

*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

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

(Matt. 25:6 RSV)



## PIECES FALLING INTO PLACE

The first article in the "Special Edition" of Ministry on the 1888 Centennial was written by Robert W. Olson, secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate. In the article, he wrote:

Ellen White recognized the responsibility of leadership in correcting evils and in setting the proper spiritual tone in the church. But in the 27 years she lived following the Minneapolis meeting, she never once suggested that we pass an official action in which we would formally dissociate ourselves from the un-Christlike attitude manifested by so many at Minneapolis. (p. 8)

The clear intent of this statement - though carefully worded - is that Ellen G. White did not call for "denominational" or "corporate" repentance in regard to the rejection of the message of 1888. This required a response from Wieland who has been calling for such. In his official organ - "1888 Message Newsletter" - he, or someone on his behalf, replied, but in so doing admitted to the truthfulness of Olsen's assertion. It read - "Ellen White may not have used the phrase, even as she never used the word agape, but she clearly taught the principle (we will give sources in a moment)." (March-April 1988, p. 7) In paragraph "(c)" of his reply, the supposed sources are indicated: "She [Ellen White] recognized the principle of national impenitence (COL 304, 305; AA 247), and denominational impenitence (5T 456, 457). Faith will bring about the opposite: denominational repentance." (Ibid., emphasis his)

We read and reread the pages cited and could not find these terms as indicated by Wieland. We did find some key concepts:

- 1) A nation's [church's] sin and a nation's [church's] ruin were due to the religious leaders. (COL, p. 305)
- 2) There is a terrible amount of guilt for which the church is responsible. (5T, p. 457)

Nowhere can there be found a single sentence by Ellen G. White calling for "denominational"

or "corporate" repentance in regard to the message as given in 1888 because it had been rejected. And rejected it was by many, especially those in positions of leadership.

There is, however, a specific call to repentance to be found in the message to the Church of Laodicea. The faithful and true Witness declared - "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: **be zealous therefore, and repent.**" (Rev. 3:19) Wieland is absolutely correct in applying this call to Laodicea in a corporate sense. (This verse closes the "thou" section of the message to Laodicea; the next verse begins the approach of Christ to the individual). How is this to be reconciled? This goes to the very core of the controversy over the message of 1888.

A little thought in regard to the message of righteousness by faith should lead one to perceive that it is, and can only be, an individual experience. The reception of God's free grace is not a corporate experience which is then distributed through human mediators to the individual; that would be papal. It is rather a grace ministered directly to the individual through the one Mediator between God and man, the Man, Jesus Christ. Thus the realization of my failure to accept this marvelous grace can lead only to an individual experience.

Corporate acts resulting from the decisions of men who have not opened their hearts to the grace of God can lead to a departure from principles of righteousness so that a corporate repentance is the only answer to keep a corporate body, be it the Jewish nation-church, or the Seventh-day Adventist Church from ruin. A failure to recognize this factor by both Wieland and Short, and the leadership of the Church has created the impasse on the issue of "corporate" or "denominational" repentance.

One of the most insightful experiences as an editor that I have had in recent weeks was to help proofread the Second Printing of A Warning and Its Reception. There as I read carefully again what Wieland and Short had written in 1950; the response of "the brethren" and the counter reply of the "messengers of 1950", the pieces of the puzzle dropped into place. There is a need for individual repentance, and there was a need for corporate repentance necessitated by the actions of those who by their continued rejection of the message of 1888 administered their executive authority contrary to the will of God.

In an attempt to get "the brethren" to see this result of their rejection of the 1888 message, and to bring forth the fruits of repentance, Ellen G. White did play a key role.

Let us analyze some of the factors in the picture of what has been termed "the crisis years" - 1888-1903. In the Second General Conference Report, reviewing the original 1888 Re-Examined, under a subsection - "The Overall Picture," the committee stated:

6. In Battle Creek centralizing movements were put on foot and certain institutional leaders, losing their consecration, were guilty of a course of action detrimental to the cause and displeasing to God.

