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SHOOTING THE WATCHDOG

*File under
Anderson*

A few weeks ago I sent a letter to the Union Conference presidents of North America, asking them to confirm or deny that they had voted for the suspension of my ministerial credentials, as well as for my removal from the list of loyal veteran workers, actions taken respectively April 14 and Nov. 2. From the replies received thus far, it appeared that they had received their information chiefly from the explanations given at the meeting where the action was taken, which information was not true. I here give the facts.

The Church Manual definitely states that the defendant has a "fundamental right to be heard". This has been denied me. While I have been invited to come to Washington, it was definitely stated that "this will not be in the nature of a trial". Letter Jan. 18, 1960. The secretary writes: "With reference to a tape recording, I am instructed to say that our correspondence reveals no promise of a tape recording for you. If desired, one can be made, but it will be kept in this office for a permanent record." July 4, 1959.

The president had previously written me: "The brethren here had in mind recording on tape the proceedings of our meeting. This would provide a full record of what is said and done. We assume that such a complete record would be agreeable to you." Letter Feb. 10, 1958.

But he soon changed his mind on such "a complete record" that would be "agreeable to me." On April 3 he wrote, referring to the "complete record" which he assumed would be agreeable to me, "Such a record would not be a wise plan to follow. . . . it would not be fair to the participants." Quite a change of front from his previous letter. And then he adds that such a change was my suggestion. It is rather difficult to follow the vagaries of such a mind.

I may state that since I wrote you the whole situation has been thoroughly investigated by competent legal talent, who have found that certain aspects are subject to civil action. The note of Nov. 2 was of special interest to the Labor Union Officials. In fact, it caused quite an uproar. There my loyalty is questioned, and it appears that my sustentation is based on the fact that I am old and needy and not on my past record of service. The unions fought out this matter long ago. Pension is not based on the proposition that recipient must remain loyal to the company, and that it can be rescinded if the worker criticizes the company. Pension is based on past years of service, and is not a bribe to compel loyalty. They made several distinct inquiries of our sustentation plan, asked to be informed officially of the connection between sustentation and criticism, if there is any. "Let us know," said one, "and we will surely bury you." It is a very touchy point with them, and the action of our committee of Nov. 2 was a serious mistake. Union officials seemed anxious for a showdown on this point.

While I have had very little to do with this exploratory work, I have been favorable to it. I have agreed to function till April 15, and will then step aside and let the men who are now working take over and assume all responsibility from then on.

Shooting the Watchdog

In the Review of Jan. 11 I saw an article with the title "Shooting the Watchdog". It reminded me of a story I once read of some people who shot their dog because he disturbed them with his barking at night, and later regretted their shooting when burglars ransacked their dwelling.

With my many years of teaching in responsible positions; with my close study of the 1888 meeting; with my close association with practically all the men involved; with the research necessary for the production of my fifteen books on theology; with the number of students whose theses on the 1888 debacle brought to light much information from which I profited, I have felt that I had a background that peculiarly fitted me for being on the watch for the Omega phase of the controversy which Sr. White said would come. When I early learned of the close rapprochement of our leaders with the Evangelicals, I felt that it was time to awake.

I read in the Ministry with astonishment the series of articles downgrading Sr. White, and as a climax stating in the Feb. 1957 issue of the journal, "NO DOCTRINAL TRUTH OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION HAS EVER COME INITIALLY TO THIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY - NOT IN A SINGLE CASE", I knew then my duty. I had to speak or perish. And so I spoke. I discovered that the articles had the approval of the administration, and that it was not merely a man or two with whom I had to deal, but the whole administration. I knew what the result would be if I attempted to raise my voice against it. It would be one man against a million. But it never occurred to me that they would attempt the unlawful thing of passing judgment contrary to justice and their own published Church Manual. When to that is added lack of common honesty, prevarication, and general disrespect for the laws of God and man, I knew that I would follow the men of the past who lost out in any contest with ecclesiastical authority. Even Paul lost out and lost his head. All forsook him, he says, but he took comfort in the fact that he had given them "a good fight". I would follow his example.

And so the word has gone out, "Shoot the Watchdog". And it is being done. May God pity our leaders. They are fulfilling prophecy. I pray for them. I am not bitter. I am not vindictive. I am enjoying a sound Christian experience. And I pray for my beloved church. My head is bloody, but unbowed. Paul went down to defeat, but he had the consolation that a crown awaited him. As for me, "Here I stand. I can do no other. God helping me." The fight is not finished. It has just begun.

M. L. Andreasen