

To Elder Figuhr and GC Committee (7L-EF L7)

Description

February 22, 1957

President R. R. Figuhr and
General Conference Committee of Seventh-day Adventists
Takoma Park, Washington, D. C.

Dear Brethren:

Now that Autumn Council is past history and the worldwide program adopted for the church well under way, may your attention be directed to the letters written you in October 1956. In this letter I would like to direct your attention not only to the Investigative Judgment, but to that great and most important fundamental principle of the third angel's message — "Justification by faith" — which fits us for the Righteousness of Christ.

Because of the abundance of information relating to these subjects by Mrs. White it will not be necessary to go into a long discussion of this all-important matter, but rather, some of the fundamental principles involved in connection with them. By way of explanation, I will use mainly quotations from the Bible and the writings of Mrs. E. G. White.

First, a statement from Elder A. G. Daniells: "That all who accept the third angel's message should enter into the experience of justification by faith. They should have Christ revealed to and in them. They should know by personal experience the work of regeneration. They should have the fullest assurance that they have been born anew, from above, and that they have passed from death unto life. They should know that their guilt has been canceled, that they have been delivered from the condemnation of the law, and are thus ready to appear before the judgment seat of Christ." — Christ Our Righteousness, p. 68.

"To fail to enter into this experience, will be to miss the real, vital, redeeming virtue of the third angel's message. Unless this experience is gained, the believer will have only the theory, the doctrines, the forms and activities, of the message. That will prove a fatal and awful mistake." Ibid.

Elder Daniells warns that formalism and a faith without a living experience would be fatal (Christ Our Righteousness, p. 69).

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He continues: "O that we had all listened as we should to both warnings and appeal as they came to us in that seemingly strange, yet impressive, way at the Conference of 1888! What uncertainty would have been removed, what wanderings and defeats and losses would have been prevented! What light and blessing and triumph and progress would have come to us!" — Ibid., p. 69.

In these quotations Brother Daniells is trying to warn all of God's people, both ministry and laity,

that they not make the same mistakes made at the 1888 General Conference at Minneapolis. Pointing out the great loss to us because they rejected the message sent by the Lord to instruct His people at that time, he says that the One who loves us will yet hear our plea if we will but respond to both warning and appeal.

“The sweetest melodies that come from human lips â?? justification by faith, and the righteousness of Christ.” â?? Mrs. E. G. White, Review and Herald, April 4. 1895; Christ Our Righteousness, p. 72.

What a wonderful thought is here expressed in these last lines. But, O, what a fearful warning comes to all of us from the pen of Mrs. E. G. White. We quote:

“In 1888 at the General Conference held in Minneapolis, Minn., the angel of Rev. 18:1 came down to do his work, and was ridiculed, criticized, and rejected. And when the message he brings again swells into a loud cry it will again be ridiculed, spoken against, and rejected by the majority.” â?? Taking Up A Reproach.

” ‘Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent!’ ” â?? Christ Our Righteousness, p. 120.

“I am instructed to say that these words are applicable to Seventh-day Adventist churches in their present condition. The love of God has been lost, and this means the absence of love for one another. Self, self, self is cherished, and is

striving for the supremacy. How long is this to continue? Unless there is a reconversion, there will soon be such lack of godliness that the church will be represented by the barren fig tree. Great light has been given to her. She has had abundant opportunity for bearing much fruit. But selfishness has come in, and God says, ‘I . . . will remove thy candlestick out of

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his place, except thou repent.’ ” â?? Christ Our Righteousness, p. 120.

“Jesus looked upon the pretentious, fruitless fig tree, and with mournful reluctance pronounced the words of doom. And under the curse of an offended God, the fig tree withered away. God help His people to make an application of this lesson while there is still time.” â?? Ibid.

These statements from the pen of the Lord’s servant, severe as they are, should cause us to do some serious thinking. Their being applicable to the churches today, we should lay the ax at the root of the tree, repent, receive the blessings of the Lord, and save our souls.

“God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.” â?? Ibid., p. 121.

“A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and

reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.” â?? Ibid.

“The word of the Lord never represses activity. It increases man’s usefulness by guiding his activities in the right direction . . . Man will increase in power as he follows on to know the Lord. As he endeavors to reach the highest standard, the Bible is as a light to guide his footsteps homeward.” â?? Ibid. 122.

“God rebukes His people for their sins, that He may humble them, and lead them to seek His face. As they reform, and His love revives in their hearts, His loving answers will come to their requests. He will strengthen them in reformatory action, lifting up for them a standard against the enemy. His rich blessing will rest upon them and in bright rays they will reflect the light of heaven. Then a multitude not of their faith, seeing that God is with His people, will unite with them in serving the Redeemer.” â?? E. G. White, Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902; Christ Our Righteousness, p. 123.

