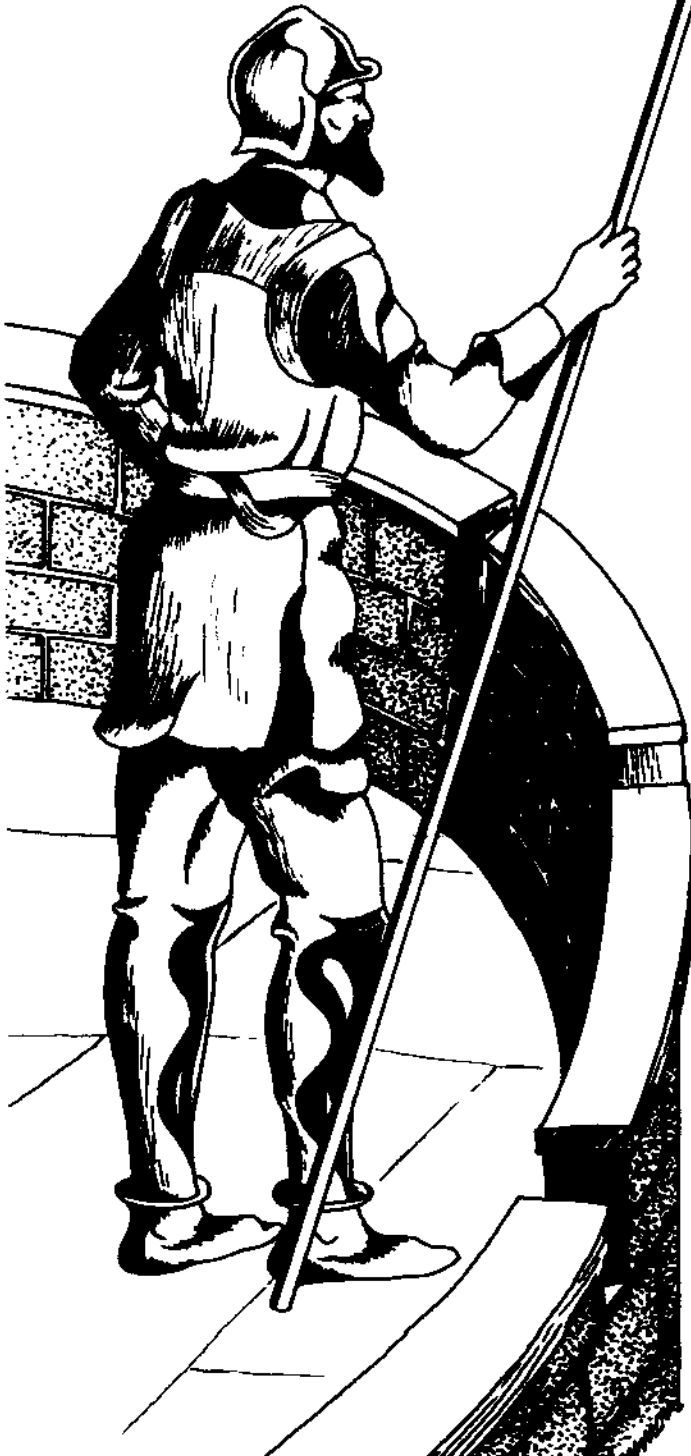


*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM!
Come out to meet Him."

(Matt 25:6 RSV)



THE LATTER RAIN NOW?

Simultaneously in the first issue of the Adventist Review for 1990, and in the January issue of Ministry, a call for Revival by Elder Neal C. Wilson was given first place of importance in both papers. The heart of Wilson's message was - "it is time for God's people to press together and earnestly seek the power of God's Spirit in the latter rain." He emphasized that "we can and must have this blessing **now**."

This call is not being taken lightly by either the Editor or Executive Editor of Ministry. In "First Glance" (January, 1990, p. 3), Elder J. R. Spangler tells of a conversation between himself and J. David Newman, the Executive Editor, concerning Wilson's call. Recognizing misplaced priorities of their time, they vowed to be accountable to each other to spend "one hour a day in study and prayer, focusing on the life of Christ."

