

“Watchman, what of the night ?”



“ The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!” Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)

▶ THIS ISSUE'S READING

**“ THE FINAL BETRAYAL OF THE SACRED TRUST ” :
ELLEN G. WHITE DISCREDITS
THE S.D.A. NOTION OF
CORPORATE CALVINISM Pg. 2**

Editor's Preface

This issue of WWN is being presented as a follow-up /extension of the preceding thought paper (Issue # 59), ¹ which examined a type of "Corporate Calvinism" that is still being embraced by a seemingly escalating number of brethren within our ranks. Briefly, we explored the notion of whether the Calvinistic concept of 'once saved, always saved,' perceived as unconditionally applied to corporate groups / entities, was biblically sound. The findings, compiled and re-presented nearly exclusively from past issues of WWN written by Elder William Grotheer, exposed the unbiblical basis and spiritually bankrupt nature of this pernicious error. Tragically, however, the idea that the S.D.A. organizational structure is unequivocally 'going through' into God's eternal kingdom 'no matter what' is also widely accepted among us as inspirationally true. Sadly, this sentiment is almost universally reinforced (supposedly) by the Writings of Ellen G. White.

With this write-up, we will particularly focus our attention on this Calvinistic principle by comparing it with the contrasting view as actually presented in the Writings. Again, we will draw from previous works penned by Elder Grotheer to further expose the utter fallacy of this whole mindset. In doing so, we will be following the same interpretive rule which guided him as Ellen White counseled: "The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture." (1SM, pg. 42). ² This is simply the teaching method used by the Holy Spirit — "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Corinthians 2: 13).



“Alpha,” “Omega,” “The Balances of the Sanctuary,” “Another Coming Out”

Unique terms in the Writings addressed to those to whom the gift was given —

In the Scriptures certain expressions become a part of the eschatological language marking the end times. In Daniel as well as in Revelation the Judgment is introduced: "the judgment was set" (Daniel 7: 10): "because came the hour of the judgment of Him" (Revelation 14: 7, Greek.)³ To this concept is added, the "image to the beast" (Revelation 13: 14) and "the seven last plagues" (Revelation 15: 1). The message which brings this prophetic imagery together - the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 - was committed in sacred trust to a group of people to whom also was restored the Gift of Prophecy.

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import, — the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.

"The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them." (9T, pg. 19).⁴

The words, "alpha," "omega," "the balances of the sanctuary," and "another coming out," are all unique to the Gift and are directed to those to whom the "most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals" was given. Because of this fact, special attention needs to be given to these words, their context in the Writings, and what they are saying to us individually, and to the Church corporately as the instrument to whom God entrusted "a work of the most solemn import."

The Alpha

This word was first used at the turn of the last century in connection with the book - *The Living Temple*.⁵ In 1904, a *Special Testimony* (Series B, # 2)⁶ was released which contained "Letters to Physicians and Ministers." In a letter dated August 7, written to one of the physicians, Ellen White wrote:

"Separate from the influence exerted by the book 'Living Temple;' (sic.) for it contains specious sentiments. There are in it sentiments that are entirely true, but these are mingled with error. Scriptures are taken out of their connection, and are used to uphold erroneous theories. (pg. 49) ...

"We must firmly refuse to be drawn away from the platform of eternal truth, which since 1844 has stood the test. ... in the book 'Living Temple' (sic.) there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies." (pg. 50).

The emphasis in these letters was to stand firmly "on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial." (pg. 51). The warning was given that "The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error." (pg. 52). After listing the objectives of the movement envisioned by those promoting the alpha of apostasy, Ellen White asked the question, "Who has the authority to begin such a movement?" Then she advised: "We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth?" (pg. 55).

The "alpha" did not succeed, but the danger did not end. Coupled with the warning concerning the "alpha" was the prophecy of an "omega" of apostasy to come. Ellen White in the same letters warned: "I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people." (pg. 53). Why the trembling? "The omega will follow, and will be

received ... " (pg. 50, emphasis supplied).