7. The issues during the 1890's were not primarily over the doctrine of righteousness by faith, but over the concentration and misuse of power in Battle Creek, and the consequent evils resulting therefrom. (A Warning and Its Reception, 2nd Printing, Mint Sec., p. 8)

This summary is verified in messages sent by Ellen G. White to Elder O. A. Olsen, then president of the General Conference. She wrote:

The high-handed power that has been developed, as though position has made men gods, makes me afraid, and ought to cause fear. It is a curse wherever and by whomsoever it is exercised. This lording it over God's heritage will create a disgust of man's jurisdiction that a state of insubordination will result. (TM, p. 361; written in 1895)

This spirit of domination was extending even to the presidents of the local conferences. (p. 362) Satan had "inspired" men with his own attributes, and the result was that they were "**following in the track of Romanism**". (362-363). Why did this happen? The answer is given:

The righteousness of Christ by faith has been ignored by some; for it is contrary to their spirit, and their whole life-experience. Rule, rule, has been their course of action." (p. 363)

This is the fruitage when the message of Christ's righteousness is not a part of the "life-experience." The crisis over this misuse of "executive authority" was met head-on at the 1901 General Conference session. At the very beginning of the session, Ellen G. White called for a "reorganization" starting at the "foundation" and building upon a "different principle." Here are her exact words in context:

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. What we want now is a **reorganization**. We want to begin at the **foundation** and to build upon a **different principle**. (GC Bulletin, 1901, p. 25)

Resulting from this session, there came forth a new Constitution with no General Conference president. What enabled this drastic change to be accomplished? **Note carefully these words** of Ellen White at the 1901 session:

Who do you suppose has been among us since this conference began? Who has kept away the objectionable features that generally appear in such a meeting? Who walked up and down the aisles of this Tabernacle? - The God of heaven and His angels. And they did not come here to tear you to pieces, but to give you right and peaceable minds. They have been among us to work the works of God, to keep back the powers of darkness, that the work God designed should be done and should not be hindered. The angels of God have been working among us. (1901 GC Bulletin, p. 463; quoted in A Warning and Its Reception, 2nd Printing, Mint Sec., p. 32)

This point dare not be overlooked. The 1901 Constitution was the work of men who yielded to the guidance of angels and the presence of God. It was divinely inspired!

Looking back on the session, Ellen White wrote in the Review and Herald, Nov. 26, 1901, these words:

During the General Conference the Lord wrought mightily for His people. Every time I think of that meeting, a sweet solemnity comes over me, and sends a glow of gratitude to my soul. We have seen the stately step-pings of the Lord our Redeemer. We praise His holy name; for He has brought deliverance to His people. (Ibid.)

But before the next session of the General Conference, it was revealed that the roots of Minneapolis had not died, and had sprouted again to bare its baleful fruit. Men could not resist the desire to "rule". The actions take between the sessions are a research in itself. In a letter to the Battle Creek Church, Ellen White wrote of a dream she had of the brethren humbling themselves and confessing their attitudes of alienation which each had for the other. She stated that "there was rejoicing such as never before had been heard in the Tabernacle." (8T:105) But when she was aroused to consciousness, she heard the words - "This might have been." While the framework had been erected through which God could work mightily for His people, the hearts of the men entrusted with the responsibility of the work

had not been changed by the message of the Righteousness of Christ. The results soon followed.

Near the close of the 1903 General Conference session, a new Constitution was introduced, setting aside the God-inspired Constitution of 1901. The "track of Romanism" was again entered. P. T. Magan, who had signed a "Minority Report" protested vigorously declaring:

It may be stated there is nothing in this new constitution which is not abundantly safeguarded by the provisions of it; but I want to say to you that any man who has ever read Neander's History of the Christian Church, Mosheim's, or any of the other great church historians, - any man who has ever read those histories can come to no other conclusion but that the principles which are to be brought in through this proposed constitution, and in the way in which they are brought in, are the same principles, and introduced in precisely the same way, as they were hundreds of years ago when the Papacy was made.

