

Testimony to ministers and gospel workers.

pages 91-98

Faithful, Earnest Warnings 85

The Message of Justification by Faith

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones.

This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

The uplifted Saviour is to appear in His efficacious work as the Lamb slain, sitting upon the throne, to dispense the priceless covenant blessings, the benefits He died to purchase for every soul who should believe on Him. John could not express that love in words; it was too deep, too broad; he calls upon the human family to behold it. Christ is pleading for the church in the heavenly courts above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own lifeblood. Centuries, ages, can never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice. The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.

The efficacy of the blood of Christ was to be presented to the people with freshness and power, that their faith might lay hold upon its merits. As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat, while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's [93] atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are ever to bear in mind that there is One that can take away sin and save the sinner. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. This faith is the life of the church.

As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness by Moses, and all that had been bitten by the fiery serpents were bidden to look and live, so also the Son of man must be lifted up, that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Unless he makes it his life business to behold the uplifted Saviour, and by faith to accept the merits which it is his privilege to claim, the sinner can no more be saved than Peter could walk upon the water unless he kept his eyes fixed steadily upon Jesus. Now, it has been Satan’s determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel’s message, in clear, distinct lines. John’s words are to be sounded by God’s people, that all may discern the light and walk in the light: “He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the

Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

This is the testimony that must go throughout the length and breadth of the world. It presents the law and the gospel, binding up the two in a perfect whole. (See Romans 5 and 1 John 3:9 to the close of the chapter.) These precious scriptures will be impressed upon every heart that is opened to receive them. “The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” — those who are contrite in heart. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” These have not a mere nominal faith, a theory of truth, a legal religion, but they believe to a purpose, appropriating to themselves the richest gifts of God. They plead for the gift, that they may give to others. They can say, “Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.”

This is the very work which the Lord designs that the message He has given His servants shall perform in the heart and mind of every human agent. It is the perpetual life of the church to love God supremely and to love others as they love themselves. There was but little love for God or man, and God gave to His messengers just what the people needed. Those who received the message were greatly blessed, for they saw the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and life and hope sprang up in their hearts. They were beholding Christ. “Fear not,” is His everlasting assurance; “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore.” “Because I live, ye shall live also.” The blood of the spotless Lamb of God the believers apply to their own hearts. Looking upon the great Antitype, we can say, “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

The Sun of Righteousness shines into our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of Jesus Christ. Of the Holy Spirit's office He says, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." The psalmist prays, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

The Lord would have these grand themes studied in our churches, and if every church member shall give entrance to the word of God, it will give light and understanding to the simple. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." (See Isaiah 29:13-16, 18-21.) "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this,

that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

Never was there a time when the Lord would manifest His great grace unto His chosen ones more fully than in these last days when His law is made void. “The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable.” What does God say in regard to His people? “But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.” (See also Isaiah 43.) These are prophecies that will be fulfilled.

Warning Against Despising God’s Message

I would speak in warning to those who have stood for years resisting light [See Appendix.] and cherishing the spirit of opposition. How long will you hate and despise the messengers of God’s righteousness? God has given them His message. They bear the word of the Lord. There is salvation for you, but only through the merits of Jesus Christ. The grace of the Holy Spirit has been offered you again and again. Light and power from on high have been shed abundantly in the midst of you. Here was evidence, that all might discern whom the Lord recognized as His servants.

But there are those who despised the men and the message they bore.
They have

taunted them with being fanatics, extremists, and enthusiasts.

Let me prophesy unto you: Unless you speedily humble your hearts before God, and confess your sins, which are many, you will, when it is too late, see that you have been fighting against God. Through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, no longer unto reformation and pardon, you will see that these men whom you have spoken against have been as signs in the world, as witnesses for God. Then you would give the whole world if you could redeem the past, and be just such zealous men, moved by the Spirit of God to lift your voice in solemn warning to the world; and, like them, to be in principle firm as a rock. Your turning things upside down is known of the Lord. Go on a little longer as you have gone, in rejection of the light from heaven, and you are lost. "The man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation."

I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been so long as false guideposts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ.

Neglect this great salvation, kept before you for years, despise this glorious offer of justification through the blood of Christ and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. I entreat you now to humble yourselves and cease your stubborn resistance of light and evidence.

Say unto the Lord,

Mine iniquities have separated between me and my God. O Lord, pardon my transgressions. Blot out my sins from the book of Thy remembrance. Praise His holy name, there is forgiveness with Him, and you can be converted, transformed.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

* * * * *

“Let Him That Thinketh He Standeth Take Heed Lest He Fall”

TM Historical Foreword: (Excerpt)

The Setting of the 1888 Minneapolis Conference

One of the enemy's most effective measures was to lead good men to take positions which ultimately brought hindrance to the work they loved. This was seen in the spirit which developed in the hearts of men who engaged in discussions and debates. It was seen in the experience of businessmen connected with the cause. It was seen in the experience of missionaries going out to new countries, who, with narrow concepts of the work, found it difficult to move forward in the way God would have them take. It was seen in the tendency shown by some to depend upon the leaders at Battle Creek for guidance in the minute affairs of a far-flung mission work. It was seen in the way leading men at Battle Creek, heavily burdened with institutional work, attempted to give detailed direction to the work in distant lands of which they knew little.