The Omega

In this series of letters (Series B, # 2), Ellen White listed what would have taken place had the alpha succeeded. These objectives need to be carefully considered for the enemy's objective does not change toward truth, whether in the time of the alpha or in the time of the omega. The conflict only intensifies as the end approaches (Revelation 12: 12). In 1905, she would warn that "the great apostasy" which was "developing and increasing and waxing stronger," would "continue to do so" until the second coming of Christ. And because this would be, "We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith and go forward from strength to increased faith." (Series B, # 7, pg. 57).

In the time of the "alpha" the enemy of truth sought to promote "the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith." Then the question is asked: "Were this reformation to take place, what would result?" To this, the answer is given:

"The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written." (Series B, # 2, pgs. 54-55).

The "alpha" did not succeed. Only one book was written - *The Living Temple* - but it contained "deadly heresies" mingled with much physiological truth. The preface declares that the intent of the author, John Harvey Kellogg, M.D., was not to write a "theological treatise, but simply to study man from a physiological standpoint; hence, in the use of the word 'temple,' as it appears upon the title-page and in numerous places in the work, the physiological, or literal, sense is to be under-

stood." (pgs. 3-4). For most of the 568 pages this holds true. The first 60 pages, however, develop psychological and theological concepts which turn the bodily functions into evidence of the presence of a Divine Being. Kellogg would write:

"There is a clear, complete, satisfactory explanation of the most subtle, the most marvelous phenomena of nature, — namely, an infinite Intelligence working out its purposes. God is the explanation of nature, — not a God outside of nature, but in nature, manifesting himself through and in all the objects, movements, and varied phenomena of the universe." (pg. 28).

Interesting also is the fact that Kellogg closes his preface with a notation of acknowledgment of his indebtedness to both "A. T. Jones and Dr. E. J. Waggoner," who in 1903, when the book was published, were still held in high esteem by the laity of the Church. (pg. 6).

While the "alpha" did not succeed, the "omega" would be received. This means simply that among other things, "books (plural) of a new order" would be written which would seek to set aside "the doctrines which stand as pillars of our faith" discarding "the principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church." In summary language, "Our religion would be changed." (Series B, # 2, pg. 54).

Books of a "new order" have been written. "Principles of truth that God in His wisdom" gave "to the remnant church" have been "discarded." (*Ibid.*). The publication of *Questions on Doctrine* in 1957 did just this. And some forty-five years later (in 2003) it was reprinted as the second book in a series by the Andrews University Press to be known as the "Adventist Classic Library." Devoid of shame, its 1957 publication is proclaimed to "easily" qualify as "the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history." (*Annotated Edition*, pg. xiii).⁷

This is not the only book. There were to be "books." Others would follow.

Leroy Froom, whose "facile pen" was active-

ly involved in composing the written distillation of the Adventist-Evangelical conferences, in 1955-56 (*The Adventist Heritage*, Vol. 4, # 2, 1977, pg. 38) ⁸ would himself write a book, - *Movement of Destiny* - which reiterated the same positions as taken in 1957. From claimed to write this book under a mandate from Arthur G. Daniells (pg. 17), ⁹ long time president of the General Conference. The book published in 1971 carried the "imprimatur" and "nihil obstat" of Robert H Pierson, then president of the General Conference and Neal C. Wilson, vice-president of the North American Division.

Other books which might be listed are *The Sanctuary Doctrine* ¹⁰ by Roy Adams in 1981 as the first volume in the Doctoral Dissertation series published by Andrews University Seminary, and *Christ Our Substitute* ¹¹ in 1982 by Dr. Norman R. Gulley, Elder Grotheer's immediate predecessor as head of the Bible Department at old Madison College.

