

## ADVENTIST PIONEER LIBRARY



# Lest We Forget

*"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." LS 196*

## G. I. BUTLER

### and RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

*by Fred Bischoff*

**T**here was little evidence of the "faith of Jesus" in the Adventists of the 1880's.<sup>1</sup> The "faith of Jesus" encompasses an understanding of the gospel that Scripture outlines and a confidence in the testimony of Jesus. It is revealed by a personal embodiment of the character qualities of God disclosed to us in both of the above. We will review these qualities in the life of Elder Butler, age 52 to 81 (from 1886 to 1915).

Elder George I. Butler took strong exception in 1886 to E. J. Waggoner's teaching on the law in Galatians 3. That year he wrote Ellen White at least four times lamenting what Waggoner was doing, and asking for her opinion. He felt this issue was one of "the principles of our faith."<sup>2</sup> In one of his first letters to her, Butler manifested a healthy openness on his part. If he were shown to be wrong, he declared, "I feel sure I would accept it . . ."<sup>3</sup> Every other statement showed an inflexibility that helps to explain the deep depression into

which he later lapsed.<sup>4</sup> He believed he was standing firmly for the right, while Ellen White was shown instead that he was resisting light.<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Butler and Uriah Smith in April 1887 she said, "I do not wish the letters that I have sent to you should be used in a way that you will take it for granted that your ideas are all correct and Dr. Waggoner's and Elder Jones's are all wrong."<sup>6</sup>

His reaction to this letter further illustrated how unbelief drains one of spiritual vigor, while diverting enormous energy into self-directed endeavors. A year and a half later from his sick bed he wrote a 41-page letter to Ellen White, just before the Minneapolis General Conference session. In it he blamed her for his illness. "It was sadness of heart . . . by the position you took that gave me that four months' sickness."<sup>7</sup> He stubbornly asserted, "I have not, Sister White, been able to see the justice of your letter of April 5, 1887, and never expect to . . ."<sup>8</sup>

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# G. I. BUTLER and RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

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In response, she wrote him from Minneapolis that his spirit was "not Christlike," and he had "not kept pace with the opening providence of God."<sup>9</sup> She pointedly stated, "If my letter caused so great consequences to you . . . I shall not be held accountable for it; for if you had received it in the right spirit, it would have had no such results."<sup>10</sup> Regarding the 1886 General Conference, she emphasized, "My guide . . . stretched out his arms toward Dr. Waggoner, and to you, Elder Butler, and said in substance as follows: 'Neither have all the light upon the law, neither position is perfect.'<sup>11</sup> The guide also told her, "There is much light yet to shine forth from the law of God and the gospel of righteousness. This message, understood in its true character, and proclaimed in the Spirit, will lighten the earth with its glory."<sup>12</sup> This identifies vital aspects of the message, connecting it with the angel of Revelation 18, and showing it to be the loud cry message.

In December 1888, Ellen White wrote to Elder Butler and his wife identifying three causes of his physical illness and spiritual blindness:

1. his wife's ideas and feelings;
2. his "spirit of warfare" on health reform, his "habits in eating and in labor"; and
3. his "pride of soul" and "large amount of self."<sup>13</sup>

Butler's 12 years of isolation in Florida caring for his invalid wife, "passing through severe trials."<sup>14</sup> were a fulfillment of what Ellen White was shown back at Minneapolis, that Elder Butler's "stubbornness and unbelief was sinful and God would bring his afflicting hand heavily upon him if he did not repent and have another spirit, and if he still held his perversity and stubbornness, he would come nearer still to him in affliction."<sup>15</sup>

During 1890 and 1891, Mrs. White addressed the desperate spiritual needs of Uriah Smith and George Butler in several letters. They were "ensnared by the enemy" and "unfaithful." Their position and work was "to

unsettle the faith of the people of God."<sup>16</sup> They had left Ellen White alone, and she felt it more than the death of her husband James.<sup>17</sup> They had despised the message and the messengers of righteousness by faith and were "warring against the light."<sup>18</sup> Smith made a confession in January of 1891 that was in the right direction. In contrast, Butler saw no need to do so.<sup>19</sup> Butler wrote to Ellen White in September stating, "what you charge me with . . . I cannot make it seem to me to be so, and really it seems otherwise."<sup>20</sup>

