

THE SHAKING

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One again the earth has been shaken, this time not in a Third World country with the loss of thousands of lives, but in New Zealand, of all places. A seemingly pristine place such a Christchurch has experienced upheaval and loss of hundreds with many yet to be found.

The “shaking” is a Bible doctrine as verily as the other established doctrines. God will “arise to shake terribly the earth” (Isa. 2:19), He “will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger” (13:13). However this may come as a natural cataclysm we shall wait and see; but the basic idea of a “shaking” among God’s people is that the LORD is fed up with the hypocrisy of professed faith that is not validated by appropriate works motivated by *agape*.

The world itself is tottering in rotting immorality; the collapse of the Twin Towers on 9/11/01 is a vivid picture of the collapse taking place before our eyes of simple, basic decency. The collapse taking place in just the last few years is astonishing; before the “shaking” is complete, everything that can be shaken will be shaken. But there will be some truths that will remain unshaken.

And each of us is a microcosm of the world and the church being “shaken.” We watch astonished as some we knew who once professed a firm faith in biblical inspiration now cast doubts on it and spew

Hindu ideas, even postulating reincarnation as a possibility, so desperate are they in trying to endure the spiritual famine that is raging in church after church.

Side by side with the “shaking” that comes on the church will be that famine: “Says the Lord God, . . . I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. . . . In that day the fair virgins and strong young men shall faint from thirst” (Amos 8:11-13).

We are there now. Someone wisely said that the time will come when we must gather warmth from others’ coldness; yes! That’s where we are now.

The warmth of the genuine Holy Spirit is given to us, through the Word (John 14:16, 17); He will not leave one hungry, thirsty, soul to perish. So, on your knees! Tell the Lord that you believe (but please help your disbelief!) to receive into your hungry soul those new covenant promises the Lord made to Abraham (yes, you are Abraham’s descendant if you believe the gospel; Gen. 12:2, 3). Then keep on believing what “the Spirit of truth” says, and enjoy your victory.

Not only are we living in what we have always said is “the shaking time,” but more than that: we are living in the time when everything possible is being shaken furiously.

We do know that such a “shaking” is predicted by the Lord. “When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done” (Isaiah 24:13, RSV).

"Only a few people will survive, and Israel [the church] will be like an olive tree from which all the olives have been picked except two or three at the very top, or a few that are left on the lower branches" (Isaiah 17:6, GNB).

Many Seventh-day Adventists are saying that the great "shaking" long foretold is already in process, and coming to its climax.

"The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church" (4T 89); "God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities. But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.

"The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to 'science falsely so called' will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not

keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (5T 80); TM 112; EW 269ff.].

The attention of many is being directed to Ellen White's famous prediction of the "omega," [Cf. 1SM 193-200.] a devastating apostasy to come near the end of time which will conclude Satan's deceptive efforts to destroy the remnant church. The "alpha" was the terrible falling away in the early years of the century [*Ibid.*, pp. 197, 199.] when Dr. John Harvey Kellogg led some prominent leaders and ministers out of the church because they held false views of the nature of God and His work, and took away our finest medical institution, the Battle Creek Sanitarium. [Cf. Lewis Walton, *Omega* (RH, 1981).] The present movements are indeed causing perplexity and distress on all levels of the church. Basic truths are openly denied.

A clear pattern has become apparent: in practically every instance (exception so few as to be negligible), the beginning of this theological disaffection was the rejection of concepts of righteousness by faith taught in the 1888 message and endorsed by Ellen G. White. [Cf. TM 91-94; also 1SM 234, 235, etc.] The denials of the 1888 concepts can be successively documented, step by step, for the past decade by decade. Partisans of

this doctrine were teaching in our colleges and saw their articles widely published in our papers. So subtle were the implications of these apparently “evangelical” ideas of righteousness by faith, that a significant proportion of our ministers, theologians, and members eagerly accepted them. The inevitable fruitage: abandonment of cardinal Seventh-day Adventist teachings. [Note that Ellen White predicted that the rejection of the 1888 concepts would lead to apostasy. CWE 31.]

