

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

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

(Matt 25:6 RSV)



1888 RE-EXAMINED EXAMINED

(Part Two)

The three final chapters of the 1950 edition of 1888 Re-Examined have been compressed into one in the 1987 edition - "Ellen White's Predictions of Baal Worship." Much has been deleted. The chapter of the new edition closes with a conclusion which states:

Baal-worship was and is a disease of the [church] body that is foreign to it and makes it sick. But healing is possible through repentance and reformation. (p. 160)

The 1950 edition closed with a section - "CONSTRUCTIVE RECAPITULATION." In this section was a clear call for "denominational repentance." That section read:

It is now abundantly clear that "we" have traveled the road of disillusionment since the Minneapolis meeting in 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 [the] 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)

This specific call for a "denominational repentance" was based upon a clear testimony from the Writings - Vol 8, p. 250. It is direct counsel to the church as a corporate body. Written within ten days following the adjournment of the 1903 General Conference Session, the events of that session dare not be ignored if the clause concerning the "church" - "which is now being leavened with her own backsliding" - is to be clearly understood. [These events will be noted in another section of this "critique".] But strangely, this paragraph, and quotes from the Writings is not found at the close of the 1987 edition, nor at the close of the corresponding chapter in the 1950

edition; however, it is found at the close of the last appendix, mutilated by ellipses. (See pp. 208-209, 1987 edition; also Footnote #1) That the reader may see clearly what has been done to the quotation, we will produce it in full, noting in bold type the sentences and paragraph deleted:

God has not changed toward His faithful servants who are keeping their garments spotless. But many are crying, "Peace and safety," while sudden destruction is coming upon them. Unless there is thorough repentance, unless men humble their hearts by confession, and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will not enter heaven. When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing.

Who can truthfully say, "Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world"? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: "Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? 'How is the faithful city become an harlot?' 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."

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. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility, and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth, and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives. (Test. Vol. 8, pp. 250-251)

The time element in this whole chapter needs to be carefully considered. Because Wieland and Short did not do so, and because they could not put certain elements of this prophetic testimony into their presuppositions, they chose to delete.

The chapter is captioned - "Shall We Be Found Wanting?"- and the "We" is the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a "corporate body." This is clearly indicated in paragraph two - (Again we quote in full, noting in bold type the deletions of Wieland and Short. See 1987 edition, p. 208) -

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, and the opportunities given, will she be judged. (p. 247)

The force of the whole paragraph is corporate and future at the date of writing, 1903. Note the use of the pronouns, "she" and "her" with "will." - "she will" - "on her will" - "will she be". "Will" with third person expresses simple futurity. The fulfillment of this paragraph was yet future in 1903. That the church as a corporate body would be judged in the balances of the sanctuary - that was without question. It "is to be". The decision to be rendered was not made in 1903. At that time, the church was only "being leavened with her own backsliding." (p. 250) It was the beginning. To avert the verdict - "Found Wanting" - should the "backsliding" reach the limit of Divine Patience, there was only one solution - repentance and conversion. This we shall discuss in the next section.

Returning to the whole paragraph deleted by Wieland and Short in quoting from Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 250, we need to explore the question - When is the once "faithful city" judged "an harlot"? When is the time that the "divine presence and glory" depart from the midst of the city - a place once called the "Father's house"? In the 5th volume of the Testimonies, (pp. 207-216) is to be found a parallel statement, and it is placed in a time sequence. [This chapter, Wieland and Short do not even discuss in their 1987 update even though it has the utmost bearing on their presuppositions] The parallel language reads: - "But the glory had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." (p. 210) [Note use of past perfect tense; see box for comparison]

"My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed!" (Vol. 8:250)

"But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." (Vol. 5:210)

What is the time setting for the condition noted in 5T:210? Answer: "Jesus is about

to leave the mercy-seat of the heavenly sanctuary, to put on garments of vengeance, and pour out His wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them." (pp. 207-208)

Who are the first to feel the wrath of God when the "final atonement" is completed? "Here we see that the church - the Lord's sanctuary - was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God." (p. 211)