In January 1893, she wrote how Butler and Smith were holding themselves "aloof, not blending . . . with the work that brethren Jones and Waggoner" were led of God to do.<sup>21</sup> With such a course, Butler and Smith, "who might have received the richest blessings," she stated, "will meet with eternal loss, for though they should repent and be saved at last, they can never regain that which they have lost through their wrong course of action."<sup>22</sup> They continued "standing in the way of others" and "retarded the work."<sup>23</sup>

In April, Butler wrote to Elder Haskell, still not seeing any sin in his actions, and ascribing Ellen White's evaluation of him to her own opinion.<sup>24</sup>

In May, Ellen White was yearning that Butler "would come out from the shadow of death and into the chamber of light and brightness." She added, "I have no call to write to him anything. Poor man, I feel so sorry for him!"<sup>25</sup>

June 13, in an article in the *Review and Herald*, Butler admitted God was leading in "the greater agitation of the doctrines of justification by faith." In the article he contended, "I never, for a moment since my conversion, supposed I could be saved by my own good works . . ." Yet he admitted "that additional light of great importance has been shining upon these subjects."<sup>26</sup>

The next month Ellen White said Butler and Smith were cherishing the

same spirit from Minneapolis, and had "little appreciation" of heavenly light. Significantly, she differentiated Elder Butler's position. "No greater light or evidence will come to any one of you except to Elder Butler. He has not been directly in the channel where light from the throne has come upon him. The Lord looks with compassion . . . in a special sense upon Elder Butler."<sup>27</sup>

In the August 15, 1893 *Review and Herald* he reviewed Ellen White's new book, *Steps to Christ*, and accepted every part of her precious volume.

In 1895, Ellen White wrote, "If Elder Butler had heeded the warning, the entreaties of the Spirit of God, if he had walked in the counsel given him of God, he would now have been walking in strength and efficiency."<sup>28</sup>

A transition came toward the end of the 1890's. Ellen White had one of the first copies of her new book *Desire of Ages* sent to Butler. He replied late in 1898 with gratitude that she would think of him. April of the next year she in turn wrote him, "You misapprehend me when you suppose I have lost all hope of you. This has never been the case . . . I would be pleased to see you take hold of the work again and move forward . . . in the rich truths which God has given us."<sup>29</sup>

The crisis years of the early 1900's show what may appear as contradictory events and counsels. In 1901, after the death of his wife, Brother Butler returned to active church work. However, in January 1902, Uriah Smith printed articles in the *Review and Herald* still strongly opposing the views of Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White, according to A. G. Daniells.<sup>30</sup>

In February 1902, Ellen White directed the church to the contribution the pioneers offered. She affirmed their need for Elders Butler and Smith, and stated regarding Elder Butler, "We welcome him into our ranks once more, and regard him as one of our most valuable laborers."<sup>31</sup>

The *Review and Herald* Board removed Smith from position as head editor in March. Butler came to his defense, taking what Daniells described as "a

*The message of righteousness by faith brought by Jones and Waggoner in the 1880's could have prepared a people to meet Christ.*

most unreasonable position," and being "unnecessarily severe in his criticism."<sup>32</sup>

In May, Ellen White strongly affirmed that as a result of his years of affliction, "Elder Butler is strong in physical and spiritual health. The Lord has proved and tested and tried him . . . I see in Elder Butler one who has humbled his soul before God. He has another spirit than the Elder Butler of younger years . . ."<sup>33</sup>

In April 1903, she again wrote, "I rejoice that Brother Butler is with us in this work . . . God desires the gray-haired pioneers, the men who acted a part in the work when the first, second and third angels' messages were first given, to stand in their place in His work today."<sup>34</sup> She wrote him in June, "We must now do a work that should have been done long ago . . . The . . . experience through which the people of God passed in the early history of our work must be republished."<sup>35</sup>

