



*"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 1888 MESSAGE IN 1986

Can It Still Be Given in the Setting of 1950?

- + -

In 1888, God chose two "messengers" and gave them a message to bring to the Church in its general session held that year in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ellen G. White told J. S. Washburn¹ the following year when both were in attendance at the Ottawa, Kansas, Campmeeting that the Lord gave E. J. Waggoner special light on the question of "Righteousness by Faith" that He had not given her. Even though she had wanted to bring out this message, she was unable to do so as clearly as Waggoner had done; however, when Waggoner did, she recognized it. This is the reason why she refers to both Waggoner and Jones as "His messengers" (TM, p. 95) sent with "a testimony that presented the truth as it in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines." (Ibid., p. 93)

This message, except for a brief revival of interest in 1924,² lay dormant and unheeded by the Church at large and its ministry. However, in 1950, at the time of the General Conference Session in San Francisco, God chose two other men to reintroduce the Message of 1888 to the Church. On July 11, 1950, Elders R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short made representations to the officers of the General Conference. Their letter

said in part -

The President's stirring address last night, calling upon us to guard the faith once delivered to the saints, and to speak forthrightly in defense of it, presents a challenge. With this in mind, it is imperative that we know exactly what it is that should be guarded, for certainly there is great confusion in our ranks today.

This confusion was evident in the "Christ-centered" preaching urged upon us repeatedly in the Ministerial Association meetings of the past four days. These meetings were supposed to set the stage for a mighty revival among God's people at this General Conference session. This "Christ-centered" preaching is expected by its proponents to bring great reformation among Seventh-day Adventist workers the world around.

No one for a moment would disparage the preaching of the true Christ as the center and substance of the three angels' messages. However, in this confusion, it has not been discerned that much of this so-called "Christ-centered preaching" is in reality merely anti-christ centered preaching. It vitally affects the outcome of the General Conference session. To make such a statement to the General Conference Committee sounds fantastic. But startling things are not unexpected by the church in the last days. (Emphasis theirs; Quoted in Preliminary Memorandum, p. 3)

Nothing further was done at the session, but subsequently, resulting from a hearing in Washington D.C., these men were asked to write out their contentions, resulting in the manuscript - 1888 Re-Examined. It was left with the "brethren" and Wieland and Short returned to their mission field in Africa. The Defense Literature Committee was asked to render a report on this manuscript. In 1951, this committee responded by rejecting the analysis of the 1888 Minneapolis conference as researched by Wieland

and Short; and denouncing as slander against the Adventist ministry, the charge that the Christ-centered preaching advocated at the Ministerial Association meeting was in reality "anti-christ centered" preaching.

Historical Backdrop

At this juncture of the recital of history, we must leave a discussion of the manuscript, 1888 Re-Examined, temporarily, and note what was happening within the Church and the world. First the world: In 1948, the State of Israel was re-established. This in itself was NOT a fulfillment of any prophecy of God's word. However, it was an event which contradicted interpretations by Adventist evangelists that Israel would never again be established as a nation. In reality, this event was merely a pre-shadowing of other coming events which were and will be fulfillments of Bible prophecies. (See Luke 21:24; Daniel 11:45) In other words, the final scenes of earth's history were beginning to take shape. Ellen G. White had directed attention to the importance of events in the history of Jerusalem. She wrote:

In the twenty-first chapter of Luke Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem, and with it He connected the scenes which were to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 23-24)

It is significant that she did not cite the parallel records of Jesus' prophecies in Matthew (24) and Mark (13). In Luke, the one prophecy relative to Jerusalem not mentioned by the other two writers is the clear declaration that Jerusalem "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles (nations) be fulfilled." (21:24) The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 foreshadowed this coming event. It is against this backdrop that the message God gave Wieland and Short must be evaluated.

The manuscript which Wieland and Short left with the "brethren" was not completely lost on the leadership. Elder W. H. Branson had been elected president in 1950. Mid-term, he decided on a Bible Conference which was held in the Sligo Park Church in 1952. What he said at this conference shows the effect of the representations made by Wieland and Short on his thinking. Further, what was said by another participant connected the

Adventist perception of what took place in 1948 with Luke 21:24.