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In these statements from Sister E. G. White’s writings it is pointed out that “God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation.” The indication here is that only a revival by the Holy Spirit will be acceptable. A reformation by man alone is not sufficient to bring about and accomplish the desired results. Elder Daniells explains that the church has experienced an untold loss because the brethren did not accept the Spirit-filled message that was presented in 1888. Sister White tells us that the message that was presented at the 1888 Conference was the Angel of Revelation 18:1. At that time it was “ridiculed, spoken against and rejected.” And when it comes again and as it swells to a loud cry, it will again be ridiculed, spoken against, and rejected by the majority.

There are several things easily seen from the statement quoted: (1) that the Angel of Revelation 18:1 is a message; (2) it is to bring revival and reformation; (3) according to Sister White it is to come sometime after 1888; (4) we know that never in her lifetime did she mention such an event taking place after 1888.

According to Elder Daniells, the Angel had not arrived before he compiled Christ Our Righteousness.

This brings us face to face with the stern fact that since we are living in the very last days of this earth’s history; it is about time the message of Revelation 18:1 begins to swell. The signs reveal that heaven will not wait much longer for His people to get ready. We are to remember a message never comes in a way that pleases us, but that it will be contrary to any human planning. “Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.” â?? Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300. Nevertheless, the message has come and will accomplish its work.

“A message that will arouse the churches is to be proclaimed. Every effort is to be made to give

the light, not only to our people, but to the world Our own people need to have the light placed before them in clearer lines.” â?? Ibid, p. 117.

Here we are told that our own people are to be given this message, first that they might have a clearer understanding of the message; afterward, it is to be given to the world. Many statements in the Spirit of Prophecy books tell the same thing. From a portion of a few I shall quote:

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“We are in the great day of atonement, when our sins are, by confession and repentance, to go beforehand to judgment. God does not now accept a tame, spiritless testimony from His ministers. Such a testimony would not be present truth. The message for this time must be meat in due season to feed the church of God.” â?? Review and Herald, May 22, 1887; Christ Our Righteousness, p. 150 (1926 and 1929 editions only; not found in 1941 edition).

“The cases of the righteous dead have been passing in review before God. When that work shall be completed, judgment is to be pronounced upon the living. How precious, how important, are these solemn moments! Each of us has a case pending in the court of heaven. We are individually to be judged according to the deeds done in the body.” â?? Ibid.

“If we have any regard for our souls’ salvation, we must make a decided change.” â?? Ibid., p. 151.

“We are fast approaching the close of our probation. Let every soul inquire, How do I stand before God?” â?? Ibid.

“Let the church arise, and repent of her backslidings before God. Let the watchmen awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound. It is a definite warning that we have to proclaim . . . The attention of the people must be gained; unless this can be done, all effort is useless; though an angel from heaven should come down and speak to them, his words would do no more good than if he were speaking into the cold ear of death. The church must arouse to action. The Spirit of God can never come in until she prepares the way.” â?? Ibid.

In these quotations only a few of the high points are mentioned. All who read all of the pages quoted from this little book will see the picture is more glaring than we have space or time to show. All Sister White’s books, from Steps to Christ to Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, tell the same startling story. Who is in this sad condition? “Let the church arise and repent of her backslidings before God. Let the watchmen awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound.” â?? Ibid.

The “church” and the “watchmen” mean lay members and the ministry. We must all arouse to action or be lost. “All” means from the least to the greatest, for says Jesus: “there is none good but one, that is, God.” Matt. 19:17. Let us reform and put away all selfishness and pride, so that God may bless us and natural affection for each

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other return.

Thus far, the dark side of the picture is shown. Now, let us look at the bright side.

“While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away sin, among God’s people upon the earth.” â?? The Great Controversy, p. 425.

In the book Christ Our Righteousness, p. 150, Sister White says that first the dead are judged and then the living. The above statement from The Greet Controversy shows that this special work of putting away sin among God’s people is during the Judgment of the Living, which begins at the house of God â?? the church (1 Pet. 4:17). We know this to be true because our sins are removed when we are judged. You can see that God would not remove our sins before He judges us; to do this would be predestination.

“When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. ‘Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.’ Malachi 3:4. Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a ‘glorious church, not having spot, or

wrinkle, or any such thing.’ Ephesians 5:27. Then she will look ‘forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ Song of Solomon 6:10.” â?? The Great Controversy, p. 425.

Now to make this work of Investigative Judgment of the Living plain, which, according to the apostle Peter, begins with the church, we will quote Sister White: “As they reject the teachings of His word, God withdraws His Spirit and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.” â?? Ibid., p. 431.