In the February issue of Ministry, there was a follow-up article by Wilson, "Why Wait?" (pp. 32-33, 39); **plus** a report on happenings in the Atlantic Union Conference by Philip Follett, "Whispers of the Spirit's Voice" (pp. 34-35); **plus** a report by the president of the Oklahoma Conference, Robert Rider, "Sprinkles of the Latter Rain" (pp. 36-37); **plus** a compilation from the Writings of Ellen G. White on the subject of "Revival and Reformation Now." All of these "pluses" indicate the seriousness of this emphasis in the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the present time. Furthermore, it brings every independent ministry, and some who do not wish to be so considered, such as the 1888 Message Committee, to their moment of truth.

An indirect report from Western Australia indicated that certain visiting men from the Ministry and the E. G. White Estate related at meetings "down under" that a revival was commencing in the United States. Elder Philip Follett, in his article noted the E. G. White prophecy that "God's power" would "return to the East." (See 9T:98) The implication was clear that what Follett was reporting was evidence that this

prophecy was beginning to be fulfilled. If these are genuine experiences as are being related as occurring in both the Atlantic Union and the Oklahoma Conference, then every independent ministry must make a valid assessment or capitulate in confession and humility. This involves Wieland and Short who have been calling upon the Church's leadership to confess and repent. If the Holy Spirit in the latter rain is being ministered to the Church through its present leadership, the 1888 Message Committee is going to have to do more than merely devise plans for the release of more propaganda.

Admittedly, when I read the articles by both Follett and Rider - and there is no evidence that they are fabricating, but rather they are relating things as they know them to be - I had to stop and do some praying. I do not wish to miss the Kingdom of God through any obstinate or rebellious attitude. If this is indeed genuine and the working of God, I want it. So I prayed most earnestly to God to give me an answer. As I was praying, there flashed into my mind a reference in the The Great Controversy. I quickly turned to the page indicated, and found my answer. With that answer, I carefully re-read the articles noted above, and read other material in preparation for this analysis.

First, one cannot but be suspicious of Wilson's involvement in the process. Frankly, he is and has been for years the Church's number one hindrance to the experience he says he is now seeking. Further, 1990 is either re-election or retirement for him. Add to this the call at the Annual Council for a decade of healing and the illustrations he used. These create more doubt than confidence in his true motives in fostering this present call for the latter rain now. The Church and those watching need to see more than mere lip service in a call for revival by Wilson before they can even begin to be convinced that his articles are not more than mere rhetoric.

There is a cautionary statement in the Writings which has a bearing on this whole picture. It reads - "Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection." (TM:506) Simply put, unless we have experienced the first work of the Holy Spirit and what He was sent to accomplish, we might as well forget the latter rain. Closely related to this are the facts as to what the "early showers" actually are, and what the "latter rain" is to be.

Add to this the fact that when the genuine "manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain" shall be poured out, it will be done in such a way that while falling on hearts of those around us, we may not discern it, nor receive it. (See TM:507) Again simply put, it will not be a charismatic manifestation as is done in modern Pentecostal Spiritism.

This factor alone cast long shadows over the report of Robert Rider and activities in Oklahoma. If as his report indicates, the workers in Oklahoma are experiencing a deep spiritual and observable revival, then why was the pastor of the first church in Oklahoma City sent to Oregon to learn first hand how to turn his church into a charismatic pentecostal Celebration Church? This question is based on letters being received from Oklahoma City.

"The Early Showers"

In the Upper Room, Jesus knowing that soon He was to be parted from His disciples and return to the Father, told them that in His place - "a Divine Spirit dwelling in a temple of flesh" (See YI, Dec. 20, 1900) - He would pray the Father and receive for them "another Comforter" to be with them to the end. (John 14:16)

Leaving the Upper Room, on His way to Gethsemane, Jesus reminded them again of the promised Comforter and outlined the Spirit's work: "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." (John 16:8) Herein is the beginning work, "the early showers," and unless accomplished, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection. The question as to whether the "latter rain" can fall on the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church **now**, can only be answered in the light of how much of the beginning work of the Spirit has been done.

In his initial appeal calling for prayer **now** for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Neal C. Wilson wrote - "As an elected leader of God's covenant people, I want you all to know that I commit my life to seeking the outpouring of the latter rain upon myself and upon the world church. By God's grace I will fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to give the Holy Spirit." (Adventist Review, Jan. 4, 1990, p. 3) What things Elder Wilson has to do about his own personal life is between him and God. That is beyond our ken and comment, but what things

Wilson has done in ministering his stewardship of the high offices which the Church has bestowed upon him are subject to review and comment.

