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June/74.



"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*

### THE NARROW WAY TO THE LATTER RAIN ✓

For years we have been talking about receiving the Latter Rain for the finishing of the work of God in the earth and the return of Jesus. Every new missionary program embodies the hope that now we have found the answer. If the members of the church will unitedly participate in its objective, we suggest that the end will soon come. We have called for the doubling of our church membership in a given period of years. We have announced that at certain worker's meetings, the conference staff has covenanted to baptize hundreds in one year as its goal for souls. Certainly with all the advertising that we are doing of our "busy work", God must somehow be aware that we want the Latter Rain. Still we have not received it.

As is often the case with children, we will do almost anything, and a lot more, if we just don't have to do it in the way that is required. But somehow as a wise Parent, God knows what is best, and the best way to arrive at the goal. Very interestingly, the outline of the narrow way to the Latter Rain was given at the beginning of our work in a small book, called *Early Writings*.<sup>1</sup> The first edition that contained the outline was published in 1858 - 116 years ago! In studying this outline of the narrow way to the Latter Rain, let us start at the description of the experience, and work back through the outline to the event which marks the entrance to that narrow way.

In vision Sister White sees a group of people, "clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect."<sup>2</sup> She wanted to know what had brought about this great change. "An angel answered, 'It is the latter rain, the

refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel."<sup>3</sup>

The first step back from this experience, reveals that this company "had obtained the victory." Realizing the unity for which Christ prayed, they "moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers," and from their hearts came forth music, "sweet and harmonious", "seeming to be full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy."<sup>4</sup>

The next step back indicates that this victorious company had been "mightily shaken." This then brings us to the gate of the narrow way - The Shaking, its cause and its purpose. Note carefully, yes, prayerfully, these two paragraphs:

I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.

I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who receive it will obey it, and be purified.<sup>5</sup>

Let us analyze these paragraphs. First, give consideration to the "straight testimony". It results *from* the "counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans." Those who receive this counsel into their hearts "will exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth." But there will be those in the church who will not like to hear this straight truth, and who will not want the standards raised, but rather lowered. Because of this they will rise up against the straight testimony, and this will cause a shaking in the church. It will be a time of disunity, not unity. Remember that the picture of the unity for which Christ prayed is given as the *second step* in the narrow way to the Latter Rain, not the first!

The very language used is interesting. It states that those who receive the

testimony of the True Witness, "pour forth" the straight truth. This hardly describes the philosophy of those sincere and devoted church members who believe that one should be very careful as to *how* a call for revival and reformation is made. They believe that the "sighing, crying" over the sins of Israel should be done only through secret prayer to God, instead of open testimony and rebuke. I am sure that this method of silent concern, if heaven so approves, would be the easiest, at least, less painful, if not altogether Cross-less.

Then there is the matter of the "counsel of the True Witness." What is it? Biblically, it is found in the book of Revelation.<sup>6</sup> It involves the white raiment for clothing; the eyesalve for discernment; and the gold of faith for true wealth. But more than this - it involves the message that the members of the church, outwardly thinking of themselves in need of nothing, are indeed wretched - miserable, blind and naked. To "pour forth" this truth causes an acute reaction.

We are prone to think that if we preach the message of righteousness by faith - the white raiment - it will in the first instance have a most unifying effect. It did not in 1888; why should it now? Is this the reason why we are so reluctant to come face to face with what the message of righteousness by faith in 1888 really was? We want the results without the agonizing experience that brings the true blessing. In other words, the crown without the cross is the real longing of the human heart.

When the counsel of the True Witness is proclaimed, the shaking will occur. It happens whenever it has been done, and wherever it is done. But when these things do take place, there are those who say, "If this is to be the result of such a message, it can't be the true message of righteousness by faith," - and they take their stand with those who want to lower the standards of the church. This, though done often in ignorance, is nothing more than opposing the gospel of our

Lord, for "this creating of strife is not the effect of the gospel, but the result of opposition to it."<sup>7</sup> And unwittingly, many join the opposition!

By silencing the straight testimony of those who would pour forth the plain truth, an appearance of unity is achieved, but not that unity which will bring the Latter Rain. There are those who have fallen for the deceptive guile of Norman Vincent Peale and his power of positive thinking; and therefore, refuse to note the testimony of the True Witness that declares that we are wretched! That would not be nice to tell the members of the church, would it? It might discourage them! Do we know more about the way to the Latter Rain, than the Lord of the Church? Really do we?

There is another aspect as to what constitutes the "Counsel of the True Witness." The True Witness is Jesus. His counsel is declared elsewhere in the book of Revelation to be - "The testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy."<sup>8</sup> But we have lightly esteemed it, if not entirely disregarded it. We continue to tolerate, even honor those who would seek to make of none effect the testimonies of the Spirit. We continue to operate according to worldly policy geared to the standards of the world instead of the specific counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy. By our attitude toward, and our reaction to the Testimony of Jesus, the destiny of the church is determined. It is the solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs.

Christ loves the Seventh-day Adventist church; He died for her. Because of this love, He sends rebukes and chastening messages which call for reform and repentance.<sup>9</sup> But we despise rebuke and correction, railing that the ones being sent are "accusers of the brethren", or something worse. How long will Christ deal with us collectively? This is the supreme question of the present hour.

According to the True Witness, He will spue us out of His mouth. If such does take place, will God's purpose for this generation fail? No! He will come to the

door of each professed follower and knock, then "if any man hear [His] voice, and open the door, [He] will come in to him."<sup>10</sup> When looking upon Him, "Whom they have pierced"<sup>11</sup> deep heart repentance will take place. Willingly will they accept the proffered menu - "for [His] flesh is meat indeed and [His] blood is drink indeed."<sup>12</sup> What will follow? "All who truly receive it will obey it, and be purified."<sup>13</sup> Then will be fulfilled the precious promise:

Those who come up on every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.<sup>14</sup>

May God help us realize this, is my prayer.

Ellen G. White, <u>Early Writings</u> , pp. 269-273		
<u>Ibid.</u> , p. 271	<u>Ibid.</u>	<u>Ibid.</u> , pp. 270-271
<u>Ibid.</u> , p. 270	Revelation 3:14-22	
Ellen G. White, <u>Desire of Ages</u> , p. 357		
See Revelation 12:17; 19:10		
Revelation 3:19	Revelation 3:20	
Zechariah 12:10	John 6:55	
Ellen G. White, <u>Early Writings</u> , p. 270		
Ellen G. White, <u>Testimonies for the Church</u> , Vol. I, p. 187		

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Note - A Reading Must:- "The Church-State Wall" - an Interview with Glenn L. Archer. Christianity Today, May 10, 1974, pp. 6-10. This needs not only to be read by the laity, but also by our own church leaders - administrators, college presidents, and academy principals.

Quotable quotes from article:

*"God, not taxes, is the crying need of churches and church people."*

*"'Civil religion' is a form of church-state union or quasi-union."*

*"The state, now exhibiting itself in Washington, D. C., is no haven for God's people or God's church. We who claim to be God's messengers have a work to do, and begging funds from government is not on the agenda!"*

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