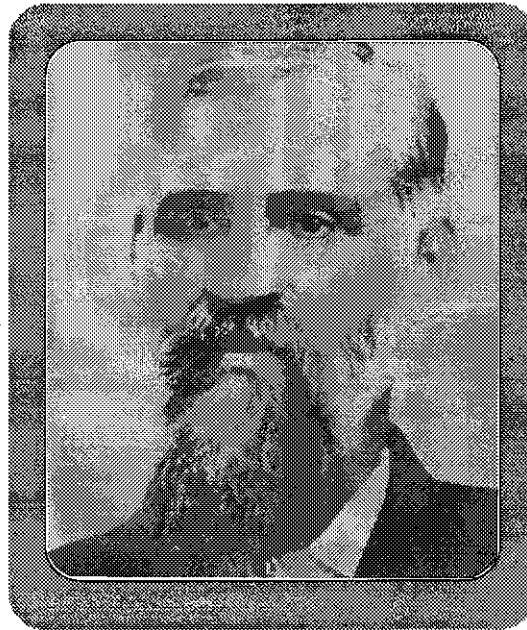
In 1904, she wrote him regarding the foundational crisis. "At this crisis all are called upon to take their position . . . Not a stone is to be moved in the foundation of this truth—not a pillar moved."<sup>36</sup> She repeated this again to him as late as 1910.<sup>37</sup>

Brother Butler's work in supporting the Madison and Loma Linda schools showed a new confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. In 1915, his speech at the Autumn Council of the General Conference held at Loma Linda helped to save the new medical school.<sup>38</sup>

### Reflection

The refining fire had done its work with Brother Butler. His wife's illness and death, and his personal illness and trials impressed upon him the importance of health reform, and humbled his view of himself. Through it all, he remained loyal to the church and learned to put greater confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy.

In his experience we can see how a theory of the truth can co-exist with persistent resistance against it. We understand how the Lord often uses great trials to break through our self-confidence and deception, until we begin to see the deeper issues of our needs and



A YOUNGER GEORGE L. BUTLER

the gospel solutions. The missed opportunities of 1888 corporately added up to what Ellen White described as "insubordination," and resulted in the church having to remain in this world many more years.<sup>39</sup>

The message of righteousness by faith brought by Jones and Waggoner in the 1880's could have prepared a people to meet Christ.<sup>40</sup> When this message and work was hindered, the resulting spiritual confusion led to heresies that attacked the very foundations of the church. Upon her return from Australia, when after the 1901 General Conference Ellen White saw no deep spiritual change in the church, she began to realize that the window of opportunity had passed, and turned her attention to damage control and preservation of the foundations of the church.

She called Smith and Butler to assist her from 1902 onward in preserving these foundations. These men were pioneers who had remained faithful to the cause, though blinded in part to the advancing providences of God. Her affirmation of God's leading both of these men to have a place in His work right to the end of their lives was in spite of the fact that they did not understand the message of righteousness by faith in all its dimensions.

They were valuable for other aspects of the message, particularly their "pioneer" perspective and unwavering loyalty to the movement. It was as if

she said to the church, "Since you are not going to finish the house, at least leave the foundations. Another generation will come, and finish the house." Some of the pioneers who were called to help her in this work were the very ones in part responsible for the lost opportunity. And so they were called to counter the consequences of their own actions. It appears they did this loyally and willingly, though they never regained what she said was their "eternal loss." May we affirm the foundations, and plead with the Lord to finish the house, cooperating with Him in this most important work. ♦