To reject the message of the Angel of Revelation 18:1 is to cause God to withdraw His Spirit, and instead of having sins removed from the sanctuary in heaven, the names of those who fail to repent will be removed from the book of life.

When this work is accomplished for the church, then says Sister White: “Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and

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terrible as an army with banners’ (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.”

â?? Prophets and Kings, p. 725.

When the investigative judgment is over for the church then in her purity she will take the Judgment of the Living to the world. “God’s elect must stand untainted amid the corruptions teeming around them in these last days. Their bodies must be made holy, their spirits pure (A pure church ‘not having spot or wrinkle or an such thing’).” â?? Counsels on Health, p. 20.

What a wonderful day it will be when all of God’s people show their love for one another â?? when

brother can trust brother. According to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy this condition does not exist today; whereas, both teach it will prevail in the church before Christ comes in the clouds where every eye shall see Him.

Since reform must and will come, the first thing we need to know is what are some of the things that need reforming. As Sister White says: "Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices." â??

Christ Our Righteousness, p. 121. The Lord is urging all to quickly prepare themselves for this great work of reform.

In order to reform we must know how to reform. When repairing an engine, a mechanic first determines the cause of trouble, then makes the necessary repairs. So, we, like the mechanic, must diagnose our case. With the necessary information, we may quickly set to work on repairs. Sister White's writings give the needed information.

The most important thing to the operation of an engine is the firing system. There must be the proper amount of fuel and the right kind in order to make it run efficiently. In our diagnosis of the Christian engine, we find that the Holy Spirit is ever present to ignite the fuel â?? the word of God in our hearts. So then, we must check our fuel to see if it is the right kind, sufficient amount, and proper mixture. In checking our fuel, we find the Adventist church is blessed with the proper sort and an abundant supply from the word of God as interpreted by the Spirit of Prophecy. If the church is not on fire with the Holy Spirit, then it must be that foreign substances have gotten into our fuel tank.

We find that this condition existed among the disciples before Pentecost. But as soon as they got rid of the foreign material in their

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fuel tank, the Spirit came and ignited the church. So the church today cannot be fired without the Spirit and the Spirit cannot come without the needed preparation. Each must ask himself if he is standing in the way and blocking the door that the Spirit cannot enter.

To get the proper understanding of the fuel system of the Christian, we shall divide it in two parts. First, the spiritual, then the temporal. To dispense to the Christian engine the proper spiritual fuel, and fire it with His Spirit, is God's responsibility. To supply the engine with the proper temporal fuel is our responsibility. When these two blend, then heaven unites with earth in the work of redemption. As long as foreign substance is in the fuel system the Spirit cannot come. The soul cannot be fired by the Spirit as long as the diet consists of flesh food, tea, coffee, etc. The word and the Spirit must agree, so let us check the Spirit to see if It agrees with the words here spoken.

"Flesh foods are injurious to the physical well-being, and we should learn to do without them." â??
Counsels on Diets and Foods, p. 403.

". . . flesh food is not the right food for God's people. I have been instructed that flesh food has a tendency to animalize the nature, to rob men and women of that love and sympathy which they

should feel for every one, and to give the lower passions control over the higher powers of the beings. If meat eating were ever healthful, it is not safe now. Cancers, tumors, and pulmonary diseases are largely caused by meat eating.” â?? Ibid. , p. 404.

“The health of the body is to be regarded as essential for growth in grace and the acquirement of an even temper. If the stomach is not properly cared for, the formation of an upright, moral character will be hindered. The brain and nerves are in sympathy with the stomach. Erroneous eating and drinking result in erroneous thinking and acting.” â?? Ibid., p. 405.

“But when I visit the Retreat, I see that there is a very marked departure from health reform on the matter of meat eating, and I am convinced that there must be a change, and at once.” â?? Ibid., p. 406.

“A positive injury is done to the system by continuous meat eating. There is no excuse for it but a depraved, perverted appetite The flesh of animals will no longer compose a part of our diet; and we shall look upon a butcher’s shop with disgust We

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are built up from that which we eat. Shall we strengthen the animal passions by eating animal food?” â?? Counsels on Diet

and Foods, p. 407.

This light was given to our people over 88 years ago; we may inquire if a proper use is being made of the light God so abundantly gave to us. Is it true that the above admonitions were given only for instructions at the Health Retreat? There is likewise instruction given to our ministers and people.

“As God’s messengers, shall we not bear a decided testimony against the indulgence of perverted appetite? . . . God has provided an abundance of fruits and grains, which may be healthfully prepared and used in proper quantities. Why, then, do men continue to choose flesh meats? Can we possibly have confidence in ministers who at tables where flesh is served join with others in eating it?” â?? Ibid., pp 401,402.

