

Molding A Denomination

AN EVALUATION BY ALEX. F. DUGGER

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF AGE! ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF USEFULNESS!

Born in the midst of the great Civil War when the national economy was at its lowest ebb and when men were surrounded by uncertainty and almost intolerable hardships. Who can fathom the indelible imprint upon its readers? God only.

Let us praise the Lord for the men of faith who sacrificed so much to launch it—for determined men whose venture twice failed financially and yet succeeded. Brother Jacob Brinkerhoff was one of these men who so loved the gospel work that he was willing to put his all into it. It is recorded that he and his good wife sold their home in order to buy at sheriff's sale (in 1874) the equipment of the second publishing association. From this date the publishing equipment remained in private ownership until the General Conference was incorporated.

During the Civil War, groups of seventh-day Sabbath-keepers, known by various names such as Christians, Church of Christ, Church of the First Born, Church of God, etc., united in a cooperative organization and sponsored a publishing plant operated by a publishing association. Those from these groups who could not conscientiously go along with the Whites in their organization (in Present Truth as they called their

movement) of the Seventh Day Adventists, were the sponsors of our early publications. It is doubtful if any one of these had all of the truths now taught by the church. Brother Brinkerhoff, as individual owner, held each contributor responsible for his or her views of the Scriptures.

Early numbers of THE HOPE OF ISRAEL contained articles on the various church names as held by the various groups sponsoring the publication. "The Bible Student's Assistant" was advertised in 1871. This tract gave Bible references on each of the following subjects: The Kingdom of God, The Millennium, The Triumph of the Saints, The Second Advent, The Saints' Inheritance, The Hope of the Church, The Resurrection, The Signs of the Times, The Law of God, The Sabbath, Ceremonial Sabbaths, Time to Begin the Sabbath, First Day of the Week, The Christian's Law Giver, Faith, Repentance, Baptism, The Covenants, Sanctuary, Soul, Spirit, State of the Dead, Destiny of the Wicked, Hell, Restoration of the Jews to the Land of Palestine, Whom the Promise Is To, God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son, The Church (including scriptures on the Church of God) and references on The Metallic Image of Daniel. The introduction to these subjects gave advice on how to study the Bible and on how to use the "Assistant."

"The Bible Sabbath Defended" was first printed about 1880 and

is still available today.

Beginning in the 1890's tracts were published regularly under the heading "Bible Truth Series."

One of these early tracts is entitled "The Two Kingdoms." This tract deals with the Kingdom of Grace (called by some the Spiritual Kingdom) and the Kingdom of Glory or the Kingdom to Come. This tract is mentioned for the reason that a long-time member of the church recently remarked that the church had not taught a Spiritual Kingdom until in recent years.

Around sixty to seventy years ago, the paper advertised thirty or thirty-five tracts on as many subjects. All tracts were printed first in the ADVOCATE, then run off and bound in tract form. Thus, each subscriber had access to the reasoning and the scriptures in every tract printed.

Changes were made in the name of the paper at times, until THE HOPE OF ISRAEL emerged as THE BIBLE ADVOCATE. For one hundred years the paper has poured forth a steady stream of good articles on the subjects found in the Bible. For years it carried a Letter Department where testimonies and ideas of subscribers were presented. From time to time reports of protracted meetings and of local conferences appeared. These with the General Conference reports gave the readers a glimpse of the progress of the work.

In the early years the world did not have the many attractions of our day to offer to the populace and people generally acquired good reading habits and were more interested in Bible literature. Thus, the scriptural material distributed by the ADVOCATE with the zeal and good work of the ministry amalgamated the various groups that sponsored the early work into the church of today.

May God bless His church and its members and give it much fruit for the Kingdom. May each one of us be loyal to it and support it as God would have us. May each one of us study to show himself approved unto God and beware lest we offend the Church of God.