1. *EGW 1888 Materials*, pp. 212, 217.
2. *Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis*, p. 46.
3. *Ibid.* p. 23.
4. *Ibid.* pp. 68, 69.
5. *1888 Materials*, pp. 1005, 1246.
6. *Ibid.* p. 32.
7. *MMM*, p. 82.
8. *Ibid.* p. 99.
9. *1888 Materials*, p. 86, 89.
10. *Ibid.* p. 96.
11. *Ibid.* p. 93.
12. *Ibid.* pp. 165, 166.
13. *Ibid.* pp. 190-194.
14. *Ibid.* p. 644.
15. *Ibid.* p. 848.
16. *Ibid.* pp. 714, 715, 717.
17. *Ibid.* p. 741.
18. *Ibid.* p. 846.
19. *Ibid.* p. 1005.
20. *MMM*, p. 210.
21. *1888 Materials*, p. 1128, 1136.
22. *Ibid.* p. 1128.
23. *Ibid.* p. 1140.
24. *MMM*, pp. 251, 256.
25. *1888 Material*, p. 1184.
26. *MMM*, p. 260.
27. *1888 Material*, p. 1137, 1138.
28. *Ibid.* p. 1412.
29. A. L. White, *E. G. W. Biography, Vol. 4*, pp. 406, 407.
30. *MMM*, pp. 318, 319.
31. *20 Manuscript Releases*, p. 220.
32. *MMM*, p. 317.
33. *Retirement Years*, p. 117.
34. *1888 Materials*, p. 1801.
35. *17MR*, p. 344.
36. *19MR*, p. 311.
37. *1888 Materials*, p. 1811.
38. *For God and CME*, p. 106, 113.
39. *10MR*, p. 277.
40. *1888 Materials*, pp. 210, 1814.

# GEORGE IDE BUTLER

## A MAN

**G**eorge Ide Butler, minister, evangelist, administrator, and twice General Conference president, was a renowned pioneer in the multifaceted history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Butler has been held at least partially responsible for the negative response of many who attended the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, towards the message of righteousness by faith presented by Dr. E. J. Waggoner and Elder A. T. Jones.

Butler's family was deeply rooted in American history. His grandfather, Ezra Pitt Butler, Sr., served in the American Revolution, was governor of the state of Vermont from 1826 to 1828, a councilman, judge, university trustee and pastor of the Waterbury, Vermont Baptist Church. His father, Ezra Pitt Butler, Jr., was a captain in the War of 1812. He supported temperance, anti-masonry and abolition of slavery. Into this conscientious, patriotic family, George Ide Butler was born November 12, 1834, the second of six children.

He was five years old when his parents accepted the news of the soon coming of Christ preached by the Millerites. His father became a "very zealous worker in the '44 movement."<sup>1</sup> Miller visited their home on several occasions.

Butler was 10 years old at the time of the Great Disappointment in 1844. The family remained faithful through the disappointment, though seeds of doubt began springing up in Butler's young mind.

By 1848, after studying with Captain Bates, Butler's mother began keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath "all alone . . . in her bedroom with her Bible and little paper."<sup>2</sup> In the Autumn of 1850, Butler's father studied with Bates, accepted and began keeping the Sabbath. Before long he was ordained to the ministry, though he considered himself to be merely a witnessing farmer.

By age 18, Butler said he had become a "proud, stiff, stubborn infidel, passionate, hot headed, with little reverence for God or man . . . a shy, skeptical, proud-spirited youth."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is gratifying to note

that he "valued honesty and morality and determined to shun card playing, . . . tobacco and liquor."<sup>4</sup> In 1853, he traveled to the Northern Wilderness, got a job with surveyors in Wisconsin, and west of Minneapolis, took a claim which he later sold.

While traveling on a river boat to Kansas City in 1856, George got off at "Rock Island, where the steamer had tied up for freight . . . to pace the town . . ."<sup>5</sup> By the time he returned to the steamer, he had made his decision to follow the good parts of the Bible. "Back in his cabin, upon his knees, he gave his life to God."<sup>6</sup> Upon his return to Waukon, he was baptized by J. N. Andrews. Later M. E. Cornell preached at Waukon convincing him that Ellen White's testimonies were from God rather than hypnotism.

