

Third Angel's Message Series



LESSON # 16

"The great trouble with heathenism was to think that God was so far away--not only far away but full of wrath at them all, and only waiting to get a chance to pick them up and savagely shake them and plunge them into perdition. So viewing Him, they made offerings to get Him in a good humor and to keep Him from hurting them. But He was not far from every one of them all the time. "Not far." That is near--so near that all they had to do was to "feel after him." Although they were blind and in the dark too, all they had to do was to feel after Him and they would "find him." Acts 17:21-28."

ALONZO T. JONES, GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1895

Turn to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Let us read a portion of that chapter to begin with this evening, as connecting with the close of the lesson we had last night:--

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God.”

Just as though they were in harmony with all the ordinances of the Lord.

“They ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul and thou takest no knowledge? [Here is the answer.] Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure and exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen?”

The text asks, **“Is it . . . a day for a man to afflict his soul?”** The margin is the better reading: **“Is it . . . for a man to afflict his soul for a day?”** A man proposes to fast; he goes without victuals, perhaps from breakfast to supper--and afflicts his soul by thus going hungry and calls that a fast. He has afflicted his soul for a day.

“Is it such a fast that I have chosen? for a man to afflict his soul for a day? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord?”

Here is the fast that the Lord has appointed:--

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”

That is the point at which the lesson closed last night. That is the fast that God has chosen for His people; that is an acceptable fast unto the Lord. But that fast never can be observed until those who would observe it have come to the place where they shall see Jesus Christ allied, as He is, to every soul on this earth and shall treat him according to the alliance that Christ has made with him. When we reach that place--and we reach it in Jesus Christ, for it is there--then that will be the fast that we will observe right along.

I have a sentence here that I will read. I found it in a “Testimony” the other day:--

“Search heaven and earth and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is manifested in mercy to the very ones who need your sympathy and aid in breaking the yoke and setting free the oppressed. Here the truth is lived, the truth is obeyed, the truth is taught, as it is in Jesus.”

So, then, in manifesting mercy to those who need sympathy, in manifesting aid in breaking the yoke, and setting free the oppressed,--in that the truth is lived, the truth is obeyed; *in that* the truth is taught, as it is in Jesus. Assuredly. Does not that bring us right where Jesus is? Is not that Jesus Himself? The very thing

that we are studying is that Christ has allied Himself with every soul on the earth. He has linked Himself with every human being, with every one in sinful flesh, and we are not to hide ourselves from Him who is our flesh. And when we who profess the name of Christ shall respect Him in every man with whom He has allied Himself, there will be just one grand Christian Help Band wherever Seventh-day Adventists are found. Then Christian Help work will be going on everywhere and all the time, for that is Christianity itself.

Now I have not a thing to say against the organization of Christian Help Bands that have been organized, but it is too bad that they had to be organized out of so few Seventh-day Adventists. That is all the trouble. Why should it be that only a portion of the church should be ready to engage in Christian Help work or compose a Christian Help Band? What is our profession in the world? We profess the name of Christ, which in the nature of things, demands that we respect the investment that He has made in every human soul and that we minister to all in need.

On the other hand, the organization of Christian Help Bands or any other kind of bands to do this thing from the side of mere duty, urging ourselves on to do it and pledging ourselves to do it without seeing Jesus Christ in it and without this connection with Christ and this love for Him that sees His interests in all human beings and ministers to Him as He is linked to all men--that will miss it also. Other kinds of Christian work will go along with that, but this is the greatest. "Search heaven and earth and there is no truth revealed more powerful" in Christian work and in teaching the truth as it is in Jesus. In heaven and earth there is nothing like it.

Just in this time, when such a fast as that is needed everywhere and among us especially, how blessed a thing it is that the Lord brings us right to that point and reveals the whole subject to us, giving us the Spirit and the secret that will do the whole of it in Christ's name, for His sake, with His Spirit, and to every man, because every soul is the purchase of Christ. Wherever we meet a human being, Christ has allied Himself with that man. Whoever He is, the Lord is interested in Him; He has invested all that He has in that man.

This truth draws us to the point where we shall always be doing everything possible to put forth the attractions of Christ, the graces of Christ and the goodness of Christ to men who know Him not but in whom He has invested all so that they may be drawn to where they, too, will respect the goodness of Christ and the wondrous investment that He has made in them.