Let us note first Branson's remarks. He, in closing a study on "The Lord Our Righteousness," stated:

To a large degree the church failed to build on the foundation laid at the 1888 General Conference. Much has been lost as a result. We are years behind where we should have been in spiritual growth. Long ere this we should have been in the Promised Land.

But the message of righteousness by faith given in the 1888 Conference has been repeated here. ... Truly this one subject has, in this conference "swallowed up every other."

And this great truth has been given here in this 1952 Bible Conference with far greater power than it was given in the 1888 Conference because those who have spoken here have had the advantage of much more added light shining forth from the hundreds of pronouncements on this subject in the writings of the Spirit of prophecy which those who spoke back there did not have.

The light of justification and righteousness by faith shines upon us today more clearly than it ever shone before upon any people.

No longer will the question be, "What was the attitude of our workers and people toward the message of righteousness by faith that was given in 1888? What did they do about it?" From now on the great question must be, "What did we do with the light on righteousness by faith as proclaimed in the 1952 Bible Conference?" (Our Firm Foundation, Vol. II, pp. 616-617)

During the 1952 Bible Conference, Elder A. S. Maxwell noted among the unfulfilled signs still before God's people were "Developments in Palestine." He said:

The recent dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel has focused the attention of mankind once more upon Palestine. ...

There is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should all be watching with special care. Said Jesus, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24.

For nineteen centuries Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles. It is still trodden down of the Gentiles. ... Victorious as were the forces of Israel in every other part of Palestine, they failed to take the most dazzling objective of all. Mysteriously they were held back from achieving this most cherished goal, this culminating triumph, as by an unseen hand.

What could be the reason? Only that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled. (Ibid., p. 230)

Today this is no longer an unfulfilled prophecy facing God's people, but a fulfilled prophecy calling for understanding and response by God's people. If, therefore, events were taking place in 1948 which would lead to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus - and it was so recognized at the 1952 Bible Conference - then the call for the renewal of the Message of 1888 in 1950 is inextricably connected with events both in secular and our church history as they fulfill prophecy. The Message of 1888 was to prepare a people not only to stand in the day of the Lord, but a people to bear the final witness of the grace of God as manifest in the final atonement. Thus as the final events approached, God sent "messengers" calling for a renewal of this message.

On to 1955-1956

Elder W. H. Branson told the delegates to the 1952 Bible Conference that the key challenge arising from this conference was - "What did we do with the light on righteousness by faith as proclaimed in the 1952 Bible Conference?" What did they do with it? A careful study of the various messages given at the conference reveal that historical and fundamental Adventism was upheld by most of the speakers. But in three years, we entered into conferences with the Evangelicals and denied the unique trust God committed to the Advent Movement - the final atonement. When the book - Questions on Doctrine - was published, it stated emphatically -

Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement.
"Christ hath redeemed us" (Gal. 3:13) "once for all" (Heb. 10:10). (P. 390. Emphasis theirs)

As a result of the publication of this book, A. L. Hudson, then local elder of the Baker, Oregon, Seventh-day Adventist Church, drew up a Supporting Brief to a proposed resolution to be presented to the delegates at the 48th General Conference in 1958 at Cleveland, Ohio.³ In this Supporting Brief, attention was called to the manuscript - 1888 Re-Examined - as the basis for the explanation as to why this denial of basic Adventism occurred. (p. 30) It was clearly shown that if the message of warning given by God's "messengers" in 1950 had been heeded, the apostasy of 1955-1956 would not have taken place. The Adventist conferees would have been able to distinguish between the true

Christ ministering in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary and the false christ of the Evangelicals. Thus the Message of 1888, and the setting in which it was given in 1950 cannot be separated from the apostasy of 1955-1956. Though completely antithetical, they are united inseparably because of events in the history of the Adventist Church. The Adventist conferees rejected the true Christ, and accepted the false just as Wieland and Short warned in their manuscript. To preach the Message of 1888 now in the 1950 setting without reference to the events which followed is to advocate the untenable position of calling for God's people to embrace the true Christ, and yet support and adhere to the false christ embraced by official Adventism.