Butler began teaching school and continued courting Lenetha Lockwood, whom he had dated since 1855. He well remembered when Mrs. White "took Lenetha off into the bedroom, I suppose to talk about me . . . which was not a circumstance calculated to make me happy at the time."<sup>7</sup> He and Lenetha were married March 10, 1859,

## TIME LINE

- |       |  |      |   |      |  |
|-------|--|------|---|------|--|
| 1834  | George I. Butler was born.                             | 1853 | His family moved to Waukon, Iowa.                             | 1861 | Their daughter, Annie was born.                                |
| 1839  | His family joined the Millerite Advent movement.       | 1853 | He worked with surveyors in Wisconsin.                        | 1864 | Twin sons, William Pitt and Hiland George were born.           |
| 1844  | The Great Disappointment.                              | 1855 | He began courting Lenetha Lockwood.                           | 1865 | Butler was president of the Iowa Conference.                   |
| 1848  | Butler's mother began keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath. | 1856 | He decided to trust in God and was baptized by J. N. Andrews. | 1867 | He moved his family to Mount Pleasant, Iowa. He was ordained.  |
| 1850+ | His father accepted the Sabbath message.               | 1856 | He became a school teacher.                                   | 1871 | Butler reported a two-fold increase in the membership in Iowa. |
|       |  | 1859 | He married Lenetha Lockwood on March 10.                      |      |  |

# OF INFLUENCE

by Marlene Steinweg

and by 1864 had a family of three children: Annie and twin boys, William Pitt and Hiland George.

Butler was elected president of the Iowa Conference in 1865. He worked earnestly to counteract the splintering effect of B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff, who were criticizing the Whites. These men, previously president and secretary of the newly organized Iowa State Conference, had initiated an apostasy throughout the state that began with the congregation at Marion. Butler personally visited from church to church teaching the members the truth, counteracting their influence. Under his able leadership, the church in Iowa grew very strong.

Butler was ordained to the ministry in 1867, and soon moved his family to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, where they lived for 16 years.

Butler became president of the General Conference in 1872. A task voted at the Conference was for him to convert into a college G. H. Bell's private school, established in 1868 at Battle Creek. December 31, 1873 the deal was set to purchase a 12-acre site

for the new college. This site was chosen over two more adequate parcels of land of 120 and 50 acres. Immediately after its purchase, the twelve-acre property was reduced to seven by the sale of five acres of side located lots. \$50,000 in pledges were raised to erect a red brick building. August 24, 1874, classes temporarily commenced in the Review building and moved into the completed building by January 4, 1875.

The early 1870's were a dismal period for the Adventists. The Battle Creek Church was disciplined. Uriah Smith and George Amadon were discharged from their duties at the *Review*. At this time Butler produced an essay on leadership whereby he hoped to obtain reconciliation. In this essay he noted that God had set apart with specific leadership gifts certain men of the Bible who acted with more authority. Ellen and James White were that kind of leader he said, and recommended that the Church give Elder White "room to exercise his leadership as long as he does not conflict with moral principles."<sup>8</sup> Ellen White wrote that in his essay he was wrong

to assign such authority to one man. Butler resigned his presidential responsibilities in August 1874, because he felt unjustly criticized and James White replaced him as General Conference president by November.

Butler was sent to California in 1875 where he helped raise \$22,000 to establish the Pacific Press. A year later he was elected president of the newly formed Nebraska-Iowa Conference. While visiting a very ill Ellen White in Battle Creek in 1880, Mrs. White advised him to again accept the presidency of the General Conference. He wept, but agreed to do so.

Butler's second presidential term, beginning in late 1880, is described by one church historian as entering a "volcano's crater."<sup>9</sup> Perhaps his greatest challenge was to carry out leadership under the influence of James White, who could not or would not let go. In spite of this pressure, when Brother White died of malaria on August 6, 1881, Butler wept as he would have for his own father.

Butler wrote a series on the Spirit of Prophecy for the *Review* which classified inspiration using an hierarchical rating. While this series seemed to support Ellen White, she felt it criticized the Bible by implying that the Psalms and Books of History were mere literature and history and not divinely inspired.

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1872 Butler was president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

1873 A twelve-acre site was bought for the new Battle Creek College.

1874 Battle Creek College opened its doors August 24.

1874 November, James White replaced Butler as General Conference president.

1875 Butler was sent to California and helped establish the publishing work there.

1876 He was elected president of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference and extended work into Missouri and Kansas.