If you are doing it for the man's sake or for your own credit, you may be taken in, of course. But if you do it as unto Christ and because of Christ's interest in the man, it is literally impossible for you ever to be **"taken in;"** for Christ ever liveth and doth not forget. **"Give to Him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."**

Here is the principle: It is to Christ that we are doing it. And as stated in the previous lesson, though the man may despise Christ and never believe on Him as long as the world lasts and may sink into perdition at the last, Christ in that great day when I stand on His right hand yonder will not have forgotten it. And in remembrance of it He will then say: **"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."**

You remember the place where He says: **"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Matt. 10:42.** And this being so, when done only in the name of a disciple, how much more when it is done always in the name of the Lord himself! **"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed toward His name in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." Heb. 6:10.** Do you minister? That is the question.

This is the true fellowship of man, the true brotherhood of man. A great deal is said nowadays about "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." But it is just the brotherhood of such men as they approve all the time. If you belong to our order, then that is the brotherhood of man, but if you do not, we have nothing to do with you. Even churches also act the same way: If you belong to our church, then that is the brotherhood of man, but if you do not belong to our church, why, we have no particular interest in you, as we have nothing to do, properly, with caring for those who are outside of our church. This is our brotherhood of man.

All this is not the brotherhood of man at all. The true fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man is the brotherhood of man in Jesus Christ. It is to see Jesus Christ as He has allied Himself to every man, and as He has invested all He has in every man. He has broken down the middle wall of partition. In His flesh, which was our flesh, He has broken down the middle wall of partition that was between us, for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace indeed. And in Him there is neither Greek nor Jew, black nor white, barbarian, Cythian, bond, nor free; nothing of the

kind. All are one in Christ Jesus, and there is no respect of persons with God.

In Jesus Christ alone is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and in Jesus Christ we find the brotherhood of man only when we find Christ the Brother of every man.

It is written, "**For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.**" Not ashamed to call who brethren? Every one that is of flesh and blood--Christ is not ashamed to call him brother. He is not ashamed to go and take him by the hand, even though his breath does smell of liquor and say, "Come with me, and let us go a better way." That is the brotherhood of man.

It has been Satan's work always to get men to think that God is far away as possible. But it is the Lord's everlasting effort to get men to find out that He is as near to every one as possible. So it is written: He is not far from every one of us.

The great trouble with heathenism was to think that God was so far away--not only far away but full of wrath at them all, and only waiting to get a chance to pick them up and savagely shake them and plunge them into perdition. So viewing Him, they made offerings to get Him in a good humor and to keep Him from hurting them. But He was not far from every one of them all the time. "**Not far.**" That is near--so near that all they had to do was to "**feel after him.**" Although they were blind and in the dark too, all they had to do was to feel after Him and they would "**find him.**" Acts 17:21-28.

Then the papacy came in, the very incarnation of that enmity between man and God. This incarnation of evil entered under the name of Christianity, and it again puts God and Christ so far away

that nobody can come near to them. Everybody else comes in before God.

Then in addition to all this, He is so far away that Mary and her mother and her father--and then all the rest of the Catholic saints clear down to Joan of Arc and Christopher Columbus pretty soon--all these have to come in between God and men so as to make such a connection that all can be sure that they are noticed by Him.

But this is all of Satan's invention. Christ is not so far away as that. He is not far enough away to get a single relation in between Him and me or between Him and you. And this is just where God wants us to view Him--so near that it is impossible for anything or anybody to get between. But to how many people has He come so near? He is not far from every one of us, even the heathen.

The incarnation of that enmity that is against God and that separates between man and God--the papacy built up this, and now here is this same thought that we mentioned a moment ago, the false idea that He is so holy that it would be entirely unbecoming in Him to come near to us and be possessed of such a nature as we have--sinful, depraved, fallen human nature. Therefore Mary must be born immaculate, perfect, sinless, and higher than the cherubim and seraphim and then Christ must be so born of her as to take His human nature in absolute sinlessness from her. But that puts Him farther away from us than the cherubim and the seraphim are and in a sinless nature.

But if He comes no nearer to us than in a sinless nature, that is a long way off, because I need somebody that is nearer to me than that. I need someone to help me who knows something about sinful nature, for that is the nature that I have, and such the Lord

did take. He became one of us. Thus, you see, this is present truth in every respect, now that the papacy is taking possession of the world and the image of it is going on in the wrong way, forgetting all that God is in Jesus Christ and all that Christ is in the world--having the form of godliness without the reality, without the power. In this day is it not just the thing that is needed in the world, that God should proclaim the real merits of Jesus Christ once more and His holiness?