The first work of the Comforter is to convince of sin. When one is so convinced, if he desires the fullness of the Spirit, he will confess, and seek to rectify the wrongs done to individuals. "It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work only in greater degree must be done now" (TM, p. 507) There are some questions that need to be asked of Elder Wilson. Has he made contact with Merikay McLeod (Silver) and confessed the duplicity he practiced when visiting with her and leaving a false impression of his intents? Has he contacted Elder Leonard Mills and confessed the wrongness of his threats against him, and the attempted conference frame-up against Mills if he had knowledge of the same? (See Betrayal, pp. 295-298, 329) What about others against whom he has practiced administrative duplicity? - and the list of names could go on.

The second work of the Holy Spirit is to convict of righteousness. Speaking of the danger to which the Church was exposed in 1896 because men in positions of leadership sought to define the way the Holy Spirit was to come, Ellen G. White noted that the problem was that men "were not willing to exchange their own righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth." (TM, p. 65) We can talk all we want to about 1888, and the message of Christ's righteousness, but unless we are willing to come face to face with truth, pure and unadulterated, we will not receive the genuine latter rain experience.

In 1980, Wilson chaired the discussion and adoption of the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief at the Dallas General Conference session. These Statements confirmed the compromises of the SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-56, plus adopting language from the Constitution of the WCC. In 1985, at the General Conference session in New Orleans, Wilson resisted any review to rectify or alter these Statements. The acknowledgment in the book - SDA's Believe... - begins with this sentence - "With the authorization and encouragement of President Neal C. Wilson and

other officers of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,..." The genuine latter rain is not going to be poured on apostasy and error, no matter how subtly written or devised.

The closing paragraph in Wilson's second article in both the Adventist Review (Feb. 1, 1990, p. 9) and the Ministry (Feb. 1990, p. 39) reads: "Let prayers for the outpouring of the latter rain ascend to Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary and to the throne of grace 24 hours a day from somewhere in the world field." Wilson, in this plea, did not indicate where Jesus was in the heavenly sanctuary. It does make a difference. In Early Writings, among the first visions is one which describes "The End of the 2300 Days" (pp. 54-56). Two groups are pictured. One has followed Jesus by faith into the holiest and they pray - "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." In response to this prayer, Jesus breathes "upon them the Holy Ghost." The other group remains looking to where Jesus had been in the first apartment. They, too, pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." But who answers this prayer? - "Satan would breathe upon them an unholy influence."

What kept Wilson from writing - "Let prayers for the outpouring of the latter rain ascend to Jesus in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary." The counsel is clear; it does make a difference as to where the petition for the latter rain is sent - the holy place, or the most holy. We might ask, to where is Wilson directing his prayers? Or, have the Desmond Ford concepts made such an imprint on Wilson's thinking, that he now thinks of the heavenly sanctuary as merely a unit with "the throne of grace" synonymous with "the great white throne" from which the sealing latter rain light comes? (See Early Writings, p. 38)

What the Latter Rain Is Not!

Paralleling the beginning of the message of righteousness by faith in 1888 was modern pentecostalism. The Adventist Church was led to believe that the acceptance of the message would bring the long expected latter rain and the finishing of the work. These two factors meet in what came to be known as the Holy Flesh Movement of Indiana. In 1895, Elder S. S. Davis was asked to go to Evansville, Indiana, to establish the work in that section of the State. Growth must have been rather slow as no report of progress appears until 1898 after Davis attended a

worker's meeting at which Elder A. F. Bal-
lenger stressed that the time had come to
receive the Holy Spirit in all of its full-
ness. It was soon after this meeting, Davis
reported from Evansville:

Sabbath and Sunday, August 13, 14, were event-
ful days in the history of the work in this
place. In the Sabbath meeting the Spirit was
present to impress hearts, and nine persons re-
quested baptism. Among them was a Baptist
minister of considerable prominence, ... Sunday
night our meeting was well attended. The sub-
ject was "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost;" and
the Spirit was poured out in a large measure.
It seemed that we were filled to the utmost of
our capacity to receive. We have reached the
time of the message, "Receive ye the Holy
Ghost;" and we are actually having pentecostal
times and apostolic experiences. The message is
rising, and grand and awful times are upon us.
This message will close with power and great
glory; and if it is the will of the Lord, I want
to live and see it triumph. (Quoted in The Holy
Flesh Movement, p. 6)