1880 He was reelected president of the General Conference.

1882 Battle Creek College closed temporarily.

1883 He moved to Battle Creek and made his first trip to Europe. The College reopened with a blind pastor, Walcott Littlejohn, as Director.

1884 South Hall, the men's dormitory opened.

1885 William W. Prescott replaced Littlejohn as Director of the College.

1886 College buildings were erected for manual arts.

1887 West Hall, the women's residence, was completed. A conflict arose over Jones and Waggoner's ideas.

TIME LINE *continued on page 6*

# A MAN OF INFLUENCE

*continued from page five*

Butler began traveling abroad in 1883. In Europe he promoted more effective evangelism, visited the Waldensian territory and Naples, Italy, Romania, Germany, the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland. He encouraged the brethren to establish publishing houses, found training schools for the youth and increase the number of colporteurs and house-to-house visits. Butler visited Australia and New Zealand in 1885.

From 1881 to 1889, Butler was president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. "In this capacity, he exerted a mighty influence for the building up and expansion of the publishing interests of the denomination."<sup>10</sup> During this time, several new youthful leaders came into prominence and varying views emerged regarding the law as expressed in Galatians. E. J. Waggoner, editor of the *Signs*, and A. T. Jones, editor of the *American Sentinel*, published their views on this subject in the *Signs*. At the 1886 General Conference, Butler sought to prevent such open publication of contrary views. He convoked a theological committee that met and studied "the law" in Galatians, and voted that that "law" referred to the "whole law." The General Conference Board then adopted

a policy prohibiting "doctrinal views not held by a fair majority of our people, to be . . . published in our denominational papers . . . before they are examined and approved by the leading brethren of experience."<sup>11</sup>

Ellen White counseled that they not air their controversial views in public, particularly using opposing Seventh-day Adventist presses, and that Butler should play fair. "Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had."<sup>12</sup>

Due to ill health, Butler did not attend the 1888 General Conference. However, having been forewarned

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*This message, understood in its true character and proclaimed in the Spirit, will lighten the earth with its glory.*

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that "A. T. Jones, Dr. Waggoner, and W. C. White had things all prepared to make a drive at the General Conference,"<sup>13</sup> he wrote letters and telegrams urging the leadership to stand firm for the "old landmarks." When Elder Jones and Dr. Waggoner presented their view of righteousness by faith, it thrilled Ellen White. But it was not accepted by the general body

of delegates due to the influence of leaders like Butler. In her last sermon at that General Conference, she declared, "I see the beauty of truth as the doctor has placed it before us . . . This message, understood in its true character . . . and proclaimed in the Spirit, will lighten the earth with its glory . . . You have no right to entertain feelings of enmity, unkindness and prejudice toward Dr. Waggoner . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Elder O. A. Olsen was elected to replace Butler as president of the General Conference. Butler felt rejected by the conference and by Ellen White. Discouraged, he and his wife moved to a 110-acre farm in Bowling Green, Florida. There his wife suffered a stroke and George cared for her until her death in November 1901. He had a lot of time to think. He corresponded with friends and fellow workers like S. N. Haskell. In 1893, he wrote to Haskell acceding that "great good had come to the church in the added light on Christ's Righteousness."<sup>15</sup>

Butler was elected president of the Florida Conference in 1902 and held that office through 1904. From 1902 to 1907 he was president of the Southern Union. He served as a member of the General Conference Executive Committee. As a result of his able leadership, the publishing plant