It is true He is holy; He is altogether holy. But His holiness is not that kind that makes Him afraid to be in company with people who are not holy for fear He will get His holiness spoiled. Anybody who has such a kind of holiness that they cannot be found in the company--in the name of Jesus Christ--of people who are fallen and lost and degraded, without spoiling it would better get rid of it as quickly as possible and get the right kind, because that kind of holiness is not worth having. It is already spoiled.

[*Question:* --What about the reputation?--The Christian has no reputation. He has character. The Christian asks no questions about reputation. Character, character is all that the Christian cares for and that the character of God, revealed in Jesus Christ.]

But there is a great amount of just that kind of holiness among professed Christians in these days--indeed, I am not sure that it is all outside of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. It is that kind of "*holiness*" which leads many to be ready to exclaim if a brother or sister--a sister especially--should go among the fallen, unfortunate ones and begin to work for them and sympathize with them and help them up: "O, well, if you are going with such people as that, I cannot associate with you anymore. Indeed, I am

not sure that I want to belong to the church any more, if you are going to work for such people and bring them into the church."

The answer to all such expressions as those is: Very good. If you do not want to belong to the church with such people as that, you would better get out of the church as quickly as possible, for very soon the church of Jesus Christ is going to have just that kind of people in it. **"The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom before you."**

The church of Jesus Christ, in a little while, is going to be so molded upon the grace of Jesus Christ and so filled with His holy character that its members will not be afraid to go, as did He, to the lowest depths to pick up the fallen. They will have such measure of the holiness of Jesus Christ that they will not be afraid of becoming defiled by going *in His name*, down to the lowest.

But that kind of holiness which says: "Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou"--stand aloof or you will defile my holy garments--O, that is the holiness of the devil! Away with it!

God's holiness is pure, that is true; it is such holiness that sin cannot bear the presence of it. It is holiness of such transcendent purity and power as to be a consuming fire to sin. Its consuming power upon sin is because of its wondrous purity, and therefore because of the wondrous purity, and the power of that wondrous purity of the holiness of God in Jesus Christ, He longs to come in contact with those who are laden with sins, who are permeated through and through with sins in order that this holiness, finding an entrance, shall consume the sin and save the soul. That is Christ's holiness.

It is one of the most blessed truths in the Bible, that our God is a consuming fire because of His holiness. For then in Jesus Christ we meet Him whose holiness is a consuming fire to sin, and that is the pledge of our salvation in perfection from every stain of sin. The brightness, the glory, the all consuming purity of that holiness will take every vestige of sin and sinfulness out of the man who will meet God in Jesus Christ.

Thus in His true holiness, Christ could come and did come to sinful men in sinful flesh, where sinful men are. Thus in Christ and in Christ alone is found the brotherhood of man. All indeed are one in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Some have found and all may find in the "Testimonies" the statement that Christ has not "*like passions*" as we have. The statement is there; every one may find it there, of course.

Now there will be no difficulty in any of these studies from beginning to end. If you will stick precisely to what is said and not go beyond what is said nor put into it what is not said, whether it be touching Church and State, separation from the world or this of Christ in our flesh. Stick strictly to what is said. Do not go to drawing curious conclusions. Some have drawn the conclusion some time ago--and you can see what a fearful conclusion it is--that "Christ became ourselves; He is our flesh. Therefore, *I am Christ.*" They say Christ forgave sins; I can forgive sins; He wrought miracles; I must work miracles. That is a fearful argument. There are no two ways about that.

Christ became ourselves, in our place, weak as we, and in all points like as we are, in order that he might be that forever and never that we should be Himself. No. It is God who is to be manifested always and not ourselves. In order that this might be, Christ

emptied Himself and took ourselves in order that God Himself might come to us, appear in us, and be revealed in us and through us in all things. It is always God and never ourselves. That which ruined us at the start was the exaltation of ourselves, the setting forth of ourselves and the putting of ourselves above God. In order that we might get rid of our wicked selves, Christ emptied His righteous self and stood in the place of our wicked selves and crucified ourselves, putting ourselves under foot always, in order that God might be all in all. How much? All. All in how many? All. It was done that God might be all that there is in me and all there is in you and all there is in Christ. Assuredly that is what this was done for. We are not to exalt ourselves. Christ is to increase. I am to decrease. He is to live. I am to die. He is to be exalted. I am to be emptied.

Another

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