

## retrospect: eighteen-eighty

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The WATCHTOWER

JULY 1, 1973

\* Consider, too, the fact that Jehovah's organization alone, in all the earth, is directed by God's holy spirit or active force. (Zech. 4:6) Only this organization functions for Jehovah's purpose and to his praise. To it alone God's Sacred Word, the Bible, is not a sealed book. Many persons of the world are very intelligent, capable of understanding complex matters. They can read the Holy Scriptures, but they cannot understand their deep meaning. Yet God's people can comprehend such spiritual things. Why? Not because of special intelligence on their part, but as the apostle Paul declared: "For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10) Jesus Christ praised his heavenly Father for 'hiding such things from the wise and intellectual ones but revealing them to babes.' (Matt. 11:25) How very much true Christians appreciate associating with the only organization on earth that understands the "deep things of God"!

\* Direction by God's spirit enables Jehovah's servants to have divine light in a world of spiritual darkness. (2 Cor. 4:4) For instance, long ago they understood that 1914 C.E. would mark the end of the Gentile Times or "appointed times of the nations," during which the Gentile nations were allowed uninterrupted rulership of the earth. (Luke 21:24) This 2,520-year period began with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians in the late seventh century B.C.E. [For example, *Zion's Watch Tower* of March 1880 had declared: "The Times of the Gentiles' extend to 1914, and the heavenly kingdom will not have full sway till then." Only God by his holy spirit

could have revealed this to those early Bible students so far in advance.]

\* Another reason to appreciate the organization of Jehovah's Christian witnesses is that it aids us to understand God's provisions for blessing obedient ones, and then to bring our lives into harmony with the divine will. (Matt. 24:45-47) This brings us happiness now despite world gloom, for it is truly satisfying to know that one is pleasing God. By its publications and through other means, the true Christian organization keeps prominently before us the Biblical prospect of endless, happy life under the rule of God's kingdom. (Rev. 21:3-5) What a blessing! How much we should appreciate God's earthly organization and our opportunities to praise Jehovah with his people!

\* Furthermore, this organization alone is supplied with "gifts in men," such as evangelizers, shepherds and teachers, who serve God's purpose in connection with the spiritual development and welfare of his people. (Eph. 4:7-16) Appointed overseers or elders and ministerial servants meet Scriptural requirements for their responsible places in Jehovah's organization. Among other things, they welcome honest-hearted people into the Christian congregation and help to educate them in Jehovah's ways. (1 Tim. 3:1-10, 12, 13; Titus 1:5-9) Under the influence of God's holy spirit, you can share in this grand work of finding, welcoming and educating those who will become fellow praisers of Jehovah. What a blessed privilege!

\* Think of the people themselves—those praising Jehovah as part of his earthly organization. They are indeed "the desirable things of all the nations." (Hag. 2:7) True Christians have many spiritual brothers, sisters, mothers and children.

The Watchtower Society teaches that it alone is directed by Jehovah's spirit. However, because of many inaccurate predictions made by the Society, we know that Jehovah's spirit is not directing at all times. Human error is evident in past Watchtower publications where these predictions are found.

But of all the past issues of *The Watchtower* we can be absolutely certain that the March 1880 *Zion's Watch Tower* was written under the direction of Jehovah's spirit.

Why are we sure of this? The July 1, 1973 *Watchtower* (above) makes reference to the March 1880 issue as an example of the spirit's direction in the early days of the Society. We are then informed that it was "only God by his holy spirit (who) could have revealed" all this timely information to the early Bible students. Why is it important for all true servants of Jehovah to know what else the original March 1880 issue said?

## ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT, ONE HOPE

Eph. iv. 4.

The unity of the church of Christ is clearly revealed in the New Testament. Though there is great variety in ability, natural or acquired, yet the least as well as the greatest is a member of the Body, and all alike are vitally connected with Christ the Head. Those who are of full age, and strong, either to understand or to work, have the greater responsibility, but the young, unlearned and tender, as lambs of the flock are carried in the Shepherd's bosom, and are the objects of his tender care. The figures used in the Bible all illustrate this unity, and, we may add, indivisibility. "One fold and one Shepherd;" John x. 16. The vine and the branches; John xv. The temple and living stones, built on one foundation; Eph. ii. 20-22, and One City, as "the bride, the Lamb's wife;" Rev. xxi. 9, 10.

There are many scriptures which assert the unity of the Body aside from our text. The diversity does not weaken the fact of the unity any more than diversity in the families of men weakens their relationship. There is much comfort in the assurance this fact gives to all who have put on Christ. They are all *one* in Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 26-29. It is a great encouragement to all, for the *least* who retains this vital union with Christ is as certain of eternal life as the greatest. To see and appreciate this unity and indivisibility would destroy sectarianism and endear Christians one to another. Sectarianism began to show itself in Paul's day, and was condemned. "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," &c., was met by the question, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Cor. i. 10-13. This is as much as to say: As Christ is not divided, ye should recognize no divisions, and call yourselves by no name but Christ. If it was contrary to the spirit of Christianity then, to say I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Peter, what can be said to justify men now in calling themselves "Calvinists," "Arminians," "Lutherans," "Wesleyans," or by *any* man-made name. If Paul were writing to the churches of the nineteenth century (was he not?) would he not call such things *carnal*, as when he wrote to Corinth? 1 Cor. iii. 1-5. Would not every great and good man, after whom, or whose opinions, a party has been named, could he speak to-day, join with Paul and condemn it? Are mere opinions a sufficient ground for such gulfs or walls between Christians? These are but temptations, above which let the voice of the apostle be heard, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. iv. 3. Faith and opinion or knowledge are too often confounded. Every Christian has faith in Christ as a living person, and as a personal Saviour, for "without faith it is impossible to please God," but a man's knowledge and opinions vary according to circumstances and the degree of advancement. What would we think of the humanity of a brother who would dishonour his brother in the flesh because he is less advanced in knowledge, or cast him out because he is young? Or what of the Christianity of a brother in the spirit who acts on the same principle? Does not this tendency grow out of a misapprehension of the true basis of fellowship? We think so. Is there a *real* tie between members of one family in the flesh? Yes, we say, they have the same *blood* in their veins. Is the tie any *less real* because it is spiritual that binds the members of the family in Christ? They have one *spirit*. "There is one body and one *spirit*," &c. The possession of the spirit of Christ is an evidence of vital union with Christ; Rom. viii. 9-15; and the "fruits of the spirit" alone, should be accepted as the elements of Christian character and basis of recognition. Gal. v. 22-24. The relationship of Father, Son and Brother, which is revealed in the New Testament, is based upon the One Spirit. All who possess it are fellows, whether they know it

