SHIPS PASSING IN THE NIGHT
Glen Moore

In view of the fact that the book *Prophetic Parallels* continues to have an enormous impact and growing circulation and because it deals directly with the subject of who and what's the church; I have been asked by a few people to take a look at Ty Gibson's new book *Abandon Ship?* because the books are on the opposing side of this issue. I think in this time of shaking and sifting, if there ever was a time to make sure we are firmly grounded on such things, that time is now. For that reason and that reason alone I think it necessary to share the following look at this book --*Abandon Ship?* This is strictly done on a spiritual level and not one of a personal nature, at all. I am not questioning the motive or honesty of its author for I don't know the author well enough to have any reason to question such things and until proven otherwise, I have no need to. Although I think a clear understanding of the subject matter is vital and needs to be studied, the motive of this written report is one of spiritual academics only. We are not in an "attack" mode, we only want to defend truth for the purpose of bringing it to all who are truly interested. So onward and upward!

According to Ty's own remarks in his book I believe that he either does not understand what inspiration says about the church militant/church triumphant or he does not acknowledge it. Currently I would like to extend the benefit of the doubt to Brother Gibson. Still, what he writes in *Abandon Ship?* is quite revealing. Now keep in mind that this book upholds the wrong idea that we are to stay with the conference and that one day God will clean it up; all the apostates will walk out; and it will be left with the true and faithful. Ty Gibson truly believes that the church and the conference/ organization are essentially the same thing -- the conference is *the church.* He also plainly states that his theory is based on his "enlightened" knowledge of the church militant/church triumphant issue. Ty shows in his book that his theory hinges in a big way on his understanding of the church militant/church triumphant issue. As the story unfolds you will be able to see where *Abandon Ship?* sails into the wrong harbor of conclusion because it pulled up anchor out of the wrong port as it set sail. A series of wrong turns has charted a course that has failed in its attempt to take *Abandon Ship?'s* author and reader into a safe mooring, as you shall see. Now from his book *Abandon Ship?:*

"So at least that aspect of the church issue [that the conference organization is *the church]* was resolved in my mind. However, I would soon discover that there was much more to the matter than simply concluding that the church is not Babylon. There are still many independent ministries and individuals who, for whatever reason, would never dare to call the church Babylon, and yet, in practice and teaching, they were exerting an influence of division and separation. I associated in these circles, and quite frankly, it seemed to me that the only reason we refused to actually denounce the church as Babylon was because we knew the Spirit of Prophecy said not to. Nevertheless, the prevailing attitudes and insinuations just as surely led to separation as if we did openly declare the church Babylon.

"To the satisfaction of many, one independent ministry leader would frequently (and still does) articulate the position like this:

"'The church is not Babylon,' he would say, assuring us of a sound Spirit of Prophecy stance, 'but the church is only the true and faithful, and the organized church is in apostasy.'

"It's a very clever play on words (I think), but such reasoning fails to commit to any definable position.

"'So what exactly are you saying?' I probed on one occasion. 'Are you saying that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not Babylon, or are you saying that the true and faithful believers are not Babylon, which would leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church in question.'

"To which I received the answer, 'No, no, the church is not Babylon, but the church is the true and faithful, and the organized church is in apostasy.'

"'Oh, I see,' was my not so whole-hearted reply.

"The fact is, I didn't see...at all. I was blind to the truth about God's church, and I desperately longed for enlightenment. Praise God, the light, was coming. The hour of crystallization was not too far away. Soon God would open my mind and it would all make sense. The pieces of the puzzle were accumulating to form a clear picture.

"First, I was certain that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not Babylon. There were just too many quotations that clearly denounced that idea.

"Second, I could see numerous inspired statements that identified the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's true remnant.

"Third, there were other quotations that clearly pointed to a church composed of only true and faithful believers. This posed a significant problem, because there were many quotations equally as clear that identified the organized church, composed of both faithful and unfaithful members, as God's true church on earth.

"Fourth, the inspired writings made it clear that there would be a time of character development, followed by a time of crisis that would cause a sifting process to occur. Out of that period of testing would emerge a body of believers composed only of wheat and not tares.

"A fifth, and crucial part of the picture, presented itself as well. A reoccurring terminology was evident throughout the Spirit of Prophecy that would eventually clarify the issue. Over and over again the church was identified as having two phases of existence during its sojourn in the world. Phase One: 'the church militant.' Phase Two: 'the church triumphant.'

