



*"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

"HOW READEST THOU?"

JESUS CHALLENGED A LAWYER WITH THIS QUESTION

On one occasion a "certain lawyer stood up and tempted" Jesus. To his question, Jesus responded - "What is written in the law? how readeest thou?" (Luke 10:25-26) To the many questions which today are facing sincere and concerned Seventh-day Adventists about their Church, and its future, we might also ask - "What is in the Testimonies for the Church? How readeest thou?"

One question posed for the individual church member is to be found in the title of a testimony written in 1903 - "Shall We Be Found Wanting?" (8T:247) Within this message written within days following the close of the 1903 General Conference Session held in Oakland, California, was a paragraph that has startled every reader who has given it careful thought. It declared:

"In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence, 'Found Wanting.' By the light

bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged." (Ibid.)

"How Readeest Thou?"

It is obvious there is to be a judgment of the Church in the balances of the heavenly Sanctuary, if language has any meaning at all. The verdict depends on some "ifs." But if those "ifs" are not met, the irrevocable sentence will be pronounced - "Found Wanting!" When will this time of judgment be? Was it at the time of writing in 1903, or was it future to that date? If future, can a time be known when such a judgment will take place? These are questions which must be answered if we are to read this solemn testimony correctly.

The very first sentence of the paragraph carries the future aspect - "is to be," not the word - "now." The sentence does not read - "In the balances of the sanctuary, the Seventh-day Adventist church is now being weighed." In this Testimony the word, now, is used to distinguish the time elements of the concepts being presented. In describing the Church of 1903, the messenger of the Lord stated: "Unless the church, which is now being leavened by her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself." (Ibid., p. 250) But in the paragraph under consideration, the simple futurity of the English language has been used - "will" with the third person - "she." Thus we are faced with the question - Can we find the time when this judgment shall take place?

Within this testimony, the "heavenly Teacher" is quoted, - stating concerning the Church - "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.'" (Ibid.) This same description of the Church is to be found in another testimony which gives us a time element. In the 1880's in a message pointing to the time when "Jesus is about to leave the mercy-seat of the heavenly sanctuary," is to be found similar language. It reads: "But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." (5T:207, 210) Thus just prior to the final intercession in the heavenly Court, the Church is to be weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary - for the past tense is used to describe the Church at that time: "the glory of the Lord had departed" (5T:210), and "a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed." (8T:250)

The prophetic time as pictured within the chapter on "The Seal of God" can be further pinpointed. After calling attention to the decision of God regarding the Amorites, the lesson is drawn:

"With unerring accuracy, the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf." (5T:208)

The antecedent of "their" is "all nations." Then it is further stated: "The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision." The prophet is Ezekiel, who is quoted in the introduction to this testimony. One looks in vain for any mention of "nations" in Ezekiel 9, the chapter quoted. Ezekiel 9 concerns the sealing work for those who are sighing for the abominations being done in the Church, or what is called "the sealing time of the one hundred and forty four thousand." It is at this time "the closing work for the church" takes place, described as

"the last work." (3T:266) This involves among other things, the weighing of the Church in the balances of the sanctuary. It is the hour when the times of the nations are fulfilled, when their account is closed - yet Jesus lingers momentarily at the mercy seat in behalf of "the remnant." (See EW, p. 38) When on earth, Jesus had foretold - "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles [Greek=nations] until the time of the Gentiles [nations] are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24)¹ Where are we in the stream of time? How readest thou?

Another Question

Now let us turn our attention to another question - How has God spoken to His people in these last days? Through one messenger, or through many? What is written in the Testimonies? How readest thou? Again in 1903, from St Helena, California, the servant of the Lord wrote:

"From the year 1846 until the present time, I have received messages from the Lord, and have communicated them to His people. This is my work - to give to the people the light that God gives to me. I am commissioned to receive and communicate His messages. I am not to appear before the people as holding any other position than that of a messenger with a message." (Dated, Nov. 17:1903; quoted in The Final Word and a Confession, p. 10)

Ellen G. White knew and understood her work and mission - she was the Lord's messenger with a message for the Church. The concept of being "the Lord's messenger" was a distinctive term and designation. When she, therefore, used this designation for another, she was well acquainted with its import. This is, however, the very language she chose to use to describe the work of Elders E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones. She wrote:

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. . .

"God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it was in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines. . .

"God gave His messengers just what the

people needed. . .

