{the} third angel. Jonah did not set up "head start" programs to teach the children of the Ninevites to discern between their right and left hands. Jonah simply proclaimed one message - "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." ¹⁰

¹American State Papers on Freedom in Religion, p. 246

²General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 52

³A. T. Jones, "The Third Angel's Message - 3", General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 69

⁴Ibid., p. 71

⁵Ellen G. White, "The Perils and Privileges of the Last Days", Review & Herald, Nov. 22, 1892.

⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 72

⁷Ibid., pp. 73-74

⁸1893 Lectures on Righteousness by Faith (Memeographed edition of A. T. Jones's Studies at the 1893 General Conference Session) Introduction, p. 3
Published by Reformation Herald Publishing Association, Sacramento, Calif.

⁹Jones, op. cit., p. 74

¹⁰Jonah 3:4

+++++

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

September 1970 (III-9)