The Official Adventist Position

When the book - Questions on Doctrine - was published, it was stated in its introduction:

The writers, counselors, and editors who produced the answers to these questions have labored conscientiously to state accurately the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. But because of the very nature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization it is impossible to consider this book a denominationally official statement of doctrine, as the term "official" is understood in many church circles. No statement of Seventh-day Adventist belief can be considered official unless it is adopted by the General Conference in quadrennial session, when accredited delegates from the whole world field are present. The statement of Fundamental Beliefs as mentioned above is our only official statement. The answers in this volume are an expansion of doctrinal positions contained in that official [1931] statement of Fundamental Beliefs. Hence this volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (pp. 8-9, emphasis supplied)

In 1980 a new Statement of Beliefs was voted by the General Conference in session.⁴ While there are those who question the adequacy of Statement #23 - "Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary" - they still ask - - - "Where is the denial of the "final atonement" to be found in 1980 Statement?" Herein lies the fatal deception perpetrated upon the Church. In Questions on Doctrine, it is clearly stated that -

When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature - even in the writings of Ellen G. White - that Christ is making atonement now, it should

be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests. (pp. 354-355, emphasis theirs)

The very emphasis placed here by Leroy Froom is significant. He writes that when we speak of Jesus "making atonement now" - in other words, a final atonement - we mean that Jesus is merely making application of the benefits of an atonement completed at Calvary - no two atonements!

Further, when discussing the "Priestly Ministry of Christ," Froom declares it to be a "glorious" thought that Jesus has now "entered the 'holy places,' and appeared in the presence of God for us." Now note carefully --

But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it for us on the cross. And now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice to us. (p. 381, emphasis theirs)

Here is expressed the two sides of the same coin - the coin which denies two atonements. One side reads - "Jesus as High Priest obtained nothing for us when He entered the Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, and He obtains nothing for us now as He ministers in the Most Holy Place. The other side of the coin reads - Jesus as our High Priest is merely "making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross."

Which side of this "coin" was voted at Dallas for the laity to read? Note the language of Statement #23 which reads in part:

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers in our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross." (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, p. 43, 1981 edition, emphasis supplied)

It should be obvious to the simplest mind that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in General Conference session has officially voted the denial of a final atonement. This is what the message of 1888 was all about, a message to prepare a people for the final atonement. Thus indirectly the official

action of the Church at its Dallas session was to nullify the Message of 1888. It is, therefore, ludicrous to tell people to come out to hear and to embrace the Message of 1888, and to tell them at the same time to remain loyal to an apostate organization which has officially denied the final atonement. Such is deception reaching its zenith!

The Message of the Manuscript

When Wieland and Short wrote their manuscript, they called for a "denominational repentance." This was based upon a very specific testimony in the Writings. The call read:

It is now abundantly evident that "we" have traveled the road of disillusionment since the Minneapolis meeting of 1888. Infatuation with false teachings has taken the place of clear, cogent, heaven-inspired truth, as regards "righteousness by faith." By the hard, humiliating way of actual experience with counterfeit, Israel has brought herself to the time when she is ripe for disillusionment. The simple faith to believe, which was spurned at Minneapolis, is now replaceable with the bitter tears of humble repentance, occasioned by our history. The following prophecy has been fulfilled, and awaits only its realization by the church:

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

Such an experience will be a repentance very similar to that of Mary Magdalene, whose faith and love were spoken of by the Saviour as that of the model Christian. The genuine repentance of heart-broken love is righteousness by faith. (A Warning and Its Reception, p. 242. The above was written in 1950)

In the second appraisal of the Wieland-Short manuscript brought about by the prodding of A. L. Hudson, the General Conference responded to this call for "denominational repentance." It was stated:

The solution proposed, of the denomination making confession of the mistakes of men in the 1880's and the 1890's and of a denominational repentance, is not possible nor would an attempt to do so be of value. (Ibid, p. 259, Emphasis supplied)

This response was in 1958. Already the book, Questions on Doctrine, had been published (1957) which denied the final atonement. There was thus no way the General Conference could turn around (repent) and accept the genius of the 1888 Message. Since they still

AN OPEN LETTER TO ELDER R. J. WIELAND

June 18, 1986

Elder R. J. Wieland
625 Mariposa Circle
Chula Vista, CA 92011

Dear Elder Wieland;