"I would speak in warning to those who have stood for years resisting light and cherishing the spirit of opposition. How long will you hate and despise the messengers of God's righteousness?" (TM, pp. 91, 93, 95, 96)

Because of Ellen G. White's recognition of the fact that God spoke through more than one messenger - even in her day - should cause us to pause and think twice before we restrict ourselves to only certain published testimonies. There were other testimonies given to this people, and those by the pens of Jones and Waggoner. God designed that His voice should be continually heard in testimony to His church, until such a time that it should be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. Just prior to the terrible apostasy at the Jordon - the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 - the voice of God's messengers was again heard in warning. Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short called the attention of leadership of the General Conference in 1950 to the Baal worship which was permeating all the decisions and goals set for the Church. They called for a corporate repentance and a turning to the message of 1888. The warning went unheeded, and apostasy followed. This was met by another messenger - Elder M. L. Andreasen - as he sought to counter the bold departure from the historic faith in the publication of the book resulting from the Evangelical Conferences - Questions on Doctrine. He did this through Letters to the Churches. But the apostasy continued unabated.

There is yet another and final warning prophesied. In 1896, the servant of the Lord wrote concerning the parable of the Ten Virgins - "My mind was carried into the future, when the signal will be given, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.'" (R&H, Feb. 11, 1896) This final midnight call by "an earnest voice" (COL, p. 412) does not originate among the ten sleeping virgins, but comes from outside of them and arouses all of them. There is a separation - some respond and go forth to a meeting of the Bridegroom, while the others go to the vendors of spiritual merchandise. Since the Church is

to be weighed as a corporate body, no separation can take place till a final decision can be declared in the heavenly sanctuary. Following this decision comes the final judgment of the living, when each decides in what direction he shall go - to a meeting with the Bridegroom, or back to those who make merchandise of the things of God. The earnest voices are even now being heard. How readest thou? How hearest thou?

One Final Question

There is one final question to be answered. What is the future of the Church which is weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and found to be wanting? In 1911, when the book - Acts of the Apostles - was first released, there was an interesting description given to the voice of God's Church in the earth. Writing of the Jerusalem Council - the first general conference of the Apostolic Church - Ellen G. White stated concerning the decision sent by four men to Antioch: "The four servants of God were sent to Antioch with the epistle and message that was to put an end to all controversy; for it was the voice of the highest authority upon earth." (p. 196) The expression - "the voice of the highest authority upon earth" was not new language for Ellen G. White, for in the middle 1870's she had written to a Brother A - "I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has on earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered." (3T:492)

In 1901 at the convening of the General Conference Session, Ellen G. White arose, and stated among other things - "That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be - that is past." (GC Bulletin, April 2, 1901, #1, p. 25) As a result of this presentation, a new Constitution was adopted which abolished the office of General Conference President. This,

however, was reversed in 1903 when the reformation constitution was annulled, and the new one adopted, returned the Church to its old system. It was then that Sister White wrote that the Church was to be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and that in the actions taken in 1903, the Church "is now being leavened with her own backsliding" which could only be reversed by repentance and "a thorough reformation." (8T:250-251) No reformation has been forthcoming. Instead further attempts to strengthen the power of the hierarchy over the lives of the laity have been made.

In the legal case involving the Church through the Pacific Press Publishing Association and the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission of the Federal government, a Brief presented by the Lawyers for the Church declared that "the phrase 'General Conference in Session' is not an entity or an organism but is one facet of the Church (the most important and powerful, of course, but still only one facet of the phrase, 'General Conference'), and. . . that between the quadrennial (now quinquennial) sessions of the delegates in General Conference, the Executive Committee wields all the powers of the Church, excepting only two: the power to alter the structure of the Church and the power to alter its doctrine. Everything else, without exception, which can be accomplished in General Conference when it is in its infrequent sessions can similarly be accomplished by the General Conference Committee between those infrequent sessions." (Reply Brief for Defendants of Their Motion for Summary Judgment, p. 9; Emphasis theirs)

Further, Elder R. H. Pierson, in a sworn affidavit in the same case declared "the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists" to be "the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (p. 1) Elder Neal C. Wilson in an affidavit, swore that it is "necessary for the Church to establish its authority in the community of believers." (p. 6) What will the Church do, - the Church now declared under oath to be the Executive Committee between Sessions of the General Conference, a Church from which "the glory of the Lord" has departed, and which no longer has the Divine Presence? Note carefully - How

readest thou?

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time..." When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon His people. This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshalled by the dragon host, make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death." (5T:213)

The "remnant" referred to in this above paragraph are composed of "the little company who are standing in the light" (p. 209) and the "some" who have responded to their "entreaties." The rest - the "many" - continue "the forms of religion" even though God's "power and presence" are lacking. (p. 210)

It was the Sanhedrin - the General Conference of the Jewish Church - who in executive session "consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill Him." (Matt. 26:3-4) Members of this committee took Jesus to Pilate and demanded the death sentence. (John 19:6) Jesus warned His disciples - "They shall deliver you up to be afflicted." (Matt. 24:9) When these disciples gave the final warning to the Jewish Church, the prophecy was fulfilled in the death of Stephen, James and other Christians. The "remnant of her seed" are not greater than the original "Seed." As the Jewish hierarchy did to Christ, and those first disciples, the testimony declares - "So it will be again." (DA, p. 630) "How Readest Thou?"