or not. "If the foot shall say because I am not the hand I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body." Or if one shall say to the other, "I have no need of thee," does that destroy the relationship? 1 Cor. xii. "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body \* \* \* and have all been made to drink into one spirit." Vs. 13. Whoever has that spirit gives evidence of membership in the body, and therefore of acceptance with God; and whoever God accepts shall I reject? God forbid. Oh that we might rather more fully realize this unity, and sing in the spirit,

"Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love."

It will be observed that the unity of the body and the spirit is fundamental; and that as there is but one Head, all who have fallen asleep in Christ, are as much a part of the one body as are those who live at any time. The living generation of Christians *represents* the whole church, but they are *not* the whole any more than a part of my body is all of it, and the church, the Bride of Christ, will not, can not, be complete until all who compose it, either sleeping or waking, are developed. But if a *part*—the living *mortals*—can, as they do represent the whole on earth, why may not a *part*—the first company made *immortal*—represent the whole in a heavenly state? This we say, with the *possibility* in mind that there is *order* in the reward of the church; "Prophets, saints and them that fear his name, small and great." Rev. xi. 18.

We are satisfied that whatever theory does not recognize the essential unity of the church must be false; and yet we believe it can be shown, and that it will yet become more apparent, that there is not only *variety* in condition here, but also a corresponding *variety* in position in the kingdom, and a difference in the time of reward, as we usually reckon time. "They that are Christ's, at his coming" (parousia—presence) must include all Christians even "babes in Christ," unless it can be shown (?) that "babes in Christ" are not *members of Christ's body*; and yet it is evident that it is a *period* and not a *moment*, which is comprehended in the statement "at his coming." We understand it to mean "during his presence." Paul also says, "at (or during) the last trump," and it has often been shown that the last or seventh trumpet sounds for many years. [Without here giving the proof, which has often been given to many of our readers, we would say, we believe the seventh trumpet will continue to sound until the year 1914, which includes, between now and then, the day of wrath and angry nations, which is the period, not only of restoration of the earthly Jerusalem, but of reward to the church, or the upbuilding and glorification of the heavenly Jerusalem.]

When the New Jerusalem descends at the end of that period, or is manifested as the light of the nations for the succeeding age, as Christ, the Head, has been the light during the Gospel age, it will be observed that it is a city complete—not all throne—but a company had just been exalted to the throne, or ruling position and capacity (Rev. v. 8-10) before the opening of even a single seal; but during the great tribulation which follows, a great and bloodwashed company find a place *before the throne*, (or on the "sea of glass;" comp. Rev. iv. 6 and xv. 2), and they *serve God in his temple*. Rev. vii. 9-15. The temple is the church, and to be in it is to be a member of it. Here we find variety and unity. All constitute the "tabernacle of God," and the city as a whole is called the Bride—and yet we see some members higher than others. There are superiors—rulers—in the city, but the city as a whole is a ruling or influential power over the nations, and the "nations shall walk in the light of it." We have in an

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Upon examining this issue of Zion's Watch Tower we find that the holy spirit allegedly directed them to write: ". . . we believe the seventh trumpet will continue to sound until the year 1914, which includes, between now and then, the day of wrath and angry nations, which is the period, not only of restoration of the earthly Jerusalem, but of reward to the church, or the upbuilding and glorification of the heavenly Jerusalem." Here, according to the Society, the end of 1914 was "when the new Jerusalem" was to "descend."

This prediction obviously failed. "But," one might say, "we are all human, and everyone makes mistakes." This is true. Or one might answer that "the light gets brighter." If one wants, one can easily manufacture excuses. However, none of these can be used here. For the Society did not make reference to the March 1880 Watch Tower as a source of possible human error, but rather as an example of divine direction!

True worshippers of Jehovah must ask:

1. Does Jehovah's spirit produce error?
2. If not, why then did the Society point to the 1880 Watch Tower for an example of how their organization alone is directed by the spirit?
4. Who makes false prophecies?
5. When Jeane Dixon admits failures of her prophecies, does that make her a true prophet and not a false one?
6. Consider Jehovah's rebuke to the false prophets. He says: "For the reason that you men have spoken untruth and you have visioned a lie, therefore here I am against you..." Ezk. 13:8 (NWT).
7. Peter says, "false teachers" will deny the Lord that bought them (II Peter 2:1). If an organization consistently makes false prophecies while maintaining that it alone has direction from Jehovah's spirit, can we trust its interpretation of the scriptures in matters as important as the person, nature and work of Christ?
8. Would a false prophet reveal ultimate truth concerning Jehovah's word and his arrangement for our lives?

Are you dissatisfied with an organization that is leading you down "the broad path"? If you are, for further information, write:

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