The 1888 message was more than Luther’s ideas. It was clearer truths made possible by joining the unique Adventist concept of the cleansing of the sanctuary with the Pauline teaching of justification by faith. Thus the 1888 message is a concept of righteousness by faith parallel to and consistent with the 1844 cleansing of the sanctuary. The denial of the 1888 message leads logically to the denial of the 1844 significance. And the virtual ignorance of the 1888 message on all levels of the church created a vacuum. True to the scientific axiom that nature abhors a vacuum, false teachings rushed in to satisfy the hunger aroused by decades of legalistic teaching. [Cf. Ellen White articles in RH, January through March, 1890.]

The search for the “truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:14) is exciting. When, by God’s grace, His people apprehend it free from all confusion of “another gospel. . . which is not another,” it will be found to possess phenomenal power. (See Gal. 1:6, 7). “The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith” (Rom. 1:16). Such a message will have “great authority,” for by

its light the earth will be “made bright with . . . splendor” (Rev. 18:1, 2).

“God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us” (5T 707).

One factor is needed to serve as a catalytic agent to accomplish the work of separation known as the “shaking”, and to resolve the present confusion into clarity: that is the pouring forth of the “straight testimony.” The “shaking” is to be a sort of mass apostasy, a time when “many” will become casualties. “And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword” (Rev. 1:16). Those casualties will be “caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans” (EW 270). “The message given us by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church, and woe be unto anyone who professes to believe the truth and yet does not reflect to others the God-given rays. . . .” (*EGW 1888 Materials*, p. 1052). Therefore, it does seem reasonable to regard the “straight testimony” of the truth, as presented by the True Witness, as a sword, killing the enemies of God’s truth, making casualties or apostates of them.

The sword does not represent some physical destruction. There is a deeper meaning. For instance, modern counterpart to an ancient prophet’s being put to death would be to be put out

of the work—to “die” as a *worker*. Likewise, if any power is effective in putting apostate workers out of the work today; or is effective in destroying their influence in the work; then they can be said to have “died” or been destroyed.

Things have gotten to such a pass today that about all that is needed to bring about that result of the shaking is for some one to rise up and “pour forth the straight truth.” Indeed, the very next sentence says: “Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people” (EW 270).

Now, how will the True Witness use that sword? He elects to work through human agents surrendered to His service. “He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully” (Jer. 23:28). “Is not My word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (vs. 29). It seems, therefore, that he that hath His word, “the receiver”, will be led to “exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth.”

Jeremiahs words are true: “A curse on him who slackens in this work of the Eternal!” “And cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood” (Jer. 48:10). If we were called to be a soldier, and had to plunge a sword into red, quivering flesh, and watch gory blood gush out, we’d feel a desire to slacken in that work, and keep back my sword from blood. It’s distasteful to our nature. It might be that in a spiritual sense, we have a complementary squeamishness—a natural reticence to take the “straight truth” in hand, and plunge it into the hearts

of men whose works reveal them to be enemies of God’s people. If so, “cursed be he!” God help us to be valiant in fight! There is much that is distasteful in this work we have begun. If God is reluctant to withdraw His presence from these (workers) who have been blessed with great light, and who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others (“It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence from those who have been blessed with great light and who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure” 5T 212), it is natural that we should also be reticent to speak words which will precipitate reactions in them to bring about that very result. But if the time has come for that to be done, we must not hesitate to do it.

The Lord told Elijah to “hide himself”. What would be a modern application of that? It is impossible for a man to be physically hid these days. But it is possible for one to so conduct himself that Ahab and Jezebel have no “chance” or excuse to put him to the kind of death I spoke of above. God could work better with a live than a dead Elijah, so the point was for him to keep himself alive until God’s judgments should bring Israel to the point of repentance.

If Baal had a chance, he’d lose no time in getting anyone out of the way who exposed him. One thing is not yet clear: No one in ancient Israel could deny for a moment that a drought was on. They could

and did deny the cause of it. But these days, while there is a drought on, Baal seems able to make men think that all is prospering.

I wonder how many of God's people sense that there is indeed a drought? or a famine? Some do. How overmastering will God permit the deception to become? "The power of God (will be) revealed among men" "when . . . the voice of faithful rebuke (is) . . . once more heard in the church." That gives no comfort to offshoots, for it says "faithful" rebuke. "God is calling for men like Elijah, Nathan and John the Baptist . . . who will speak the truth bravely" (PK 140-142).