¹The following questions and notes are to be found in the 20th Century Bible Course, Lesson 5 - "Time Running Out."

"2. What sign did Jesus give that would indicate when the destruction of the city [Jerusalem] was at hand? Luke 21:20

"The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman armies in A. D. 66. After

a period of time the army withdrew and the Christians, recognizing the sign given by Christ (Matt. 24:15-20) fled the city and did not return. In A. D. 69 the Romans returned, and destroyed the city in A. D. 70. Nearly a million people died or were sold into slavery at that time, but not a single Christian died. They watched for the sign Christ had given and obeyed His instructions. [Emphasis theirs] The temple was burned to the ground as Christ foretold (even though the soldiers had orders not to destroy it). Christ foresaw the future and outlined it to His followers so that they could be saved.

"3. How long did Christ say that Jerusalem would be trodden down? (verse 24)

"Old Jerusalem and the temple site has [sic] been occupied largely by Gentile nations until 1967 when the Jews took possession of it in a 'lightning victory.' This portion of Christ's prophecy was fulfilled in our day!"

For further information on the Times of the Gentiles fulfilled, see our monograph by that title. It can be obtained for \$1.00 plus postage through the Foundation office.

By December we plan to have available a new revision of the tract - "The Seal of God" - a reprint of 5T:207-216 with notes.

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PROCTOR FOLLOW-UP

On August 24, 1982, a Consent Judgment was issued by Thomas L. Brown, Presiding Judge of the Ingham County Circuit Court at Lansing, Michigan. This was in response to a Complaint that had been filed by the Attorney General of the State of Michigan against the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the Review and Herald Publishing Association, and their entities in the State of Michigan. The Church by this Order is "restrained from entering into, adhering to, maintaining, furthering, implementing or enforcing any policy, contract, agreement, understanding, plan or program which has the purpose or effect of fixing, stabi-

lizing or maintaining the prices, price margins or mark-ups at which trade and subscription books and/or printed material sold or distributed [by the Church] may be sold or offered for resale by any independent reseller." (Section VII)

However, the Church in consenting to this judgment through legal counsel retained its control over the Literature Evangelists, and the prices for which they can sell the publications of the Church. The Order reads - "As used in this Consent Judgment, 'independent reseller' does not include Literature Evangelists, also known as Colporteurs, and [the Church's] dealings with them are not subject to the prohibitions" stated in this Order.

A further "loophole" is to be found in the Consent Agreement, by which the Church can "select or limit the number of independent resellers" and "reduce, suspend or terminate sales or shipments to any independent reseller." Thus the battle is not over, and the price control and distribution system of various publications including the Conflict of the Ages series is still maintained as a prerogative of the hierarchy.

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RUSSIAN APPEAL

On page 6 we have reproduced an article from a previous "thought paper" giving details in the life of the imprisoned minister of the True and Free Seventh-day Adventists in Russia, Elder Rostislav Galetsky. This article by Peter Raddaway originally appeared in Keston College's publication - "The Right to Believe." Also included with this thought paper is a petition to be signed urging the release of Elder Galetsky from the labor camp where he is confined.

We would encourage you to have all your friends and neighbors join you in signing this petition for Galetsky's release. Concerned non-Adventists in England will be sending us a packet of signed petitions and we would like to include a large packet from the readers of the thought paper. When signing, persons

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The Case of the Russian "Robin Hood"

An urgent appeal for a world campaign to free a Russian "Robin Hood" held in prison since July 1980 reached the West recently.

Rostislav Galetsky, a leading pastor of the True and Free Seventh Day Adventist Church, eluded the KGB for five years. While his wife lived in the central Russian town of Voronezh, he flitted invisibly round the country, comforting the oppressed, issuing samizdat reports of arrests and searches, and appearing in Moscow to speak at press conferences for foreign journalists. Each time the KGB arrived too late: he had slipped away to his next assignment.

The appeal is signed by his Church's governing council and calls for the release of 39 church members in all and of other jailed Soviet Christians. "We are deeply convinced," the council writes, "that only an intensified campaign by the world community to defend these unjustly persecuted Christians can produce a breakthrough in our struggle for our legal rights, in freeing the prisoners of conscience and in achieving genuine freedom of belief."

Galetsky, now aged 32, became well-known in Moscow in 1977-78 when he gave an interview to the *New York Times* and publicly supported leading dissidents who had been arrested. In February 1978, he spoke out on behalf of Alexander Ginsburg at a press conference and as a result was strongly attacked in the government paper, *Izvestia*.