“Let our ministers and canvassers step under the banners of strict temperance. Never be ashamed to say ‘No thank you; I do not eat meat. I have conscientious scruples against eating the flesh of dead animals.’ ” â?? Ibid., p. 402.

“No meat will be used by His people.” â?? Ibid., p. 407.

“The more largely flesh composes the diet of teachers and pupils, the less susceptible will be the mind to

comprehend spiritual things.” â?? Ibid., p. 395.

“For thirty years the light on health reform has been coming to the people of God They have continued to use tea, coffee, spices, and flesh meat. Their bodies are full of disease. How can we, I ask, present such ones to the Lord for healing?” â?? Ibid., p. 400.

We see plainly, brethren, by these statements written by the direction of the Holy Spirit that, when

the churches wholly practice and teach these health principles, they will then be in line to be fired by that same Spirit as the early church. As long as God's church and His people disregard this admonition, just that long will the Holy Spirit fail to hear their pleadings. Adam and Eve lost Eden through indulgence of appetite and the only way Eden will be restored is through the control of appetite.

Then there is also another item, and a very great one. Training L7, p. 9 48

young men for the army when they should be trained as laborers in the Lord's vineyard testifies against the Spirit of truth, for we read:

"I was shown that God's people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. They can appreciate no other." â?? Testimonies, Vo1. 1, p. 361.

Then there is the matter of using drugs in our Sanitariums which Sister White condemns.

"Drug medication, as it is generally practiced, is a curse. Educate away from drugs. Use them less and less, and depend more upon hygienic agencies; then nature will respond to God's physicians â?? pure air, pure water, proper exercise, a clear conscience." â?? Counsels on Health, p. 261.

"You should avoid the use of drugs and carefully observe the laws of health. If you regard your life you should eat plain food, prepared in the simplest manner, and take more physical exercise. Each member of the family needs the benefits of health reform. But drugging should be forever abandoned; for while it does not cure any malady, it enfeebles the system, making it more susceptible to disease." â?? Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 311.

"A practice that is laying the foundation of a vast amount of disease and of even more serious evils, is the free use of poisonous drugs." â?? Ministry of Healing, p. 126.

"People need to be taught that drugs do not cure disease." â?? Ibid.

"By the use of poisonous drugs, many bring upon themselves lifelong illness, and many lives are lost that might be

saved by the use of natural methods of healing." â?? Ibid., pp. 126,127.

These statements, with hundreds of others, some even more pointed, tell the story of why the church is not fired by

the Holy Spirit. The Spirit cannot work with those who do not work along the prescribed lines. L7, p. 10 49

The true basis of any reform is love – love to God and love to our fellowman. It is my earnest desire and sincere prayer that you will take these things in the same spirit in which they were written. The admonitions contained in the Spirit of Prophecy writings were not put there for one particular group, but they are for every one to read and follow.

To accomplish the most good in the shortest period of time, reform should begin at the head. You are the logical ones to lead out, brethren. This is the reason for this appeal. Why drift, why not go to work on reform today? Start and there will be plenty to help – even the Spirit. Cast out the abomination from our hospitals and sanitariums, and let doctors and nurses take up the work of treating the sick with herbs and natural remedies. Let them train young men and women in the use of simple methods, with prayer for the sick, and there will be a revival such as this earth has never witnessed. Why not put our young people to work for the Lord rather than let them be slaughtered in the war? “Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.” Isa. 3:25.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they that gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” Isa. 60:1-5.

When God’s people make ready for the Spirit by clearing the way, the blessings of these Scriptures will be realized. If we take care of the needy, the poor, and sick among us, the Lord says the Gentiles will come with their means. No necessity to go out in harvest ingathering here, for the Gentiles will come voluntarily. Do we have faith to claim the promises?

When the conditions are met, the Spirit will come. “And I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.” Ex. 23:25.

“In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. Many were praising

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God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth.” – Testimonies, Vol. 9, p. 126.

This was not a vision by Sister White of flesh eating, drug-using people – but a vision of genuinely converted health reformers.

“In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in

their hearts and in their homes. The Lord has given me light that when the Israel of today humble themselves before Him, and cleanse the soul-temple from all defilement, He will hear their prayers in behalf of the sick and will bless in the use of His remedies for disease.” Ibid., p. 164.

“If, after so much light has been given, God’s people will cherish wrong habits, indulging self and refusing to reform, they will suffer the sure consequences of transgression. If they are determined to gratify perverted appetite at any cost, God will not miraculously save them from the consequences of their indulgence. They ‘shall lie down in sorrow.’ Isaiah 50:11.” Ibid.

“If the Lord be God follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21. What is your decision, brethren? is the Spirit’s plea.

Yours to serve God and Him only,

Ben L. Roden

Note: The 1941 edition of Christ Our Righteousness has been used exclusively throughout this letter, except where otherwise stated.

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