There is a sad, poignant picture of white-haired, "highly honored" men who may have written much denominational history, etc., who are dumb dogs. I think it may already be a fact that they "will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions." It will be difficult for some to say anything now but to mumble "peace and safety". "Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous, prove to be ringleaders in apostasy, and examples in indifference" (5T, p. 212). When will His wrath be dealt out without mercy? Must another generation come and go, while unfaithful men today go to quiet, untroubled graves like those of 100 years ago?

We do not know the "times and seasons", nor the greatness of God's mercy. But, oh, does not God pity the thousands and thousands of human beings on this planet suffering in repression, and all over the earth, in agonies almost undreamed of the years following 1888?

But whenever we feel like saying "How long, O Lord?" it seems He says to us, "How long . . . until you are willing to make the sacrifices mentioned in PK 141, 142? "When. . . ?" With young men around the world suffering and dying, should we seek to save ourselves "from the unpleasant results of plain speaking," "though it call for the sacrifice of all" we have?

How can one tell the difference between a genuine "Elijah" message that God sends, and a clever counterfeit? When God fulfills His promise to send "Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord," there will be very certain evidences:

(1) The message will be as unpopular as Elijah's was in his day. The news of what Elijah said to King Ahab about "no rain" flew throughout the kingdom like word goes on the web today. Many far and near will condemn it while at the same time the message will "go" far and near.

(2) The message will be uncomfortable to those who love sin and worldliness, because it will be inspired by a Visitor, the Holy Spirit, whose first work is to "convict . . . of sin."

(3) Elijah's message will proclaim full religious freedom. To those in Israel who wanted to worship Baal, Elijah gave the ultimate in opportunity. Risking his life on Mt Carmel, he invited the 450 prophets of Baal to do their thing before everybody. Gave them full access to every advantage the media of the day could afford. It was a full, unhindered demonstration of Baal worship.

It follows that in these last days, the true Christ will give full liberty to “Baal” to do his thing, publicity, swollen budgets. Let the people have a big dose, so they can get sick of it on their own. There might even be something to that proportion of 450 to 1. “Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, *until she shall abhor herself*” (April 21, 1903; 7T, pp. 250, 251).

Would you have joined Elijah on Mt Carmel when he was outnumbered (within the church, remember) 450 to one by the prophets of Baal? (1 Kings 18:21, 22). You may say, “That issue was so clear-cut, yes I would have stood with Elijah!” But remember, Baal-worship was an exceedingly clever counterfeit, and the leadership of Israel were on Baal’s side, thinking Baal was their true “Lord.”

When the final showdown comes, as it was on Mt. Carmel, we read that when the storm at last begins to blow, multitudes of what we have thought were true disciples will be like “dry leaves,” like in Jesus’ day when “many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him” (Jn. 6:66).

(4) “Elijah” will have a positive message, as he had on Mt. Carmel. He didn’t spend his precious time railing against Baal worship, but re-built the broken down altar of the true God, and called on the people to see what happens when His worship is restored.

(5) The fruit of Elijah’s message? A national repentance: “When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God” (1 Kings 18:39). As in John the Baptist’s fulfillment

of the Elijah message, so the message that comes “before the great and dreadful day of the Lord” will “make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk. 1:17). It appears that “the third angel’s message in verity” (Rev. 14:1-12) and the “Elijah message” are the same: repentance permeating the “body of Christ.”

When the Lord “sent Elijah” to the “scribes and Pharisees,” they “knew him not.” John the Baptist’s message was “Elijah”! (Mt. 17:10-13). Could the dear Lord in His great mercy send “Elijah” to us and we “know him not”? Could the Lord send us a message designed to prepare us for the coming of Christ and we treat it as the Jews treated John the Baptist? God has promised to “send” him (Mal. 4:5, 6); could anything be more important than learning what that “message” is and how “we” have treated it? Maybe we need to repent!

When “Elijah” comes, will he overthrow Baal worship as he did long ago? Ancient Baal worship was the worship of self disguised as the worship of God. The 450 “prophets of Baal” made Elijah sick at heart. What is “Baal worship” today? As of old:

It is professing to serve the Lord when in fact your agenda is to promote self. “Baal, Baal, is the choice. The religion of many among us will be the religion of apostate Israel, because they love their own way, and forsake the way of the Lord” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 467, 468).