## Time Line *continued*

- |      |  |       |  |      |   |
|------|--|-------|--|------|---|
| 1888 | At the Minneapolis General Conference-Jones and Waggoner presented Righteousness by Faith. Olsen replaced Butler as president of the GC. | 1901  | Lentha died after a second stroke, in November, 1901.        | 1908 | He retired.   |
| 1889 | Butlers moved to Florida, Lentha had a stroke.   | 1902  | Butler was elected president of the Florida Conference.      | 1911 | Elizabeth was treated for TB.   |
| 1893 | Butler's article in <i>Review</i> affirmed 1888 message.   | 1902  | He was elected president of the Southern Union.              | 1912 | Butler received autographed copy of <i>Acts of the Apostles</i> from E. G. White.                                       |
|      |  | 1903  | Butler opposed the publication of <i>The Living Temple</i> . | 1913 | Elizabeth was treated for TB at the Orlando Sanitarium.   |
|      |  | 1904+ | He corresponded with J. H. Kellogg but to no avail.          | 1915 | Ellen White passed away.  |
|      |  | 1906  | Southern Publishing Association moved to Nashville.          | 1916 | Elizabeth left on a trip.   |
|      |  | 1907  | October 8, Butler married Elizabeth Work Grainger.           | 1918 | He met his wife next March 1918 at the General Conference in San Francisco. George Ide Butler died July 25 of cancer. ♦ |



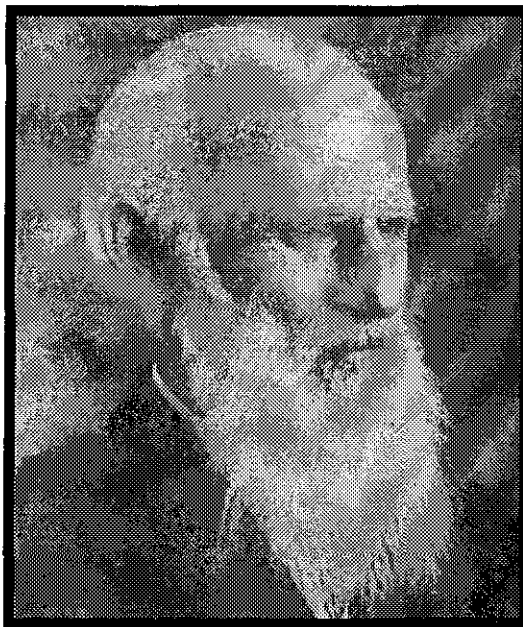
(Southern Publishing Association) was moved in 1906 to Nashville. Eight schools were established during his leadership with an enrollment of 300 students by 1908. Elder A. G. Daniells gave Butler credit for his labors, noting "the percent of increase in the membership and funds during the last six years has been greater than in any other union conference . . . The whole work has been put on a more substantial basis."<sup>16</sup>

Butler did not agree with the theology of Kellogg's book *The Living Temple*. However, he did all he could through personal interviews and letters to dissuade Dr. J. H. Kellogg from breaking away from the church. Kellogg separated from the Battle Creek Church in 1907. Then, "in 1908 most of the active SDA leaders were dropped from the sanitarium association by a small group of members, most of whom were connected with the management of the sanitarium . . ." <sup>17</sup> This action effectively removed the sanitarium from SDA control. Responding to A. T. Jones' declaration that he would stand by the sanitarium, testimonies or no testimonies, Butler countered, "I shall stand by the testimonies, *sanitarium or no sanitarium*."<sup>18</sup> (*Italics supplied.*)

October 8, 1907 Butler married Elizabeth Grainger, a sixty-two-year-old widow and former missionary to Japan. The couple moved to Twin Magnolias, an orange and pecan farm, at Bowling Green, Florida. Three months later, in early 1908, he retired.

Retirement didn't keep Butler out of the pulpit. He spoke at camp meetings about the "Early Pioneer Work" and the visions of Ellen White. He was invited for preaching appointments, and dreamed of doing tent evangelism.

Elizabeth was treated for tuberculosis in 1911 at the Florida Sanitarium. In September 1916, she left Florida on an extended trip in her



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battle against tuberculosis and didn't meet up with Butler again until March 1918, at the General Conference in San Francisco.

Butler's health had declined considerably by then. In June, his doctor diagnosed he had cancer. He died July 25, 1918, in the home of his wife's daughter and son-in-law. The funeral service honoring Elder Butler revealed he was greatly appreciated. "Thirteen fellow ministers conducted the service, six more stood as honorary casket bearers."<sup>19</sup>

Butler's faithfulness in the face of opposition and his dedication to building up the publishing and educational work and to defending the

truth inspires to similar action believers today who face the monumental final events in the history of this earth.