A combination program of evangelism uniting
the literature ministry and public evangelism
was inaugurated at Evansville. The confer-
ence State Agent, as the Publishing Depart-
ment Secretary was then called, worked close-
ly with the program. Between visits by the
State Agent during the program, Elder S. S.
Davis made contact with a group of Pente-
costals. When Jesse E. Dunn, the State
Agent, returned after the contact, Davis said
to him of these people - "Brother Dunn, they
have the 'Spirit;' we have the truth; and if
we had the 'Spirit' as they have, with the
truth we could do things." Whatever assim-
ilation Davis worked out, he was given a team
of workers and became Conference Revivalist
in 1899. It was from this date that what is
called the Holy Flesh Movement began.

During the past few weeks, we have received
from the West Coast announcements, some old,
some very recent, of goals and objectives for
the Church. One project was called CHURCH-
LIGHT which was introduced in Northern Cali-
fornia last year. The comparison made to en-
courage the Church "to come out of the dark"
has echoes of the Davis reasoning at the turn
of the Century. The challenge read:

In five years . . .

We built 952 new churches in the Far
Eastern Division

We built 820 new churches in South
America

We built 693 new churches in the Inter-
American Division

Last Year . . .

The SDA Church built 47 churches in
North America

The Assemblies of God Church built 329
new churches in North America

Again, what was the rationale? The Assem-
blies of God have the "Spirit;" we have the
truth, and if we had their power, we could
have had as many new church "buildings," too!

The most recent report comes from Southern
California, where on Sabbath, February 24,
in the Glendale Academy Auditorium, the area
Adventists were invited to "an extraordinary
series on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit."
It was called an "Upper Room Encounter."
Assisting Elder John Carter was Elder Garry
Williams, also from Australia via Oregon,
who was to be the special guest speaker.
According to the Carter Report those who at-
tended were to receive instruction from "the
Word how to receive the baptism of the Holy
Spirit." They would discover "how to pray
in the Spirit, worship in the Spirit, and
sing in the Spirit." These are terms of
pentecostalism used in describing their form
of worship. These same forms accentuate the
worship in Celebration Churches growing in
Seventh-day Adventism today. While present-
ly, there have been no reports of speaking
in tongues, or even the radical forms of wor-
ship which marked the Holy Flesh Movement,
the ground work is being laid.

The newest SDA church in the Southeastern
California Conference is the Celebration
Center in Colton. On September 14, 1989,
the president of the Conference, Stephen
Gifford, welcomed the Celebration Center as
one of the Conference congregations. In his
welcoming remarks, Gifford "thanked Simpson
[senior pastor] for reviving excitement in
the spirit of worship. He affirmed the need
of diversity of worship style in order to
meet the spiritual needs of today's society."
(Pacific Union Recorder, Dec. 18, 1989, p. 23)

There is another interesting aspect of the
beginnings of the Holy Flesh Movement, and
what could be a parallel in today's call for
the latter rain **now**. About the same time
that S. S. Davis began his work as Revival-
ist for the Indiana Conference, there was a
change of presidency. R. S. Donnell came
from Upper Columbia. At a worker's meeting

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:1

Adventists have looked forward to the time when as at the first Pentecost of the Christian era thousands were converted in a day. Pentecost symbolizes in the Adventist mind a day of power and a time when the membership will be increased numerically. While it is true that on that first Pentecost following the ascension of Jesus - the day of His enthronement as High Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec (Acts 2:33), there was a numerical increase 25 times greater than the number gathered together in the upper room prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we still fail to read correctly what Acts 2 tells us that day was all about.

Prior to the day of Pentecost, the disciples were using the "upper room" for prayer and the study of the Word of God. From this study they gained insights which they never before perceived possible. The "one place" when "the day of Pentecost was fully come" was **not** the temple courts, even though all Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord three times a year, and this day was one of those times. (See Ex. 23:14-17) If any had gone, they would have missed the outpouring of the Spirit. None went; they were all of one accord.