If language is saying anything, it is saying that when Jesus completes His work of atonement, the Church has not repented, nor responded to the "light" given in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and thus is "Found Wanting"! This strikes directly at the thesis of Wieland and Short. They write using human logic:

The foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the belief in the good news of Daniel 8:14, "Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Then shall this constant cloud of failure which has hovered over God's Israel be lifted; then shall God's name be cleared as His people demonstrate His plan of salvation to be a success; then shall the sacrifice of Christ be vindicated. A cynical attitude which says, "Suppose the church fails and the conditions are not met" is the same as saying, "Suppose the sanctuary will not be cleansed." The honor of God requires that it shall be cleansed! (P. 208, 1987 edition; Emphasis theirs)

Is the Holy Spirit cynical? He inspired the prophetic picture that "the church - the Lord's sanctuary - was the first to feel the stroke of God's wrath."

Who will receive the benefits of the "final atonement"? "The little company who are standing in the light." (p. 209) A "faithful few... who have preserved the faith in its purity, and kept themselves unspotted from the world." (p. 210) [See I John 1:7]

What have "the faithful few" been doing? "These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had re-proved, counseled, and entreated." (*ibid.*)

What are the results? "Some who have been dishonoring God, repented and humbled their hearts before Him." (*ibid.*)

What will the rest of the church - "the Lord's sanctuary" - be doing? "Many continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." (*ibid.*)

Will "the faithful few" tell the "some" who repent to continue to support with the sacred tithe, the "leadership" of the "many"

from whose corporate body "the glory of the Lord had departed"? (*ibid.*) How tragic to delete, and ignore, yet profess belief in the Writings! This tragedy is compounded by the fact that Wieland and Short profess to be giving the 1888 Message - the Message of Christ's righteousness "which is pure, unadulterated truth." (TM, p. 65) Thus what has been set forth as an update of the true message becomes through deceptive ellipses, and omissions a fatal delusion which is being used to give concerned Seventh-day Adventists a false sense of security.

Denominational Repentance

When the call was made in 1950 by the two messengers - Wieland and Short - sent by God to the church urging "denominational repentance", the leadership recognized exactly what God was trying to say. In the first appraisal of 1888 Re-Examined, the hierarchy wrote:

Throughout your manuscript it is evident that you feel the denomination should rectify certain things pertaining to 1888, and then make due acknowledgement and confession of the same. This is really more than a suggestion; you strongly urge that this course be followed. The following extracts are quoted from your manuscript:

Every failure of God's people to follow light shining upon their pathway for the past century must be completely rectified by the present generation before the remnant church can be granted any divine vindication before the world. p. 2 [Modified in the 1987 edition]

There is before the remnant church a heavy account to settle. The sooner the issue is faced squarely and candidly the better. p. 2 [Deleted in 1987 edition]

Such a view of the matter will require that this generation recognize the facts of the case, and thoroughly rectify the tragic mistake. p. 38 [Unmodified]

Then on page 137 you write that "a denominational repentance" is essential before the loud cry can be received. [Statement only cosmetically altered in new edition] (A Warning and Its Reception, pp. 252-253)

What was the decision of the hierarchy?

We do not believe that it is according to God's plan and purpose for the present leadership of the movement to make acknowledgement or confession, either private or public, concerning any of the mistakes made by the leadership of a by-gone generation. (*ibid.*, p. 253)

In this action, and what followed, we find a repeat of 1888 with an exception. Even as "the light that [was] to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world (SM, bk. i, p. 235); so also the light that God sent through Elders Wieland and Short was kept from the laity by the action of the hierarchy. But the sad fact is, that unlike the messengers that God sent in 1888, both Wieland and Short consented to this action. They became parties to the decision to keep the light God gave them for the Church away from the people. To borrow their own language from the original edition - Wieland and Short have "a heavy account to settle. And the sooner the issue is faced squarely, the better." (p. 2) See Footnote #2.