The evidence leaves us with the cold reality that our religion has been changed. Either the pre-1950's Adventism was fundamentally wrong, or the present course of post-1950's Adventism is basically askew with truth. Many of the current positions being promoted in "the books of a new order" are open to serious question. A stealthy mingling of truth with error, progressively growing out of the "omega of apostasy," is subtly being reflected in our doctrinal positions and "Corporate Calvinism" is one of the major vehicles being used to excuse and promote it. In this regard, as we study carefully the other unique phrases found in the Writings our course of action can become crystal clear, or the counsel given can have a negative effect, depending upon the stubbornness of our hearts.

In The Balances of The Sanctuary

The 1903 General Conference Session was held in Oakland, California. During the session, in Oakland two reports from the Committee

on Plans and Constitution (a majority, and a minority report) were presented to the session. The Minority report signed by E. J. Waggoner, David Paulson, and Percy T. Magan read:

"The minority of your Committee on Plans and Constitution beg leave to submit that the Constitution proposed by the majority of the Committee appears to us to be so subversive of the principles of organization given to us at the General Conferences of 1897 and 1901 that we can not possibly subscribe to it.

"The proposed new Constitution reverses the reformatory steps that were taken, and the principles which were given and adopted as the principles of reorganization, in the General Conferences of 1897 and 1901, and embodied in the present Constitution; and this before that Constitution or the organization according to it, has ever had adequate trial.

"We therefore recommend that the Constitution of 1901 be given a fair trial before it is annihilated." (*1903 General Conference Bulletin*, pgs. 146-147). ¹²

One of the signers of this Minority Report, Dr. Percy T. Magan, told the delegates:

"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" (sic.), 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 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." (*Ibid.*, pg. 150).

On April 13, a motion of adjournment brought the 1903 session in Oakland to a close to be reconvened in the Battle Creek Tabernacle on April 22. Between these two dates, on the day just before the convening in Battle Creek, Ellen White would ask, "Shall We Be

Found Wanting?" In answer to her question, she would write:

"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, 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." (8T, pg. 247).

13

This is corporate language. It must be measured against the backdrop of the work and responsibility given to the Church as described earlier in 9T, pg. 19 (see pg. 2, col. 1). It is not a "perhaps statement." The Church "is to be weighed" — the Church to which was given "the most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals." God has declared that He will weigh the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the balances of the Heavenly Sanctuary. It becomes incumbent upon the individual member to determine if He has, and the decision rendered. Then he has a decision to make - a decision directly related to the "Corporate Calvinistic" 'mindset' embraced by many within the movement. Bear in mind that this same testimony written from St. Helena, California, on April 21 quotes the Divine Instructor as asking, "How has the faithful city become an harlot?" and stating that it has become "a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed!" (pg. 250).

This concept of "the departure of the divine presence and glory from Israel" had been used two decades earlier and placed in an end-time setting in connection with the sealing of God's people as described in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. (see 5T, pgs. 207-216).¹⁴ Three groups of people are designated: the "few," the "many," and the "some." The "few" are also called "the little company" whose prayers and concern "arise in behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the

world." (pgs. 209-210). These concerned ones "had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counselled, and entreated." (pg. 210). This earnest work caused a separation between the "some" and the "many." "Some who had been dishonoring God, repented and humbled their hearts before Him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, his power and presence were lacking." (*Ibid.*).

The time frame is also defined as the time when "Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary" (pg. 207-208). The use of the "balances of the sanctuary" is completed. There is interjected an illustration of God's dealing with a nation of the past, the Amorites. Their cup of iniquity was not yet full, and mercy tarried. It is cited as representative of how God's dealings will be with all nations as the final hour of mercy approaches. It reads:

"With unerring accuracy, the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While his mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf." (pg. 208). The paragraph is followed by this sentence — "The prophet (Ezekiel), looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision." But nowhere in Ezekiel 9 to which this testimony is alluding is to be found a prophetic time element noted. Quickly passing from "the nations of this age" Ellen White moves to the Church when its "time" of "danger, and depression are greatest." Then is revealed the "few," the "many," and the "some."