"Once I understood the *church militant, church triumphant* concept, God's larger plan began to come into focus. I started to realize that the Lord intends to accomplish something grand and glorious through His church--something of universal impact and eternal magnitude.

"When the light dawned upon me, I could see that the enemy of God had almost stolen from me the privilege being a part of a master plan, conceived in the infinite heart of God, to prepare a people to give the crowning revelation of His love to the world. The very church I had almost cast aside as worthless, I came to recognize as God's chosen 'Theater of Grace.'" *Abandon Ship?,* Pages 22-25. Published in 1997 by Pacific Press Publishing Association.
(Emphasis his.)

Now folks this all sounds very nice and as we can have compassion for Ty Gibson "desperately" wanting to get at the truth, and also that the above even sounds like God may have given Ty the answer he looked for; it just doesn't stand up along side of plain inspiration. God never gave Ty the answer he wrote in his book *Abandon Ship?,* meaning *Abandon Conference?* The reason I know this for certain is because God never goes against His own and present counsel on the subject. The author of *Abandon Ship?* himself says that the turning point for him was in the revelation that God brought to him concerning the church militant/church triumphant concept. But God did not give the answer concerning the church militant/ church triumphant concept that Ty comes up with in his book. Ty plainly states that one day in the process of the sifting "Out of that period of testing would emerge a body of believers composed only of wheat and no tares" (page 24). And through his process of reasoning above, which in my opinion and I will prove is flawed, goes on in his book to say that when this happens and when all of God's true and faithful finally come together on this earth that's when His church stops being the church militant and becomes the church triumphant.

Ty's theory is inaccurate because it goes against revealed inspiration plainly found in the Spirit of Prophecy. The inspired fact is that God will never have a church triumphant on this earth prior to the second coming of Christ. There is no church triumphant here on earth while there is a warfare against Satan. The one and only church triumphant is in heaven. The reason for this is because of exactly what the title "church triumphant" says: the members of this church have already been triumphant over Satan. Even during the time after the shaking and sifting is over and the tares are shaken completely out, the church here on earth still won't be the triumphant church because the militant church will remain in a warfare, a conflict which has not totally seen victory until the second coming takes place. That is when the true and faithful of the church militant

become members of the church triumphant because at that time they are finally beyond the reach of the archenemy. Their mortal battle is over and they have proven victorious -- triumphant. It's that simple.

Because many wish to make this issue more complicated than it is, they have misunderstood this issue and this misunderstanding always leads them to the wrong conclusion. But in its primary sense the Spirit of Prophecy, concerning this issue, is not speaking of overcoming sin but being triumphant completely, meaning the mortal battle is over. Of course, the sin issue is central to being able to be on the right side of things when the battle is over but that's not what the church militant/church triumphant means by definition. It means just what it says.

- The church militant is a church at war; a church in a life and death struggle with Satan; a church whose life is on the line and has not yet gained victory to the point of being out of eternal mortal danger.

- The church triumphant on the other hand is a church who has gained eternal mortal victory who has been completely victorious over Satan and is out of harms way.

The two churches are on the same side especially in the sense of when the shaking and sealing are over but one church, the church militant, is still locked in mortal combat; the other church, the church triumphant, is not.

No matter what happens here on earth, heaven has already been victorious. We the members of the church here on earth will always be the church militant because, this side of the second coming, we will remain in mortal combat with Satan, and even after we are completely victorious over sin, the physical and mental ordeal, the temptation ordeal, and the bitter cup ordeal is still not over. We remain to battle; we remain the church militant.

The church triumphant is made up of countless members who have already passed the test and are where Satan cannot even tempt them anymore, forever. Where did I get this concept? It comes from the plain words that the Lord had Sister White write. Here are some for your consideration (all emphasis supplied by me):

"Every member of His church militant must manifest the same qualities [that Jesus had], if he would join the church triumphant." FCE 179

"The church militant is not the church triumphant. Unless the people of God *wage warfare* against every species of sin, they will *never pass through the portals of the holy city."* RH 12/31/01

"The church militant is not the church triumphant, and *earth is not heaven. "*LDE 61

"We wish we had *heaven here below,* but we have not. The church militant is not the church triumphant. The church militant must *wrestle and toil.* She must *strive against temptations and fight severe battles,* because Satan is not dead." GC Bulletin 4/22/01

