

The Third Angel's Message. What Is It?

THE Third Angel's Message—this great threefold message—is in every feature *present* truth. And when in its own words it is shown that this message is given in view of the fact that the hour of God's judgment "*is* come," then when the time comes for this message to be given, it will be only present truth thoroughly to believe that "the hour of his judgment is come" in truth.

Indeed, that this message were ever given at all would be evidence in itself that the hour of his judgment is come; for no message of God can ever be given before the time. Therefore whenever this message shall be found sounding to the world, it will be *then* true that the hour of God's judgment is come. And the *word* of the message that says so will be only the announcement of the *fact* that the hour of his judgment *is* come. And every one believing the message will believe that this is the fact: he will have to believe it, to be a believer of the message; because the very word of the message that he professes to believe says that this is so. And as certainly as he believes this, he will enter hourly into God's judgment, and will constantly hold himself subject to all the tests of that judgment.

That message is *now* due in the world. It is being given to the world. For years this has been so. Therefore for years it has been, and it now is, present truth that the hour of God's judgment is come. Thousands upon thousands of persons profess to believe that message. Thousands upon thousands have for years professed to believe that message. Therefore the *principle* is that this whole people of that message are entered hourly into God's judgment, and, as constantly as they live, do subject themselves to all the searching tests of that judgment. All these, therefore, know that *as for themselves*, each individually, the judgment has begun upon the living; for they are *living*. To them the message of God has come that "the hour of his judgment *is* come;" they have accepted that message, and accordingly have entered into that judgment, and so they *live* constantly in the presence of that awful fact. Consequently we say again that with *these* there is no room for any such question as to "whether the judgment has begun upon the living."

And if there be any who profess to believe this message, and yet are living as they would not live if they knew that the judgment had come, and would make a revolution in their lives if only they knew that the judgment *had* come upon the living, but would *not* make this revolution if they could be certain that the judgment had *not* come, then to what purpose *to them* could be a message, even if it were sent directly from heaven to them personally, that the judgment had begun upon the living? In such case, any change that would be sought or made, would have no virtue whatever; and these persons would be no more prepared for the decision of the judgment than if they had heard nothing about it; the only change that would be made in such a life would be altogether out of *fear of the consequences*, and not out of any *love of righteousness*.

Therefore, in the nature of things, in such a case the word could not be, He is righteous, "let him be righteous still;" because he is not righteous: he has not love of righteousness in his heart. This is demonstrated by the fact that, under the very profession of this judgment-message, he lived without regard to the judgment: he indulged evil things in his life,—things which he knew could not pass the judgment,—and he continued to indulge them until the startling word came to him personally that the judgment was come *to him*. Then, all at once, and *only that he may pass the judgment, and escape the consequences of the evil things that he has indulged in spite of righteousness*, he sets forth to make a grand revolution in his life!

But no such thing as that will ever work in the judgment of God. Whoever will pass in righteousness the judgment of God, will do so only because he has "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity," *whether the judgment was begun upon him or not*. He loves righteousness because it is righteousness, and he hates iniquity because it is iniquity; and he will no more indulge iniquity in his life with the judgment a thousand years away than with the judgment only a minute away.

There is, therefore, no room whatever for any professed believer of the Third Angel's Message, for any Seventh-day Adventist, ever to ask whether the judgment has begun upon the living. Every true believer of the Third Angel's Message, every true Seventh-day Adventist, KNOWS, because the word of God says it, and has said it for years, that "the hour of his judgment *is* come." It is here: it is a present thing as certainly as the world is here. And, knowing this, every true Seventh-day Adventist lives accordingly: he puts himself alive into the judgment; he reins himself up hourly before the judgment seat; because "the hour of his judgment *is* come." To the true believer of the Third Angel's Message this is a fact: it is living truth.

And how shall he ever give this message to the world otherwise? Can he, with any force of truth at all, preach to another man that the hour of God's judgment "is come," when he himself does not believe at all that it "is come," but only that it *will come*? Who is there in the world that does not believe that God's judgment will come? But the Third Angel's Message is *not* that the judgment *will* come; but that the very time, the "hour, of his judgment IS COME."

Since this judgment, in its decision when pronounced, is but a recognition and declaration of a condition that already exists, and is, therefore, practically instantaneous, it follows that the means of preparation for this awful decision shall be such that it shall be able to effect that preparation also instantaneously. And precisely this provision is that which is offered by the Lord in this great, glorious Third Angel's Message; for it carries the "*everlasting gospel* to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." And this everlasting gospel is "the *power of God* unto *salvation* to every one that believeth." "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." And those who are thus made righteous live righteously; because they "live by faith." This power of God is creative, and is, therefore, instantaneous in its action. And any soul loving and longing for righteousness, and hating and desiring to escape iniquity, who hears this message of

the everlasting gospel, announcing that the hour of God's judgment is come, and enters into the judgment in this hour, can be by that everlasting gospel prepared for the judgment. And while he holds himself in the presence of the judgment, subject to all its searching tests, and holds fast this everlasting gospel,—its power to save, and the righteousness that it reveals,—he is ready for the crisis of that judgment at any moment in the "hour;" because, when comes the critical moment in which his name is reached, he is righteous by the "power of God" and by the righteousness of God, which that gospel has given to him; and most gladly will the Judge speak the joyous words, "Let him be righteous still."

This, so far, is what the Third Angel's Message is in spirit and in truth. And this is why it is that righteousness by faith "is the Third Angel's Message in verity." That message of God declares that "the hour of his judgment is come." Do you believe it?

A. T. Jones.

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