Two paragraphs follow the clear delineation of these three groups. They dare not be overlooked, except at peril to our own souls, for every one of us is in one of these three categories. They read: (Note carefully the high lighted sentences).

"In the time when his wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ [the "few"] will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul-anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls, will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect.

"The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions his messengers, the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands: (Ezekiel 9: 5-6 quoted).

"Here we see that the church — the Lord's sanctuary — was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God." (*Ibid.*, 209-211).

Reread this sentence again. It tells you what the findings were when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was "weighed in the balances of the sanctuary." Ask yourself the question, if on "9/11" those who were employed in the New York Trade Center had known that they would be the target of the terrorist attack that day, would they have reported to work? Here we are told plainly where the first strokes of God's wrath will fall. How are we relating to this knowledge?

"The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had be-

trayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus 'peace and safety' is the cry from men who will never again lift their voices like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together." (*Ibid.*, pg. 211, *emph. added*).

A Second Coming Out

In the year following the crisis at Minneapolis in 1888, Ellen White wrote:

"I was confirmed in all I had stated in Minneapolis, that a reformation must go through the churches. Reforms must be made, for spiritual weakness and blindness were upon the people who had been blessed with great light and precious opportunities and privileges. As reformers they had come out of the denominational churches, but they now act a part similar to that which the churches acted. We hoped that there would not be the necessity for another coming out. While we will endeavor to keep the 'unity of the Spirit' in the bonds of peace, we will not with pen or voice cease to protest against bigotry." (16MR, pg. 216-217).¹⁵

This statement suggests a key concept. There had been an original coming out. But if the Adventist church came to reflect the same spirit of the denominational churches which had resulted in the original coming out, it would necessitate "another coming out." While it is true that there is no further use of this expression again, other statements reflect the thought. In reporting the first camp meeting to be held in Tasmania, Ellen White broke into the continuity of her report, and stated:

"My mind was carried to the future, when

the signal will be given, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.'" (*R&H*, Feb. 11, 1896, pg. 331).¹⁶

In her earlier uses of this verse – Matthew 25: 6 – she ascribed it to "the summer of 1844" (*GC*, page 398).¹⁷ In 1896, she indicated it to be still future, and connected it with a "signal" to be given.

It should be obvious to even a casual reader that the expression "another coming out" was connected in Ellen White's mind with the parable of the Ten Virgins. In 1890, she linked this parable with the "Laodicean state." She wrote that "The state of the Church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state," and then quoted Revelation 3: 15-21. (*R&H*, August 19, 1890, pg. 420).¹⁸ The cry at midnight not only separated the Ten Virgins but marked "another coming out." ❖

WHG (GLP)

1. Gary L. Patrick, "Watchman, what of the night?" (Nora Springs, IA: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., Issue # 59 - June / July 2023, "The Persistent Belief In A Form Of 'Corporate Calvinism' That Continues To Exist Within The Seventh-Day Adventist Movement"), 1-7. https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_Issue_59.pdf
2. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Book One* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 42.
3. Jay P. Green, Sr., *The Interlinear Hebrew - Greek - English Bible, vol. 4* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1885), 683.
4. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 19.
5. John H. Kellogg, M.D., *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1903), 3-4, 28, 6. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hw1vwg&view=1up&seq=1>

6. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church, Series B* (Payson, AZ: Leaves of Autumn Books, Inc. (reprint), no. 2 and no. 7), 49-55 (no. 2), 56-57 (no. 7).
 7. George R. Knight, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine, Annotated Edition* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), xiii.
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 13. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church, vol.8* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 247.
 14. White, *Ibid., vol.5* ("The Seal of God"), 207-216.
 15. White, *Manuscript Releases, vol. 16* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1993 - Release no. 1216), 216-217.
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 18. White, *Present Truth and Review and Herald Articles, vol. 2, 1886-1892* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, "The Righteousness of Christ" - August 19, 1890), 420.
- *All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

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