"Jesus lives; He is before the Father in the heavenly courts, making intercession for those who *are still upon the earth in the turmoil and strife of life; for the church militant is not yet the church triumphant."* ST 7/24/1893

"Christians are engaged in a *warfare.* The church militant is not the church triumphant." ST 6/10/03

"We need to remember that the church militant is not the church triumphant. The *difference between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world is to be carefully considered…."* 2MR 312

"In the *aggressive warfare* there can be no release. The church militant is not the church triumphant." Battle Creek Letters 84

Now just in case there is someone who is still confused about the fact that God's church on earth is the church militant and always will be until there is no more enemy to be militant with, I have saved the best till the last.

"The members of the church *triumphant, --the church in heaven--will be* permitted to draw near to the *members of the church militant,* to aid them in their necessity." SW 9/8/1903

The Spirit of Prophecy is very clear that the church militant is exactly what the name says -- a church at war. The numerous inspired quotations above and the many others which could have been included are all consistent and there needn't be any confusion on this issue. Unfortunately the author of *Abandon Ship?,* who states clearly that when he understood what the church militant and the church triumphant was all about, the issue of who and what is the church became resolved, has been misguided and has unintentionally misused the Spirit of Prophecy. His book *Abandon Ship? and its* theories plainly unsupportive of what the church militant and church triumphant really are, is what should be abandoned.

On page 56 of *Abandon Ship?* Ty writes: "The invisible faithful will join the ranks of the faithful who remain in the visible church, and together they will become the visible church triumphant."

Many hold to this concept which deceives one into believing that the conference is the church and we must stay with it. Ty states that his theory turns on the "understanding of the church militant and church triumphant issue." But the "understanding" is flawed and so is *Abandon Ship ?*

As long as we are here on earth locked in a warfare against the archenemy, we are the church militant. The church triumphant which we can become a part of if we prove to be faithful during this testing time now resides in heaven safely out of reach, their fate eternally secure. It is the church triumphant because it has *already been triumphant over the enemy --Satan.* The Spirit of Prophecy clearly says, as you have read above, that the church triumphant helps us in our struggle. But even when the Holy Spirit comes or the angels from heaven are sent to our aid they, themselves, are already beyond being overcome by Satan; they are members of the church triumphant. The subject of the church militant and church triumphant is no more complicated than that and inspiration is clear.

Once again from *abandon Ship?* pages 56-57 Ty speaks of his friend:

"Remember Brian?

"With his few quotations, defining the church as faithful souls, he separated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has led many others to do the same. After I began to understand the broader context of the church issue, I shared my findings with him. We began, shall I say, a highly charged exchange of thoughts. Finally, the quotations identifying the organized Seventh-day Adventist denomination as God's visible church prevailed. Brian became calm and emotional. With tears he confessed that his position was not supportable when all Ellen White's comments are considered.

"I was elated. But then something slipped out of Brian's mouth that startled me to the point of causing my stomach to ache.

"'I know what you are saying is true, but I've published so many books declaring the church to be Babylon. I could never explain to all those people that I was wrong.'

"Quickly he regained his composure and began defending his position again. I pled with Brian, but to no avail. He was caught in a snare too strong for most men--the pride of opinion. It all began by drawing conclusions with inadequate study. With a few one-side-of-the-issue quotations, Brian declared his position as incontrovertible truth. When added inspired material pointed out the error of his position, he had only one of two options: He could humble himself before the Lord and confess his waywardness, or he could brace himself with pride and evade the clear will of God.

"Brian chose the later option, I'm sorry to say."

We can only hope and pray that after taking a second look at his own material and holding it up against the constant light of inspiration that Ty doesn't "choose the later option" as did Brian.

We will continue to pray that all who are seeking to go into the safe harbor of heaven at last will understand what the true ship is.

Before we lay this matter to rest, at least for now, I would also like to point out that just because God tells us not to call the church Babylon, which may, and I believe does, include the conference, it does not necessarily make the conference the church by process of elimination.

Ty concludes that the conference must remain the church because either it once was a part of the church or it is not to be called Babylon or both, and because he thinks he understands the concept of the church militant/church triumphant. On the surface this reasoning might seem to be one of strength but that is not necessarily so, and in this case it certainly is not.

The Spirit of Prophecy clearly says that the church could become *a sister* to Babylon and to say that it cannot goes against inspiration.