When in 1958 another review of the original manuscript was forced upon the hierarchy at the insistence of A. L. Hudson, the response was the same. Note:

The solution proposed, of the denomination making confession of the mistakes of men in the 1880's and 1890's and of a denominational repentance, is not possible nor would an attempt to do so be of value. The experience of the church is the collective experience of its members and leaders, and thus rightness with God is a matter of present day personal relationships. (A Warning and Its Reception, p. 259)

Twice within a decade the original call was rejected. But it wasn't as if the leadership did not know what the rejection of the 1888 Message was. They did know, and they did respond. Elder W. H. Branson who was General Conference President at the time when Wieland and Short presented their manuscript, called a Bible Conference in 1952. (See 1987 edition, pp. 165-167) Branson himself presented a topic on "The Lord Our Righteousness." (Our Firm Foundation, Vol. II, pp. 575-618) Near the close of the presentation, he declared:

No longer will the question be, "What was the attitude of our workers and people toward the message of righteousness by faith which was given in 1888? What did they do about it?" (p. 617)

This was a clear reference to the manuscript which had been presented to them two years previous. Why was it no longer necessary to answer these questions? Branson gives this answer:

But the message of righteousness by faith given in the 1888 Conference has been repeated here. Practically

every speaker from the first day onward has laid great stress upon this all important doctrine, and there was no prearranged plan that he should do so. It was spontaneous on the part of the speakers. No doubt they were impelled by the Spirit of God to do so. 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 1888 Conference because those who have spoken here have had the advantage of much added light shining forth from 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. (pp. 616-617)

In giving this answer, it should be evident that the rejection of the call for "denominational repentance" was not just an "off-handed" rejection but deliberate. The Bible Conference became an attempt "to climb up some other way" into the acceptance of God without such a repentance and confession. But by their own acknowledgement in their attempt to by-pass the divine formula, they placed themselves and the corporate body in grave danger. A correct evaluation of our history from 1950 to the present confirms this fact, and the results which followed.

The Scripture plainly teaches:

It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance. (Heb. 6:4-6)

In 1888, God gave "a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones." (TM, p. 91) This was a three-fold message - theological, organizational, and "individual" - seeking to restore to man the "power akin to that of his Creator." (Education, p. 17) This was rejected, but they did not deny the faith. (The "alpha" was turned aside) God gave specific counsel for the rectification of the rejection of the 1888 message - "Unless the church, which is now [1903] being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted." (8T:250)

In 1950, God again sent two messengers with that call and based on that counsel. (See p. 1, of this Thought Paper) But not only was it rejected, but there came a falling away from the truth committed in sacred trust to

the Church. Within three years of the 1952 Bible Conference, the SDA-Evangelical Conferences took place resulting in the publication of the book - Questions on Doctrine. This "falling away" involved the denial of the final atonement. [See "The Sacred Trust Betrayed"] This was followed with dialogues between the SDA Church and the World Council of Churches resulting in a Seventh-day Adventist theologian being placed on the Faith and Order Commission, the doctrinal arm of the WCC charged with the "obligation to work towards manifesting more visibly God's gift of Church unity." The Scripture teaches that "it is impossible... if they fall away to renew them again unto repentance."

Now either the above aspects of our history from 1950-1980 have to be ignored as Wieland and Short have done in the updated edition, or else these events in the light of Hebrews 6:4-6 are telling us that the present agitation for "denominational repentance" is an effort in futility. This raises a question. Is the obvious silence on the "falling away" which followed the 1952 Bible Conference - the SDA-Evangelical Conferences & the SDA-WWC dialogues - on the part of Wieland and Short, a self-inflicted Laodicean blindness to enable them to carry forward their "effort in futility" in contradiction to the Holy Scriptures? Does this "blindness" enable them to now call again for "a denominational repentance" to thus ease their conscience of their failure to stand up and be counted in 1950? It may provide a rationale for their present agitation, but what accounting will have to be given for the people - "men, maidens, and little children" - who shall perish! (5T:211)

Footnote #1

As far as we have been able to determine, the sentence - "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" - is quoted one other time in the main body of both manuscripts. (p. 36, 1950 edition; p. 43, 1987 edition). The comment on this reference from 8T:250 is similar in both editions - "That experience is no evidence that God will have cast off His church." The key to the casting off is not that she shall "abhor herself" but rather, does she "repent". If she does not repent, and is not converted, then the sentence can be only - "Found Wanting"!