Following the arrest in March 1978 of Adventist Church head Vladimir Shelkov, Galetsky's role grew still more in importance. Shelkov died in January 1980 in a Siberian camp, aged 84.

The True and Free Seventh Day Adventist Church is not officially recognized by the Soviet state. Since breaking away from its parent body, the official Adventist Church, in the 1920's, it has refused to submit to the extensive controls which the authorities

try to impose on all religious communities. The True and Free Adventists argue—along with other unofficial churches—that these controls violate a basic principle of the Soviet Constitution which decrees the separation of church and state.

The official Adventists have been tolerated in recent years, while since early 1978 the KGB has been waging a strong campaign against the unofficial wing. "In the last two years," the appeal says, "more than 200 police searches have been carried out in Adventists' homes, involving confiscation of purely religious and human rights literature, and 39 people have been imprisoned."

Even before this campaign, which has been conducted in a dozen localities from Tashkent in Central Asia to Riga on the Baltic, Galetsky was evading the police to avoid arrest.

"As a true and conscientious pastor" the appeal says, "he helped persecuted believers with sensitivity and compassion. By his active pastoral witness and participation in the human rights struggle, publicizing acts of violence and



persecution by the state atheists against innocent believers, Galetsky incurred the special hatred of the KGB." Eventually he was caught in Moscow, where he is being held in Batyrki prison on charges of circulation of deliberately false fabrications and slandering the Soviet State and social order.

Rostislav Galetsky was arrested in Moscow on July 1, 1980. He had just arrived at the Kazan railway station in Moscow. As he left the train five men in plain clothes began following him at a distance. At the entrance to the metro station one of the men following him ran ahead to block his path.

Rostislav Galetsky was a close associate of the long-time leader of the True and Free Adventist Church, Vladimir Shelkov, who died in a Soviet labor camp at the age of 84, January 27, 1980. (Labor camp officials refused to release his body to relatives because he had not completed his sentence). Galetsky was denounced in *Izvestiya* (May 13, 1979) as an "agent" of Shelkov and accused of passing "slandereous" materials about Soviet religious policy to western journalists.

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may put their name and full address, or their name, town, and country. The petitions returned from outside of the U.S.A. will be sent to appropriate Ambassadors in the respective countries. (People intending to travel in the Soviet Union would probably be wiser to refrain from signing.)

When you have obtained as many signatures as possible return the completed petition to us. Please do not place any signature on the back of the page. If you need a second page, you may reproduce the one enclosed, making it exactly like the original, or you may write us for more copies.

All the information we have from former prisoners in the USSR suggests that such activity in behalf of those still confined is helpful. It may not lead to an early release, but it is likely to cause camp authorities to treat them better. Any effort made is well worth the endeavor. We may not be able to visit in prison our brothers and sisters in Russia, but remember what we do for them, Jesus recognizes it as done for Him.

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1901 GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION

Article 1. Names

This organization shall be known as the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Article 2. Object

The object of this Conference shall be to unify and to extend to all parts of the world, the work of promulgating the everlasting gospel.

Article 3. Membership

Section 1. This Conference shall be composed of; (a) such Union Conferences as have been or shall be properly organized; (b) such local Conferences as are not embraced in any Union Conference, provided such Conferences shall have been accepted by vote at a session of the General Conference;

and (c) such mission fields as have not been organized into Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists in any part of the world.

Sec. 2. The voters of said Conference shall be such duly accredited delegates from the Union Conferences, such members of the General Conference Executive Committee, and such other persons in the employ of the General Conference as shall receive delegates' credentials from the Executive Committee as are present at any duly convened regular or special Conference session.

Sec. 3 Each Union Conference shall be entitled to one delegate without regards to numbers, and additional delegate for each local Conference embraced in its territory, and an additional delegate for each one thousand of its membership. Each local Conference not included in the territory of an Union Conference shall be entitled to one delegate, without regard to numbers, and one additional delegate for each one thousand members.

Article 4. Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee of this Conference shall be twenty-five in number, and shall have power to organize itself by choosing a chairman, secretary, treasurer, and auditor, whose duties shall be such as usually pertain to their respective offices. It shall also have the power to appoint all necessary agents and committees for the conduct of its work.

Sec. 2. The Executive Committee shall be elected at the regular sessions of the Conference, and shall hold office for the term of two years, or until their successors are elected, and appear to enter upon their duties.

Article 5. Sessions

Section 1. This Conference shall hold a regular session once in two years, reckoning from 1889, at such time and place as the Executive Committee shall designate by a notice published in the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, at least eight weeks before the date of the session.

Sec. 2. The Executive Committee may call extra sessions, if in their judgment occasion requires, by a like notice; and the transactions of such extra sessions shall have the same force as those of the regular sessions.

- To Be Cont.

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