Butler's resistance to the counsels of Ellen White and the grave error he made in opposing the 1888 Message of Righteousness by Faith should motivate God's people today. They must be willing to listen to and accept God's testimonies in the Bible and in the writings of Ellen G. White—willing to accept and proclaim in the Spirit of God that special Message, that the whole earth may be lightened with its glory and Jesus coming may be hastened. ♦

### STEPS TO CHRIST

Perhaps the most popular book written by Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, was published in 1892. It met a specific need that was highlighted by the agitation on Righteousness by Faith at the 1888 General Conference. Its purpose was to lead the seeker after righteousness and wholeness of character, step by step, along the way of the Christian Life. We recommend this volume to all our readers and their friends.

### References:

1. Vande Vere, E. K., *The Story of George I. Butler*, Southern Publishing Association, 1979, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 14, quoted from *Letters from GIB to EGW*.
- 4-7. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
10. *Review and Herald*, August 29, 1918, "George Ide Butler, A Sketch of His Life" by Elders M. C. Wilcox and W. C. White, pp. 14-16.
11. Vande Vere, p. 85 (Quoted from the *Review and Herald*, 12-14-86.)
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88 (Quoted from a letter by EGW to GIB and Uriah Smith, 3-31-87.)
13. Olsen, A. V., "Through Crisis to Victory, 1888-1901," *Review and Herald Publishing Association*, 1966, p. 85. (A comment E. G. White made to Elder W. M. Healey, *Letter 7*, Dec. 9, 1888.)
14. 2 MR, p. 58.
15. Vande Vere, p. 99.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 111 (Quoted from the *Review and Herald*, 3-12-08.)
17. *SDA Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, *Review and Herald Publishing Association*, 1976, p. 138.
18. Vande Vere, p. 127.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

## ADMONISHED

*E. G. White*

**I** entreat of you to remain where you are during the Week of Prayer . . . All that I may say will have no weight with you or your wife unless a work is wrought upon your heart . . . You will make objections to the testimonies, and unless the spirit of God shall have a controlling power, conscience will be warped. The very position you have occupied will now prove a temptation to you, to keep you from seeking the Lord with all your heart . . . There is a pride of soul that has not been crucified . . . You are not in harmony with the Spirit of Christ . . .

The work God has given me . . . is not likely to suffer half as much from open opposers as from my apparent friends, those who appear to be defenders of the Testimonies, but are their real assailants; who weaken them and make them of none effect. I want you to fall on the Rock and be broken. Let self die; let Christ be enthroned in the heart . . . It must be done sooner or later if you are ever saved. Jesus loves you and will . . . gather you in His strong arms but how much you need your spiritual eyesight anointed. There are many things you do not see clearly, and your soul is in peril. I want Sister Butler to drink deep draughts from the fountain of life, that Christ may be in her a well of water, springing up into eternal life.— 1888 *Materials*, pp. 190-194, E. G. White, to the Butlers, December 11, 1888.

## SATISFIED

*G. I. Butler*

**G**reat changes have occurred in the work during the four or five years I have been in retirement . . . I fully believe that God has blessed greatly to the good of His people and the cause the greater agitation of the doctrines of justification by faith, the necessity of appropriating Christ's righteousness by faith . . . I never, for a moment since my conversion, supposed I could be saved by my own good works, or be justified in any other way than by faith in Jesus Christ . . . or that I could do anything acceptable to God without the help and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I never for a moment supposed that we could keep the law acceptably . . . in our own strength . . . I am well satisfied that additional light of great importance has been shining upon these subjects . . . God has greatly blessed it to the good of those who have accepted it. For a period I stood in doubt in regard to the agitation of these subjects I have here so freely endorsed . . . My sympathies were not with those leading out in bringing what I now regard as light, before our people. I make no excuses for manifold mistakes and errors . . . I hope never to despair, never to fall out by the way. Christ seems very precious to me, the best friend by far I ever had. My heart burns within me . . . to be able yet to bring souls into the truth.— *Review & Herald*, June 13, 1893, p. 377, Statement by George I Butler.

## Lest We Forget

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