Now Wieland and Short cite examples of repentance - Job, Isaiah (1950 ed.) and Peter in both editions. But these are not all the examples which the Bible

gives. There is Esau, who though "he sought it carefully with tears" "found no place of repentance." (Heb. 12:17) There is an unseen line over which none - individual or corporate body - dare pass. It could well be that the centennial celebration next year in Minneapolis will produce "tears." This will be no sign of acceptable repentance and conversion. Fruits meet for repentance must be seen. Even then there is a primary question which must be resolved - Has the corporate body crossed the unseen line?

Footnote #2

In the new updated edition of 1888 Re-Examined, Wieland and Short seek to explain why they did not continue to give the message that God placed upon them in 1950, but rather went back to Africa. After noting that the General Conference "officially rejected" God's call for a "denominational repentance," they wrote:

"The authors would not rebel against General Conference direction. They have always firmly supported the principle of church organization and order. But they could not conscientiously retract their basic convictions which they believed were based upon the inspired testimony of Ellen White. Therefore they appealed the matter to the next higher authority - the Lord Himself in the investigative judgment and 'to the disposition of His providence.' They went on with their missionary duties in Africa." (p. 165)

Here we have a real conundrum. In The Mystery of 1888, Elder Short produces evidence that a vote was taken at the 1888 Session against the message of Righteousness by Faith as given by the Lord's messengers, Jones and Waggoner. (pp. 20-21) It needs to be recalled the thinking of the Church at that time in regard to the authority of the General Conference. Ellen White had written in about 1875:

"When the judgment of the General Conference which is the highest authority that God has upon earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered." (3T:492)

But what did Jones and Waggoner do? They went forth preaching the message God gave them - and Ellen White joined them! What a contrast between the "messengers" of 1888, and the response of the "messengers" of 1950! And the action in 1950 was not an action of the General Conference in session, but merely the finding(s) of the hierarchy.

Wieland and Short indicate they appealed the negative decision of the hierarchy to "the next higher authority." What Higher Authority could anyone want than a call from God to give a message to His Church? The basis of this message was already underwritten by the first messenger to the Church - "Unless the church ... shall repent." Here we have "the Mystery of 1950"

A Warning and Its Reception, p. 396

Potomac University
January 21, 1959

C O P Y

Elder W. R. Beach, Secretary
General Conference of S.D.A.
Washington 12, D.C.

Dear Elder Beach:

A little over eight years ago we presented a certain document to the General Conference Committee in which we endeavored to express frankly our deep convictions and concern. We left the matter before the Lord and in your care, and thereafter refrained from agitation or pressing our views before the Committee or the church. We have always felt it improper for us to appeal a matter such as this from the General Conference to the church at large. Hence our consistent and persistent refusal to grant anyone permission to reproduce our document.

The 70-page document which we prepared recently was not presented to you with a desire to abandon our policy of the previous eight years. We decided to prepare it mainly because in a previous document rather widely circulated, our honesty and integrity were called in question, our manuscript being represented as a "serious reflection upon the literary ethics of its authors." We felt that all would recognize we had a right at least to attempt to clear our characters of such an implication.

Perhaps it was merely a selfish concern which motivated us. We recognize that a more perfect faith might have trusted the Lord to vindicate our literary ethics without our saying anything in self-defense. Perhaps our second document is a kind of Ishmael-treatise, written prematurely, in place of waiting patiently in faith for an Isaac defense to have come in due time providentially. Perhaps we pulled too hard on the oar of "works".