Your name as well as that of Elder D. K. Short's has come to represent 1888 to this generation of Seventh-day Adventists. And rightly so, because God called you both as "messengers" in 1950 to warn the church of its need for corporate repentance. You grasped this concept and quoted the warning in Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 250. (See A Warning and Its Reception, p. 242)

Today, as you are now seeking in a public way to proclaim the message of 1888 which was to have been so given in 1950, you are ignoring all that has taken place in Adventism since that time, even the other part of the key warning on which you based your message in 1950. (8T:247) Some are receiving a strong impression that now because you are safe in your retirement security, and that some of "the brethren" are now giving you some public recognition in exchange for your refusal to consider the implications of what has transpired in Adventism since 1950, you are now doing what you know you should have done in 1950. Be that as it may, the issues involving the 1888 Message and the present cannot be longer avoided, but must be clearly set forth. Because of this, I am suggesting an open Forum discussion at which you and I address the issues.

This Forum could be organized by you appointing a moderator, and I choosing one, and the two select a third. These three moderators with us could work out the details as to time, place and format of the discussion. I am suggesting the following key issues as a part of the Forum discussion. You may wish to add others. These are:

I. The 1888 Message: How it can be made relevant today in the light of what has transpired in Adventism since 1950. What must be its present import in view of the fact that "the righteousness of Christ. . . is pure, unadulterated truth." (TM, p. 65)

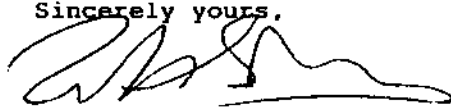
II. How does the prophetic warning in Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 247 relate to us today?¹

III. What is the significance of the prophetic testimony found in the Review & Herald, December 13, 1892?²

IV. Are the two different Hebrew words translated in Daniel, "take away" as applied to the "daily," antonyms or synonyms?

Looking forward to your positive reply, I remain in the interest of truth, pure and unadulterated,

Sincerely yours,



Wm. H. Grotheer, Editor

¹"In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages she has had. If her spiritual

experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, 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." (Vol. 8, p. 247)

²"After the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, every conceivable power of evil will be set in operation, and minds will be confused by many voices crying, 'Lo, here is Christ, Lo, He is there. This is the truth, I have a message from God, He has sent me with great light.' Then there will be a removing of the landmarks, and an attempt to pull down the pillars of our faith." (R&H, Dec. 13, 1982)

[Editor's Comment: This letter was sent as dated with a cover note asking for any comment which Elder Wieland might have regarding it, or any suggestions he might wish to make. As of this date - July 18 - there has been no response. This entire Thought Paper will be sent in advance to Elder Wieland and certain others, except for possible late announcements, prior to being released to our readers. We do not seek to work behind the backs of the "messengers" God chose in 1950. Our desire is to update the Message of 1888 in the light of events which have taken place in Adventism since 1950.]

From p. 4 - "The 1888 Message..."

maintain the positions held in the book and have voted it a part of the doctrine of the Church, all response on the part of the hierarchy of the Church to the Message of 1888 is mere lip service. This only adds to the ludicrousness of the situation. Who is trying to fool who? But the sad, sad part is that the "messengers" whom God raised up to call for a denominational repentance are now playing the same "games."

The basis as found in the Writings justifying this call for "denominational repentance" dare not be overlooked. The chapter from which this quotation was taken is entitled - "Shall We Be Found Wanting?" - and the "WE" is the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a corporate entity. Of the Church as a corporate entity, the Messenger of the Lord wrote:

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. (Vol. 8, p. 247)

The wording indicates a future time - "is to be" - "will be." The fact that the church

is to be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary is unequivocal. Only the decision to be rendered was prefaced with an "if." In 1903 at the "now" time of the testimony, it was dated, April 21, 1903, the church was "being leavened with her own backsliding." If she would repent, then the verdict from the sanctuary would not be "Found Wanting."

However, the Church as a corporate body has not repented; has refused to repent, and further has made a part of her voted doctrine a denial of the final atonement. What decision only, can God now render? How then can we continue to hold out a false hope to God's people in 1986, and ask them to ignore all the events since 1950?