Further: This whole house must recognize this, before we are through with this discussion, that the proposed new constitution, whatever improvements may be claimed for it, whatever advantages it may be stated that it contains, that, in principle, as far as the head of the work is concerned, it goes back precisely where we were before the reformatory steps of two years ago. ... I say that, as far as the head of the thing is concerned, though not couched in the same words, though not hedged about with the same identical language, they are precisely the same principles which governed us up to two years ago; and that the moment you vote this constitution, which I do not believe you are ready to do, yet, when you understand this, the moment you vote it you vote yourselves right back where we were two years ago and before it. (1903 GC Bulletin, p. 150)

It was voted, and within two weeks following the close of the 1903 Session, Ellen G. White wrote her specific call for a "denominational repentance." She stated:

Unless the church which is now [1903] being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. (8T:250)

In the original edition of 1888 Re-Examined, Wieland and Short appealed to this reference as a basis for their call for "corporate repentance." (See A Warning and Its Reception, 2nd Printing, White Sec., p. 196) By applying it to a call for repentance in regard to the Message of 1888, they used it

out of context.

In 1903 an official action [vote] was taken repudiating the results of 1901 when "the God of heaven and His angels" ministered to the assembled delegates so that they could "work the works of God." (See p. 3, col. 1) And the delegates were given a choice! This 1903 Session was marked by the fact that in all our church history, this is the only session which records a majority and minority report to an action of a session committee.

Wieland and Short have sought to down play the implications of the 1903 session, making it appear as yet another misrepresentation of Jones' and Waggoner's position rather than what it was, a rejection of "the God of heaven" and thus an act calling for denominational repentance. (See 1888 Re-Examined, 1987 edition, p. 124f) On the other hand, the hierarchy, through its official organ, the Adventist Review, have attempted to rewrite the history of the 1901 and the 1903 sessions, falsely representing Ellen G. White's endorsement of the work done in 1901, as applying to the "backsliding" of 1903. (See WWN, XXI-2, p. 5)

The fallout from the action of the 1903 Session in setting aside the "God-inspired" constitution of 1901 has been little realized. One major act of significance was the turn-about of W. C. White in joining the majority report in 1903. Here was a man, the son of one of the Lord's "messengers", who in the years following 1903 would play an ever increasing role in the format and the way the "messages" would be delivered to the people. He placed himself with those, who according to his own mother, were causing the church to backslide, - retrogress into the track of Romanism.

While the seeds of the problems after 1903 - the alpha, and the defections of notable ministers - were planted prior to 1903, the tragic history following 1903 which involved the integrity of the Writings can be traced to the actions of W. C. White. He bent everything he could to sustain the kingly power reestablished by the 1903 Constitution. The present controversy today over the Writings of Ellen G. White arise largely from events following 1903, and W. C. White's handling of those Writings.

Where is the call for "denominational repentance" over all that happened in 1903? Are Wieland and Short giving it? **No!** Are those connected with the "1888 Message Com-

mittee" giving it? **No!** Will the hierarchy of the church at the 1888 re-enactment in Minneapolis call for it? **No!** Tragically, the "most precious message" is being used to urge the rank and file to support "the backsliding" of 1903, which has now come into full fruition.

Borrowing the words of Jeremiah - "Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" for the deception that is being practiced upon the concerned of God's professed people, for "from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (See Jer. 9:1; 8:11)

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## NEWS NOTES

The first Bible and religious publishing plant in the Soviet Union may be opened by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the near future. But the church, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C., has no comment on the proposed plant in the Moscow area, due to ongoing sensitive negotiations with the Soviet government. So far, this much is known: Harold Otis of the Adventists' Review and Herald Publishing Association has been to Russia several times to discuss the proposal, and the Soviet officials have visited the Adventists' publishing plant in Maryland once. In Adventist circles the proposal is becoming more controversial. Sources say the church would pay for the plant in its entirety, but 50% of all profits from printing would go to the Soviet government. The publishing house, with government approval, would be required to print anything of a religious nature submitted to it, including Islamic literature. (Religion Report, Vol. 2, #8, p. 1)

Mikhail Kulakov, [Soviet appointed] president of the Association of Seventh-day Adventists in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree at Southwestern College in Keene, Texas, on May 1.

Kulakov, baccalaureate speaker for the 125 seniors during the college's 94th commencement weekend, stated that there were no Seventh-day Adventist prisoners of conscience today. (Adventist Review, May 19, 1988, p.6)

# THE DEAD SPEAK!

While the above title may appear odd, and heretical to most Seventh-day Adventists, the reason for the choice will soon become clear. In Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 28, we read:

God has given me light regarding our periodicals. What is it?--He has said that the dead are to speak. How?--Their works shall follow them. We are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work...Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced.