It is obvious that the Holy Spirit was not poured out on the priests ministering the temple services, nor on those gathered to celebrate the ritual of the day. The temple had indeed be left desolate, and those who officiated were no longer under Divine guidance. They continued to minister by the sparks of their own kindling. But the Holy Spirit did come upon those "in one place" - the upper room.

Those who heard the Apostles testify in the Spirit, and who heard Peter preach truth brought by the Spirit direct from the Throne of the Eternal were "Jews, devout men." (Acts 2:5) Luke alone uses the word, *eulabēs*, translated "devout," and then only sparingly.

Simeon, a man waiting for the consolation of Israel, is described by Luke as "devout." (Luke 2:25) Those who buried Stephen and lamented his death were likewise designated as "devout." (Acts 8:2) Such also were the men who listened to Peter on the Day of Pentecost. This day was **not** a time of an evangelistic outreach to "heathen" Gentiles. It was a message directed to "all the house of Israel." (Acts 2:36)

What was that message? To put it in the plainest of terms, it was a message telling the individual layman of Jewry that he was corporately accountable for the deeds of his church leaders. Hear Peter's words - "Let **all the house of Israel know assuredly**, that God hath made that same Jesus, **whom ye have crucified**, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36) Most of those "devout" Jews who heard these words had not even been present at the Passover when Jesus was crucified. The Roman soldiers had actually performed the crucifixion. Yet the Holy Spirit, through Peter, was holding them just as accountable as if they had sat on the Sanhedrin itself, and cast the deciding vote!

When the impact of that truth sank home, they asked the only question which could be asked - "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (2:27) [They didn't say - "Men and offshoots, what shall we do?"] The answer was twofold. In regard to Jesus as the Lord and Messiah, they had to change their minds in regard to the propaganda they had been hearing from their religious leadership. In other words, "Repent and be baptized." But what about their corporate involvement? Peter's answer was just as forthright: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (2:40) Luke uses this same word in his gospel, but there it is translated, "crooked." (3:5) The sense of Peter's challenge is borrowed from Deuteronomy 32:5. The word, "generation," is also used by Luke in the Gospel. (11:29)

Perhaps the real message of the Day of Pentecost is that instead of 3000 "devout" Jews being converted in a day, there will be 144,000 "devout" Seventh-day Adventists converted!

#

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Isaiah 26:2

LET'S TALK IT OVER

The willingness to receive the Holy Spirit in all its fullness is a serious matter. The Spirit which Jesus promised to send - the allos Comforter - was designated by Him as "the Spirit of truth." The coming of Jesus into the world was a key event of time and eternity. He was the truth made flesh. He didn't come to stimulate the emotions, nor to give power to satisfy human vanity. This "Another (allos) Comforter" would be like Him, equal to Him, finishing that which he came and initiated. Thus the fullness of the Spirit means the fullness of truth. For only when this is realized in the life can one be truly a son of God. We either have the devil as our father - who abode not in the truth (John 8:44) - or God as our Father through the Spirit of truth. (Rom. 8:14) That is why the "latter rain" can be falling on hearts all around us, and we not discern nor receive it.

The reception of truth is an individual decision. No one can accept or reject it for another. The acceptance of truth can bring a blessed soul satisfying experience. But it can also be very disturbing. My reaction to it determines which experience I will receive.

The message of Revelation 18, the "loud cry," and the "latter rain" are terms which describe the final work of God in giving one last moment of truth to those still in the valley of decision before the final irrevocable sentence is delivered from the Throne that closes all probationary time. There will be signs, wonders and miracles, some by the power of God, some not so, for we are warned of "spirits of devils working miracles." (Rev. 16:14) How then can we decide between that which is true, and that which is not? Herein enters the answer to my prayer which I prayed when reading what was taking place in the East, in Oklahoma, and elsewhere. The question is asked - "Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible, and the Bible only?" (GC, p. 625)

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God; it is not the evidence of things seen. Genuine saving faith in this final hour of time will accept the revelation of the Bible, and not seek to mitigate its meaning to make it conform to presuppositions. If I mitigate the word, in the crisis, I have nothing to aid me in discerning between the false and the true, except my senses. This is the position in which many have been placed unwittingly at the present time by voices who

should know better.