"We must arouse as a people and cleanse the camp of Israel. Licentiousness, unlawful intimacy, and unholy practices are coming in among us in a large degree; and ministers who are handling sacred things are guilty of sin in this respect. They are coveting their neighbor's wives, and the seventh commandment is broken. *We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon,* of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hateful bird; and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing ills?" 21MR 380

There's the quote and here's a simple question: What person who isn't completely blinded by the same prejudice that got the ancient conference lost can say that we are in better condition today and have taken the counsel to "make decided movements to cure the existing ills"? The facts are completely opposite. We are multiple times worse today than in the days of this prophet.

At the time this quote was written we all would have understood, and I think Ty would agree, that this would at least include the conference and most of us would have thought it was speaking of the organization/conference. This being the case, the Lord while still telling us not to call it Babylon has also said that it could become the sister to Babylon. To conclude that because we are not to call the conference Babylon means that it will always be the church is a flawed conclusion and leads exactly where the book *Abandon Ship?* sails.

The above inspired statement, as well as the following one, clearly spells out that the Lord was giving a warning to everyone not just everyone except for the conference. It amazes me that in the midst of 4,000 years of Biblical history and at least 2,000 years of Biblical Jewish history, and how we all know that they were the chosen people with promises that far exceed our own, watching their "chosen" conference apostatize and literally be lost as an organization, that we can still defend this conference and still continue to believe the lie that the conference is the church no matter what it does!

Before we read the next quotation please think about this and think hard on it: God is no more obligated to this conference than He was with the Ancient Jewish Conference. They abused His promises, prostituted His truth -- and He left them. What makes us think, other than the same blinding and deadly spiritual pride they had which caused them to be annihilated, that we are so special that we can get away with something that nobody and I mean nobody throughout history has?! Those who continue supporting this train of thought will meet the same end as did the forefathers of it. The words below are speaking to and about the Seventh-day Adventist church which includes the conference.

"Will the churches heed the Laodicean message? Will they repent, or will they, notwithstanding that the most solemn message of truth--the third angel's message--is being proclaimed to the world, go on in sin? This is the last message of mercy, the last warning to a fallen world. If the church of God becomes lukewarm, *it does not stand in favor with God any more than do the churches that are represented as having fallen and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Those who have had opportunities to hear and receive the truth and who have united with the Seventh-day Adventist church, call themselves the commandment-keeping people of God, and yet possess no more vitality and consecration to God than do the nominal churches, will receive of the plagues of God just as verily as the churches who oppose the law of God. Only* those that are sanctified through the truth

will compose the royal family in the heavenly mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him and keep His commandments." 19MR 176

Those of us who are called to positions of trust are called there for specific reasons. A primary reason for that calling is to be what the Bible calls a "watchman on the wall." The job description includes the very disagreeable duty of warning everyone when danger comes to the church community. This danger has been spoken of by many prophets throughout the Bible including Jesus Christ Himself the biggest of which is stated by these worthies that we are to warn God's people against the wolves, men of apostasy who come from "within." God still warns us of that today and is very clear that this is still a vital part of the job of those who are called to stand upon the wall. Frankly folks I cannot name one ministry that is accepted, acknowledged and morally supported by the organization, that cries aloud and spares not. I know of some who used to do it before the subject of acceptance from the conference became a priority. We just can't continue to have a foot in two different camps, on one side warning the world of the danger to come, while on the other side purposely ignoring the problem from within. When we do, we dishonor God and reveal to the world whether or not we are holding with trust our sacred duty.

Ministries that are operating from this position of duality are just as certainly playing politics as is the conference -- the guilt is the same and the end result will be the same. Time is too far spent to leave this problem left unadjusted. If the leaders of ministries refuse to do it or recognize the significance of it that doesn't give the rest of us any excuse for not living in the light God has provided. True it makes things harder and sadder but that's no excuse for following their failure with our own.

In our journey to find the truth, let us not abandon the plain utterances of inspired definition on what the church militant is and the church triumphant is. Let's not abandon the ship of God's inspired words in order to retain our ticket on the conference apostasy cruise ship. Better to walk the gangplank for Jesus than to dance on deck with the captain of the Titanic.

Our prayers are with all. §

Harvestime Books Resource Library
http://www.remnant-prophecy.com
http://www.Harvestimebooks.com
http://www.bible-sabbath.com