In the last issue of WWN under the article entitled - "More Studies On Full 1888 Message?" - the three-fold concept of the 1888 message was outlined. While both Elders Waggoner and Jones addressed all three phrases of the message; it was A. T. Jones who was unquestionably the champion of religious liberty and organizational truth. While many are seeking to revive the 1888 message today with reprints of articles on justification, very few are willing to reprint anything concerning the full message. Questionably Jones' greatest literary work is, The Two Republics published in 1891. Chapter nine of this excellent volume is entitled, "The Exaltation of the Bishopric." In an effort to stimulate interest in the full message of 1888 we are publishing a short section from the beginning of this chapter. Let "THE DEAD SPEAK!"

## The Exaltation of the Bishopric

The Scripture was fulfilled; there had come a falling away. But that there should come a falling away, was not all of the story - through that falling away there was to be revealed "that man of sin," "the son of perdition," "the mystery of iniquity," "that wicked," who would oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; and who, when he did appear, would continue even till that great and notable event--the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Referring again to the scripture quoted from 2 Thessalonians ii, 2, at the beginning of the previous chapter, it is seen that self-exaltation is the spring of the development of this power.

As that scripture expresses it, "He opposeth and exalteth himself." As another scripture gives it, "He shall magnify himself in his

heart." And another, "He magnified himself even to the prince of the host"--the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet another, "He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes." That is, he shall reign, or assert authority above, and in opposition to, the authority of Christ; or, as the thought is developed by Paul, this power would oppose and exalt itself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple--the place of worship--of God, showing himself that he is God.

Referring also again to the instruction of Paul to the elders who met him at Miletus, there is seen a prophecy of this same spirit of self-exaltation,--a wish to gain disciples to themselves instead of to Christ. They would prefer themselves to Christ, thus at once putting themselves above him, in opposition to him. And this would be developed from among the bishops. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

This spirit was actively manifested in opposition to the apostle John while he was yet alive, for he says: "I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." 3 John 9.

This assertion of pre-eminence was shown in prating against the apostle with malicious words, and not only rejecting him, but casting out of the church those members who would receive him. It was but a little while after the living authority of the apostles was gone, before this was carried to yet further extremes.

According to the word of Christ, there is no such thing as pre-eminence, or mastership, or sovereignty of position, among men in the church. There was once an argument among his disciples as to who should be counted the greatest, and Jesus called them unto him and said: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever among you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mark x, 42-45.

And in warning his disciples of all times against the practice of the scribes and

Pharisees of that time, who were but the popes of their day, he says they "love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. . . . Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matt. xxiii, 6-12.

With these instructions the apostles went forth under the great commission of Christ, preaching everywhere that with the Lord there is no respect of persons, but that all are equal before God. There is neither lordship nor over-lordship among men in the church of Christ; but all are brethren. Christ only is the head of the church, and the head of every man in the church.

In the church each member has the same rights as any other member; but for the good of all and the mutual benefit of all concerned, as well as better to carry on his work in the world, the Lord has established his church, and with it a system of church order in which certain ones are chosen to exercise certain functions for the mutual benefit of all in the organization. These officers are chosen from among the membership by the voice of the membership. Of these officers there are two classes, and two only, -bishops and deacons. This is shown by Paul's letter to the Philippians--"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Chap. i, 1.

Bishops are sometimes called elders; but the same office is always signified. When Paul gave directions to Titus in this matter, he said: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless. . . . For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." Titus i, 5-7.

This is further shown in Acts xx, to which we have before referred; when Paul had called unto him to Miletus "the elders of the church" of Ephesus, among other things he said to them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,"--episkopoi--bishops.

Peter also writes to the same effect: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Peter v, 1-3.

This text not only shows that the terms "elder" and "bishop" refer to the same identical office, but it shows that Peter counted himself as one among them; and that not only by his precept but by his example he showed that in this office, although overseers they were not overrulers or lords.