Along with the various sheets coming across the desk telling of programs to seek "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" come announcements of meetings sponsored by the 1888 Message Committee. These announcements read - "Join the loyal Seventh-day Adventists who believe that the church has been entrusted with a message Ellen White identified as the 'beginning' of the latter rain..." On the other hand as we have noted in this issue of WWN, the leadership believes that the "latter rain" is beginning to fall, and they have not accepted Wieland and Short's version of the Message. Something is incongruous. Yet Wieland mitigates the force of Rev. 3:16, and assures the "believers" in the 1888 Message Committee [It can't save you] that the "angel" will not be spued out; but rather it is the "angel" who opens the door in Rev. 3:20. Perhaps the "angel" has opened the door, and is now receiving the "sprinkles" of the latter rain, and Wieland knows nothing about it. Away with such confusion!

It is now time that the issues be simply but fully addressed. But when is Wieland going to let self be crucified so they can be addressed?

Another factor raised by the questions asked in The Great Controversy, p. 625, has to do with "the Bible, and the Bible only." In a letter to George I. Butler after he returned to active work following 1888, and was serving as president of the Southern Union, Ellen G. White gives a testimony of her work and how God used her. Keep in mind that during the period leading up to 1888, Butler wanted Ellen White to give an "inspired" interpretation as to what "law" was referred to in Galatians. The letter reads:

For half a century I have been the Lord's messenger, and as long as my life shall last I shall continue to bear messages that God gives me for His people. I take no glory to myself; in my youth the Lord made me His messenger, to communicate to His people testimonies of encouragement, warning, and reproof. For sixty years I have been in communication with heavenly messengers, and I have been constantly learning in reference to divine things, and in reference to the way in which God is constantly working to bring souls from the error of their ways to the light in God's light. (Letter 86, 1906)

What this personal testimony of Ellen White does not say is equally as important as what it

does say. When we are willing to accept at face value her call as "messenger" and become grounded in and upon the Bible, and the Bible only, then we will be able to make decisions on other than our senses.

In the brief comments on "The Day of Pentecost" (p. 5), I closed with the suggestive thought that perhaps the "latter rain" will be the conversion of 144,000 devout Seventh-day Adventists. There are such, even as there were devout Jews who listened to Peter that day long ago. When one surveys from where these men had come, and consider all the cost, time and hazzards to come to Jerusalem for that feast, one can begin to catch an appreciation of their devotion. But they had to repent - change their mind - as to their spiritual security. Devout Seventh-day Adventists face the same issue today.

What an hour of soul searching would take place were the fact to suddenly dawn on the consciousness of devout Seventh-day Adventists that they are held accountable for the compromises with truth made at the SDA-Evangelical Conferences in 1955-56. How would they respond should they realize that they are held accountable along with the delegates to the session for the apostasy written into the 27 Fundamental Statements of Belief as voted at Dallas in 1980?

What would some of the devout Seventh-day Adventists who are enamored with the messages of the so-called firm foundation do, could they realize that now after a decade those teachers still cannot discern truth from error? Isn't it time devoted Seventh-day Adventists become convicted and cry out - "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Add to this the scandals - Davenport - and litigations and remember the message of the Day of Pentecost is corporate accountability. Are we going to be lulled into a fatal security by the call for a decade of healing, and the "latter rain" now?

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"The Latter Rain - NOW!" - From p. 4, col. 2

in Indianapolis soon after his arrival, the Revival Team proclaimed with vigor their message of holiness. Elder Donnell openly opposed these men and is quoted as saying, "I am not going to have any such gang as Davis's, Hickeys and Crarys going over this conference preaching any such doctrine." He called them into his office to straighten them out. At the end of the study session, he made a complete about face, and became the leader of the Movement.

The question now arises. Since the Celebration Centers have the two active ingredients by which the Conference marks success - numbers and the inflowing of means, is Neal C. Wilson by his call for the latter rain now, seeking to place himself at the head of the Movement as Donnell did in 1899? A revival of form without substance as was demonstrated in Indiana is to take place again. (Could it be again at Indianapolis?) Ellen G. White wrote to Elder S. N. Haskell - "The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation." (SM, bk ii, p. 36)

Note: Those desiring documented information regarding the Holy Flesh Movement can obtain the manuscript - The Holy Flesh Movement - 1899-1901 by writing to P.O. Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854. \$3.00 postpaid.

1990 ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP

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Editor Elder Wm. H. Grotheer
Contributing Editor Allen Stump

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