Whatever may be our mistake, we wish to state herewith our desire to leave this matter, to drop it henceforth and to continue as in the past to refrain from any agitation whatsoever or the pressing of our view upon the General Conference or the church. If our views and convictions are of the evil one, surely we must not press them. If, on the other hand, there is any truth in our presentations, the Lord can well take care of it without any assistance from ourselves. We do wish to say again, brethren, that we believe the corporate Seventh-day Adventist church is the one true remnant church, led of God, and we are thus happy to resign the whole matter to the disposition of Providence.

We return to our mission field, therefore, with no desire to make an issue of our views there or elsewhere. We are grateful that it could be said of our service during the past eight years, "The two brethren returned to their fields of labor and threw themselves wholeheartedly into their work of proclaiming the gospel message." We earnestly pray now that by the grace of the Lord the same may truthfully be said of our future service also.

Sincerely yours,

S/ R. J. Wieland D. K. Short

CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lesson # 10

The Garment of Salvation

<u>Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>
1. What is the garment of salvation God offers?	Isa. 61:10
2. In the vision of Zechariah, how was Joshua the high priest clothed?	Zech. 3:1-3
3. What do the filthy garments represent?	Isa. 64:6
4. What did Joshua receive?	Zech. 3:4, 5 (See note 1)
5. What offer does God make us?	Isa. 1:18
6. What kind of heart does God desire us to have?	Deut. 5:29 (See note 2)
7. How are we justified?	Romans 5:1
8. Upon whom is the righteousness of God put?	Romans 3:22 John 3:16
9. What does this exercise of faith make a person?	Gal. 3:26
10. When a person's sins are forgiven, how long must he wait to become a child of God?	Titus 3:3-7
11. What manner of love has the Father bestowed upon us?	1 John 3:1 (See note 3)
12. Why does God bless us?	Acts 3:26
13. "In the ages to come," whose grace will God show forth to those in "heavenly places?"	Eph. 2:4-7
14. How are we saved, and why?	Eph. 2:8-10

NOTES

1. "The taking away of the filthy garments is the same as causing the iniquity to pass from the person... When Christ covers us with the robe of His own righteousness, He does not furnish a cloak for sins, but takes the sin away. And this shows that the forgiveness of sins is something more than a mere entry in the books of record in heaven, to the effect that sin has been cancelled. The forgiveness of sins is a reality; it is something tangible, something that vitally affects the individual. It actually clears him from guilt; and if he is cleared from guilt...is justified, made righteous, he has certainly undergone a radical change: he is, indeed another person....And so the full and free forgiveness of sins carries with it that wonderful and miraculous change known as the new birth; for a man cannot become a new creature (See 2 Cor. 5:17) except by a new birth." (Christ Our Righteousness, p. 69)

2. "The new heart is a heart that loves righteousness

and hates sin. It is a heart of willingness to be led into the paths of righteousness....In short, it is a heart free from the love of sin as well as from the guilt of sin." (Ibid., pp. 69, 70)

3. "God does not adopt us as His children because we are good, but in order that He may make us good...He receives us just as we are. It is not for our goodness that He loves us, but because of our need." (Ibid., pp. 72, 71)

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1888 Re-Examined - From page 5.

which is even more difficult to fathom than "the Mystery of 1888." What if John the Baptist had said - "Lord, I have given the leadership your message, and they have 'officially rejected' it. I am going back to the desert, and leave it in your Providence to take care of."

The 1950 "messengers" write that they chose, after appealing to a "higher authority" to leave the message God wanted given at that time, to His disposition. But more than that, they bowed out of the picture, taking a vow of "perpetual silence." There was a third General Conference report. This they did not mention in their updated manuscript, nor their reply to that report. Their reply we have reproduced on page 6 from A Warning and Its Reception. Each reader can evaluate Wieland and Short's commitment to silence, and the "disposition of Providence." We have underscored parts of the key paragraph.

There are some questions which cannot be answered this side of eternity. What if Wieland and Short had perceived their call as Jones and Waggoner did theirs? Could the apostasy of the SDA-Evangelistic Conferences been averted? What tragedy could have been avoided if men - mere men - had accepted their high calling instead of bowing to man!

WHG & AS

To Be Continued

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