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church came to the close of the year 1887, it had a total world membership of 25,841, with twenty-six local conferences and one mission in North America and four local conferences and six missions overseas. The General Conference Committee consisted of seven men, the Committee having been cautiously enlarged in 1882 from three members to five and in 1886 from five to seven. To take care of the legal business of the

cause, the General Conference Association had been formed with a Board of five Trustees. Various branches of the work had developed into somewhat autonomous organizations, such as the “International Sabbath School Association,” The “Health and Temperance Association,”

and the “International Tract and Missionary Association.” As has been noted, for two years, mid-1885 to 1887, Ellen White had been in Europe. Now she was back in the United States, residing at her Healdsburg, California, home. There were two publishing houses in operation in the United States: the Review and Herald in Battle Creek, Michigan, and the Pacific Press in Oakland, California. Each of these publishing houses did considerable commercial work to keep its equipment and personnel fully employed, and thus to maintain facilities needed for denominational printing. At each of these offices a leading journal was published, The Review and Herald in Battle Creek and Signs of the Times In Oakland.

During the preceding year or two some differences of opinion had been expressed in articles appearing in these journals, concerning the law in Galatians. In each case the editors of the journals championed opposing positions. Ellen White, while still in Switzerland, wrote to the editors of Signs of the Times counseling against

xvi Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers

publishing articles with conflicting views. This message is to be found in Counsels to Writers and Editors, 75-82.

[xxiii] The General Conference of 1888

The General Conference session of 1888 was called for Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 17 to November 4. This was preceded by a week-long Biblical Institute, at which there were discussions as to whether the Huns or the Alemanni should constitute one of the ten kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7, and Revelation 13. Uriah Smith, editor of the Review and Herald, took a certain position and A. T. Jones, editor of Signs of the Times, took another. E. J. Waggoner, also from the Pacific Press, conducted studies on the atonement and the law of God, and Elder Jones presented justification by faith. These discussions continued into the session itself, and occasionally there was bitter disputation. Some of the ministers had come to the conference to debate certain questions, rather than to study truth. Ellen White was present, and she called for all to approach these presentations with open hearts and open minds. She urged a careful, prayerful study of the topics under discussion.

Somehow the issues came to be identified with certain men. To many, the message of righteousness by faith struck home, and there

was a response of heart and soul which led to victorious experience in personal Christian living. There were others who identified themselves

with certain cautious and conservative leaders from battle creek who saw what they thought were perils in some of the teachings presented. When the conference came to a close, these men had failed to gain the blessing God had in store for them.

There is no record of the discourses which were presented at the conference by others than Ellen G. White, for it was not the custom of that time to publish the addresses. A General Conference [xxiv] Bulletin was issued, but it was a simple sheet carrying news about the events of the conference and presenting the business proceedings. No action was taken on the Biblical questions discussed.

At that meeting Elder O. A. Olsen was elected president of the General Conference, but he was in Europe during the conference.

On November 27, 1888, William C. White, a member of the General Conference Committee, wrote Elder Olsen that “the delegates at the
Historical Foreword xvii

close of the meeting carried away very different impressions. Many felt that it was one of the most profitable meetings that they ever attended; others that it was the most unfortunate conference ever held.”

Differing Attitudes Toward Righteousness by Faith

Ellen White was much in the field during the next two years, endeavoring to lead the churches and conferences to a deeper, fuller understanding of the important message of righteousness by faith. She spoke of this Bible truth as one which, though “new to many minds,” was in reality “old truth in new Framework.” –Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, July 23, 1889, reprinted in *Selected Messages*, B. 1, p. 355.

She was able to report during the following General Conference session, held in Battle Creek from October 18 to November 5, 1889, that “the spirit that was in the meeting at Minneapolis is not here. All moves off in harmony. There is a large attendance of delegates. Our five O’ clock morning meeting is well attended, and the meetings good. All the testimonies to which I have listened have been of an elevating character. They say that the past year has been the best of their life; the light shining forth from the word of God has been [xxv] clear and distinct—justification by faith, Christ our righteousness. The experiences have been very interesting.

“I have attended all but two morning meetings. At eight O’ clock Brother Jones speaks upon the subject of justification by faith, and great interest is manifested. There is a growth in faith and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” –Ellen G. White

Manuscript 10, 1889, published in Selected Messages 1:361.

Unfortunately, several among the leaders of our work connected with the General Conference and our institutions at Battle Creek ranked themselves on the negative side and established in the very heart of the work of the church a hard core of resistance. Within the next few years, many of those who had placed themselves in this camp saw their mistake and made heartfelt confessions. But there were some who stubbornly resisted. Some of these, connected with the business interests of the church and our institutions, made their influence felt well through the 1890's. It was of such that Ellen xviii Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers

White in 1895 wrote as recorded on page 363: "The righteousness of Christ by faith has been ignored by some; for it is contrary to their spirit, and their whole life experience."

In this volume, from page 76 and onward, frequent reference will be found to Minneapolis and its aftermath, and to the experience of some who were involved.