

The Year 1888

By W. P. BRADLEY

TO SEVENTH-DAY Adventists the year 1888 recalls events of deep spiritual significance to the growing body of believers, for it was at the General Conference session held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 17 to November 4, that the theme of righteousness by faith received special attention in the public sermons and devotional services, in the testimony meetings, and in the messages brought to the session by Ellen G. White.

Seventh-day Adventists had been sturdy champions of the teaching that saved Christians should live in obedience to the moral ten-commandment law, including the fourth, which sets forth the duty to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath. In their zeal to preach the binding obligation of the law upon Christians in all ages, Adventists perhaps had not given as much emphasis as they might have to the central doctrine of the Christian faith, that is, that salvation rests on Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross and that the sinner is saved through faith in Him. To experience the new birth through the work of the Holy Spirit, to live as expressed in the words of the apostle Paul, "It is no

longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20, R.S.V.), is the very essence of the Christian faith and the most vital aspect of the gospel message.

A New Emphasis

The new emphasis in preaching and teaching set forth in the 1888 conference was received wholeheartedly by some, while others at the conference took a rather dim view of such a change in emphasis in presenting the Advent message to the world. The historical experience of the leaders and members of the church in that year and the years that followed has been set forth quite fully in such denominational books as *Christ Our Righteousness*, by A. G. Daniells, *Through Crisis to Victory*, by A. V. Olson, and *By Faith Alone*, by Norval F. Pease. It is also developed quite fully in a forthcoming volume by L. E. Froom, and, of course, in various books and articles of Ellen G.

White, who welcomed the message of righteousness by faith wholeheartedly in 1888 and taught it consistently throughout her life, both before and after that year.

In 1950 two missionaries from Africa on furlough in North America, R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short, produced a rather extended study of the 1888 events under the title, *1888 Re-examined*. This manuscript was prepared for study by the General Conference leaders in order to bring certain aspects of the 1888 experience to their attention. After the authors had returned to Africa, the manuscript, without the approval of the authors, was duplicated and distributed rather widely. The theme it presents has been variously received, some misunderstanding the purpose of the document and attempting to misuse it and wrest its purpose toward a criticism of the General Conference, which the authors insist they never intended.

1888 OCTOBER 1888

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

We come now to a period of more recent date having to do with events of the summer of 1967, which we believe will be of interest to our workers and members. At the invitation of the General Conference, R. J. Wieland, one of the authors of the manuscript, spent several days in Washington, D.C., conferring with a group of the brethren who met with him to discuss the manuscript and its use and effect among those who have read it. (D. K. Short, manager of the Sentinel Publishing Association in Cape Town, South Africa, could not attend the meeting.) Those who were present in the group will testify that it was an excellent meeting, and that a spirit of fellowship in the blessed Advent message was present throughout.

It was made quite clear in the discussions that there has been no question on the part of the church leadership of the loyalty and sincerity of Elders Wieland and Short. On the other hand, Brother Wieland recognized that some passages in the manuscript, referring to the reaction in a past generation on the part of some to the 1888 messages, could have been worded more mildly, and do not represent on the part of the authors any lack of confidence in church lead-

ership or of divine guidance of the church.

As for the use of the manuscript and its distribution, R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short have made it quite clear that they have not authorized its publication and they deplore the irresponsible use that certain individuals have made of the original manuscript and related documents in private agitations which have produced a divisive effect within the ranks of the church. They firmly support the organization and unity of the church. Concerning the purpose and use of the manuscript they have made the following statement:

Unauthorized Use of Manuscript

"We, as authors of 1888 *Re-examined*, wish to state that this manuscript was not written for publication or for distribution, but for the study of the General Conference Committee. We have not authorized anyone to reproduce it for general circulation. Anyone who has made use of our document in this manner has done so without our permission or approval and entirely on his own responsibility. We do not approve the use of this material for agitation in the field.

"We reaffirm our confidence in the

triumph of the corporate, denominated Seventh-day Adventist Church in the fulfillment of its divinely appointed, worldwide task, and our loyalty to the doctrines and the organization of the church."

In this meeting at the General Conference headquarters all who were present reaffirmed their confidence in the Advent message and the triumph of God's church in the near future and pledged to continue to work and pray for the outpouring of the latter rain and the finishing of the work in our generation.

This Seventh-day Adventist Church still has a great task to accomplish in proclaiming the central theme of righteousness by faith in the setting of the three angels' messages in preparation for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth to receive His church and to bring an end to the reign of sin. There is also a great spiritual work to be done for the church as an organization and for every member within it—in the reception of the Holy Spirit, which comes to revive and to empower the church to accomplish its great evangelistic task. The two go together: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to prepare the members to bear their witness, and the dedicated voice of every individual in wholeheartedly proclaiming the message in its entirety and fullness.

Joy in Unity

We rejoice in the unity in faith and purpose that exists throughout the church. We rejoice in the many prayers that are ascending from members and workers through the world that the church may soon experience the latter rain in its fullness and that the work of warning the world may thus be finished.

The opportunity presented to the 1888 generation teaches lessons to us who today hope to see the work completed and the Saviour return in our time. We should be responsive to divine guidance and should repent of any trace of pride and prejudice arising out of our cherished opinions. We must repent and turn to God with a whole heart and rid our lives of self-centered complacency. Our eyes should be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve that we may see. It is for us individually and collectively to study how we may appropriate in its fullness the righteousness of our Lord and make preparation to receive more fully the bestowal of the refreshing showers of the Holy Spirit which, "if claimed by faith, would bring all other blessings in its train, and . . . is to be given liberally to the people of God" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 174, 175). ++



SILENCE IN THE TEMPLE (A Parable)

By HARRIETT CAMPBELL

And behold, there lived at a certain time a man of strong opinion and self-esteem, honored and well thought of among his peers, who went daily into the temple. He kept his robes well pressed and anointed his body daily with myrrh and perfume of great price from a hidden alabaster box.

Behold, this man was vexed in his spirit by those who served in the temple. "The priests are poor speakers," he mused, "inferior even to the rabble rousers in the market place. They raise not enough money for the treasury; they fill not the temple courts with their followers, nor do they greet the people with flattering words or deep bows."

The musicians of the temple pleased him not. Their chants were poorly chosen, poorly rendered.

The stupidity of the women (especially Dorcas and Lydia), who gathered gifts and goods for the poor without so much as a word of their many deeds, vexed him deeply. They had made no mention in the temple record of his gift. Had he not sent many of his dead brother's robes, those he could not barter in the market place, to the temple women? Nor had they made public mention of this at the temple gates!

Now, therefore, this man pondered what he might do. Then he knew what he would do—he would hold in no longer, he would vent his grievances. Sharpening his tongue, he spoke with sharp and piercing words of the priest, the leader of the singers, the chief musician, those who played with psaltery and harp, the temple helpers, the money gatherers, and the helpers of the poor—even Lydia and Dorcas.

And the two-edged sword of his crafty tongue entered the souls of the temple workers. Their works slowed until silence fell in the temple and in the courtyard.

The critic wrapped his robe more surely around him and went on his way feeling exalted in his heart and saying, "God, I am glad that I am not as other men." Nor did he know that he had taken the heart out of the temple workers and left the temple silent behind him.