

# ***Sabbath School Today***

## **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

### ***The Fruit of the Spirit***

#### **Lesson 5: “The Fruit of the Spirit Is Patience”**

Why hasn't Christ's appeal to His church done its work? Why hasn't she bought "gold tried in the fire," His "white raiment," and His "eyesalve"? (Rev. 3:18). Truly what Jesus is talking about is righteousness by faith. Laodicea is to overcome her lukewarmness. "The Holy Spirit is to animate and pervade the whole church, purifying and cementing hearts. ... It is the purpose of God to glorify Himself in His people before the world." [1]

When this occurs the Lord's parable about the farmer (representing Himself) comes into its own. "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29). The harvest is the second coming (Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:14-16).

According to the True Witness there's a problem with Laodicea's understanding of righteousness by faith. Laodicea believes she corrected her course following the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference and became mainstream Protestant in her beliefs regarding justification by faith, thus saving her from legalism. "Minneapolis 1888 was a turning point in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through Waggoner and Jones, supported by Ellen White, the church was saved from an incomplete understanding of the gospel." [2]

This poses a serious problem because if Laodicea accepted the true righteousness by faith after 1888, why is she still here after 122 years? The gospel should have prepared her by now for translation and the coming of the Lord.

It's all the more serious because what would "patience" look like for Laodicea in view of the cosmic Day of Atonement we have been living in since 1844? Revelation 14:12 is the third angel's message, which is the sanctuary truth. "Here is the *patience* of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." This is a picture of victorious Laodicea—the end product of the third angel's message. Do such a people exist today after 122 years of "accepting" the 1888 message?

A careful reading of this verse, reversing the order of its elements, is quite revealing. "The faith of Jesus" obeys "the commandments of God" and the fruit is "the patience [or perfection] of the saints." There can be no other conclusion.

The faith of Jesus is the gospel. His will was subjected to constant self-denial throughout His life with the result that He chose to do His Father's will rather than His own will. Right up to and including the cross, He crucified His will and bore the sinner's penalty of eternal death for the wages of sin. His life and death were a continuous display of obedience to the commandments of God, and the fruit was the perfection of patience.

The righteousness of Christ is to be the righteousness of the saints and then will come the harvest and the end of the world. "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).

To write about Christian perfection of character to Seventh-day Adventists is like raising a red flag in front of a charging bull. It is objected, "I have enough guilt for my own sins and failures without having the added burden of demonstrating perfection to pass the judgment." This old covenant perspective of self-reliance needs the sun-lit truth of the 1888 concept of the new covenant *agape* motivation.

Here is a definition of character perfection: Faith is an appreciation of what it cost the Son of God to die for you. If one had not died for all, then all would be dead (2 Cor. 5:14). "You may say that you believe in Jesus when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that His death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood." [3]

Such light as this can only come to God's people as they follow their High Priest into the holiest by faith. Our Great Psychiatrist continuously ministers the healing power of the cross in ever more convicting draughts to our sin-sick souls. The *agape* of Christ's cross launches us into the Christian rebirth and it sustains us life-long in daily rebirth and sanctifying renewal and restoration. The forgiveness of sins is not exclusively legal justification, but is also manifestly ongoing sanctification.

Laodicea has an ongoing conflict with the True Witness since 1888 in that for the most part she has "resisted" the sanctuary message. "The sin committed in what took place at Minneapolis remains on the record books of heaven, registered against the names of those who resisted light; and it will remain upon the record until full confession is made and the transgressors stand in full humility before God." [4] This tragic mistake must be rectified.

That generation is at rest. We are being tested as were they. Just as Calvary tested the Jews with regard to the recognition of their Messiah; likewise, the same principle is in play with regard to Minneapolis for modern Israel. Minneapolis was Christ coming to His church in the form of His messengers and the message of the cleansing of the sanctuary. The sanctuary has not as yet been cleansed. The obvious conclusion is that the message was not received by Laodicea.

The words of Inspiration still overshadow Laodicea: "We should be the last people on earth to indulge in the slightest degree the spirit of persecution against those who are bearing the message of God to the world. This is the most terrible feature of unchristlikeness that has manifested itself among us since the Minneapolis meeting. Sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it." [5]

Laodicea is to learn the lessons of six thousand years of sin and how the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Until that command to “repent” in Revelation 3:19 is obeyed, nothing can be done about getting the gold, white raiment, and eyesalve. Then the Holy Spirit will be given free reign to produce the perfect fruit of patience in her.

—Paul E. Penno.

**Endnotes:**

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, pp. 20, 21.

[2] Gerhard Pfandl, “Minneapolis, 1888: An Adventist Watershed,” *Adventist World: The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists* (January, 2010), pp. 38, 39. Pfandl is with the General Conference Biblical Research Institute writing on behalf of the Ellen G. White Estate.

[3] Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

[4] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1031; EGW to O. A. Olsen, Sept. 1, 1892.

[5] Op. cit., p. 1013; a statement made at the 1893 General Conference.