A pastor glorifies himself, attracts the people to himself, turns their attention to himself, panders the worldly-minded people in the church, climbs the ladder of his career. He professes to worship Christ

but in fact he is serving self. Is he not a “prophet of Baal”? His career is to build for himself a comfortable living; unconsciously he directs the youth to any or all careers except to prepare a people to stand in the day of God. He is not preparing a people to be translated as Elijah was, to “follow the Lamb [the crucified Christ] wherever He goes.” Instead, he is preparing a people to accept the “mark of the beast” when it comes.

When the “Elijah message” comes, what will it do? How can we recognize it, so we don’t treat it as the Jews treated John the Baptist? (cf. Mt. 17:10-13).

It will not be a revival of legalism, harsh, vindictive, condemnatory. Just the opposite: “He [“Elijah”] shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:6). A message of reconciliation! And that means “atonement”—the cosmic Day of Atonement ministry centered in the sanctuary’s Most Holy Apartment.

Then Elijah will also “behead” the modern “prophets of Baal” after it is clear that they refuse to repent. You remember at Mt. Carmel, after the 450 devotees of Satan’s Baal worship stubbornly refused to repent even after the fire fell on the mountain, Elijah reluctantly ordered their destruction because they were a poison to the world (1 Kings 18:38-40).

A wise writer speaking of the coming crisis said, “Frequent will be the apostasies of men who have occupied responsible positions” (RH Sept. 9, 1888). “The great issue so near at hand will weed out those whom God has not appointed, and He will

have a pure, true, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain” (3SM 385). “Elijah,” ancient or modern, is only good news.

Elijah had no patience with the “prophets of Baal,” but he had enormous patience and tenderness for the people. The people were sheep who had been led astray by their shepherds who had been supported from the national treasury. (Anyone who gains his livelihood administered from the sacred tithe should tremble before God).

Elijah’s indignation was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was the “righteous indignation” God expresses in Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 22 and 34 where He says “Woe be unto the pastors,” the “shepherds,” who are “profane,” “who do feed themselves.” Self-worship disguised as the worship, the ministry, of Christ! That is the essence of Baal worship. God hates it.

But His heart yearns toward the people who are led astray, especially the youth and the children. “Elijah’s” message will heal alienated hearts. Hardness will be melted. Through “the grace of God,” not through harsh legalism, buried “roots of bitterness” will be exposed for what they are and a people will realize a precious oneness with Jesus (cf. Zech. 13:1; Heb. 12:15). And, of course therefore, a precious oneness with one another! “Elijah’s” message will do for God’s people what it did for him—it prepared him for translation. Don’t kid yourself: Satan will oppose that message hell-bound. But “the grace of God” will be much more abounding. God’s people respond to their High Priest.

When “Elijah” is “sent” by the Lord, he will not be easy on modern Baal worship. But his will not be a ministry of denunciation; he will build up, not tear down. The “word” will do the job. Proclaiming Christ and Him crucified will melt hardened, worldly hearts, and Baal worship will be renounced. “When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.”

There is probably no one who doesn’t want the church to be truly awake, repentant, and alive with the joy of the Lord. We know that someday it will be (after there is a great shaking, after “Elijah” has come and done his work).

But is there anyone ready to take all the sins of the church, known and hidden, upon him/herself, realizing that apart from the grace of the Savior he would be guilty of them all? Or does each one of us feel that that would be impossible; we could never fall that low. “We’ve been brought up right!”

If such an insightful person could be found, someone who wouldn’t be praying, “Lord, aren’t they awful! please save them!” that would be a practical, corporate repentance that would do a world of good.

Someone came to the true church one time who found it in a terrible spiritual condition; yes, He must have prayed for that church; but He did something much more—He repented in the behalf of that church. He took all their sins upon Himself as though He were guilty of them all. So intimate and real was this “taking” that He “was made to be sin for [them] that [they] might become the

righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). He put Himself in each person’s place, knowing all the details from their conception on. He felt each person’s weakness as though it were His own. He felt the shame of his defeats, and the tearful longings for peace with God.

It was on His cross that He was “made to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” It was a horrible experience of “knowing”—hell itself. He felt in His soul that He was lost forever. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a victor. “He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12). “He made His grave with the wicked” (vs. 9), the kind of a grave that has no end to it; and He did something that no other person in 6,000 years has been able to do: He felt to the full the horror of it. (Anyone else would pass out long before.)

Thank God, He has disciples who are even now learning from Him.