In the 1900's the two "messengers" whom God chose to bring the message of righteousness by faith to His people in 1888, veered off course in one direction, now in the 1980's, the two "messengers" whom God raised up in 1950, are veering off course in the opposite direction. May God have mercy on these men who were called of God in 1950.

¹"Interview with J. S. Washburn at Hagerstown, Md., June 4, 1950." This interview is signed by Washburn with the notation by him - "True Report of Interview."

²In response to an action of the Ministerial Association Advisory Counsel, voted at Des Moines, Iowa, October 22, 1924, Elder A. G. Daniells produced a book captioned, Christ Our Righteousness. In this book, he

noted that through the Writings of Ellen G. White, "information is furnished regarding developments in connection with the giving of the message and its reception and also its rejection, and it is quite necessary to become familiar with this inspired information in order to understand better our present situation. It would be far more agreeable to eliminate some of the statements given by the Spirit of prophecy regarding the attitude of some of the leaders toward the message and the messengers. But this cannot be done without giving only a partial presentation of the situation which developed at the Conference, thus leaving the question in more or less of mystery." (pp. 58-59, 1926 edition)

³It was in connection with this General Conference session that A. L. Hudson and this Editor first met Wieland and Short. Hudson had been in correspondence with them in Africa, and we were also in contact. After learning that both Wieland and Short were planning to be at the General Conference, he asked me if I would drive to Cleveland and see if a conference of the four of us could be arranged. If so, he would fly back to Indiana where I was serving as a pastor at the time.

In the contact, it was learned that Wieland planned to attend the Seminary at Berrien Springs that summer, and Short was coming to Indiana to visit relatives. The four of us had a conference in Marion, Indiana. It was a Spirit-directed fellowship as we shared a common conviction that the 1888 Message should be promoted in the light of events that were taking place in the Adventist community. Hudson was encouraged to continue his publication and enlarge its scope. This he did. This Editor wrote for him under the pen name of Ben Ezra II. Wieland and Short desired to maintain their "vow of silence," and did so until each retired from regular service. However, correspondence continued over the years between the group on a one to one basis until in recent months. Hudson expressed his conviction in a letter dated, July 12, 1986, in which he wrote: "I could hope that some kind of a face-to-face communication could take place between the four of us [again] and maybe a handful of others, but unless it occurs in an atmosphere of Christian love, the meeting would be a curse, not a blessing."

⁴An interesting parallel of historical events continued from 1948 when Israel was re-established as a State, and the call came to the Church for a denominational repentance in 1950 by Elders Wieland and Short. For the Church the culmination was reached in Dallas, when at the General Conference session on April 25, 1980, a Statement of Beliefs was voted denying the "final atonement." In 1967, the forces of Israel took Jerusalem, but it was not until July 30, 1980, by action of the Knesset, that the Capital was moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, thus closing the final segment of "the times of the Gentiles," bringing to complete fulfillment the prophecy of Jesus as found in Luke 21:24.

MANUSCRIPT OF FOUNDATION -
TIMES OF GENTILES FULFILLED

- PLACED ON HIERARCHY "INDEX"

By action of the Church Board of the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church of Bakersfield, California, a young man is to be disfellowshipped at a meeting called for July 20, 1986. [This is being written, July 18] Along with the letter notifying this young man of the intended action was a page captioned - "Questions for Marvin Richardson." If he did not answer the questions the way the Church Board controlled by Elder Wellesley Muir, a former youth leader, thinks they should be answered, the decision will be final, Marvin Richardson will be - "Disfellowshipped!"

Question #4 is very interesting - "Do you agree with the teaching found in a publication called Time of the Gentiles Fulfilled?" The answer which would assure Marvin's continued membership in a church which denies the final atonement must be - "No."

Perhaps you would like to see how you would answer this question after reading the manuscript. Write for a copy - \$2.00 plus 75¢ for postage and handling.

In sending us the material from Elder Muir, Brother Marvin wrote - "Prophecy is being fulfilled in our day. Read John 16:2. ... Please have me in your prayers so that God will keep me faithful to the end."

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"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Revelation 12:11

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