The true idea on this point has been clearly stated as follows:--

It has been said that the pope, the bishops, the priests, and all those who people convents, form the spiritual or ecclesiastical estate; and that princes, nobles, citizens, and peasants form the secular or lay estate. This is a specious tale. But let no man be alarmed. All Christians belong to the spiritual estate; and the only difference between them is in the functions which they fulfill. We have all but one baptism, but one faith; and these constitute the spiritual man. Unction, tonsure, ordination, consecration, given by the pope, or by a bishop, may make a hypocrite, but can never make a spiritual man. We are all consecrated priests by baptism, as St. Peter says: 'You are a royal priesthood;' although all do not actually perform the offices of kings and priests, because no one can assume what is common to all without the common consent. But if this consecration of God did not belong to us, the unction of the pope could not make a single priest. If ten brothers, the sons of one king, and possessing equal claims to his inheritance, should choose one of their number to administer for them, they would all be kings, and yet only one of them would be the administrator of their common power. So it is in the church. Were several pious laymen banished to a desert, and were they, from not having among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, to agree in selecting one of their number, whether married or not, he would be as truly a priest as if all the bishops of the world had consecrated him." --Luther (D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation," book vi, chap. iii, par. 7.)

Such is the order in the church of Christ, and as every Christian is God's freeman and Christ's servant, it follows as has been well stated, that "monarchy in spiritual things does not harmonize with the spirit of

Christianity." --Neander ("History of the Christian Religion," Vol. i, Section Second, part i, div. i, A, par. 5.) Yet this order was not suffered long to remain. A distinction was very soon asserted between the bishop and the elder, and the bishop assumed a precedence and an authority over the elder, who was now distinguished from the bishop by the title of "presbyter" only. This was easily and very naturally accomplished.

For instance, a church would be established in a certain city. Soon perhaps another church or churches would be established in that same city, or near to it in the country. These other churches would look naturally to the original church as to a mother, and the elders of the original church would naturally have a care for the others as they arose. It was only proper to show Christian respect and deference to these; but this respect and deference was soon demanded, and authority to require it was asserted by those who were bishops first.

Again: as churches multiplied and with them also elders multiplied, it was necessary, in carrying forward the work of the gospel, for the officers of the church often to have meetings for consultation. On these occasions it was but natural and proper for the seniors to preside; but instead of allowing this to remain still a matter of choice in the conducting of each successive meeting or assembly, it was claimed as a right that the one originally chosen should hold that position for life.

Thus was that distinction established between the elders or presbyters, and the bishops. Those who usurped this permanent authority and office took to themselves exclusively the title of "bishop," and all the others were still to retain the title of "presbyter." The presbyters in turn assumed over the deacons a supremacy and authority which did not belong to them, and all together--bishops, presbyters, and deacons--held themselves to be superior orders in the church over the general membership, and assumed to themselves the title of "clergy," while upon the general membership the term "laity" was conferred.

In support of these three orders among the "clergy," it was claimed that they came in proper succession from the high-priests, the priests, and the Levites of the Levitical law. "Accordingly, the bishops considered themselves as invested with a rank and character similar to those of the high-priest

among the Jews, while the presbyters represented the priests, and the deacons the Levites." -- Mosheim. ("Ecclesiastical History," Century ii, part ii, chap. ii, par. 4, Maclaine's translation.)

These distinctions were established as early as the middle of the second century. This led to a further and most wicked invention. As they were now priests and Levites after the order of the priesthood of the former dispensation, it was necessary that they also should have a sacrifice to offer. Accordingly, the Lord's supper was turned into "the unbloody sacrifice." Thus arose that which is still in the Roman Catholic Church the daily "sacrifice" of the mass. "The comparison of the Christian oblations with the Jewish victims and sacrifices, produced many unnecessary rites, and by degrees corrupted the very doctrine of the holy supper, which was converted, sooner, in fact, than one would think, into a sacrifice." -- Mosheim. (Id., chap. iv, par. 4, Murdock's translation.) With this also came a splendor in dress, copied from that of the former real priesthood.

The estimate in which the bishop was now held may be gathered from the following words of a document of the second century:-

It is manifest, therefore that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself..... It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honors the bishop has been honored of God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does (in reality) serve the devil. -- Ignatius ("Epistle to the Ephesians," chap. vi, and "To the Smyrnaeans," chap. ix.)

The next step was for certain bishops to assert authority over other bishops; and the plea upon which this was claimed as a right, was that the bishops of those churches which had been established by the apostles were of right to be considered as superior to all others. (The Two Republics, pp. 227-233.)

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