

The Gospel Call: Ellen White's Invitation During the Feast

This article was published in the Bible Echo, October 28th, 1895, at the same time the messages of W.W. Prescott were being given in the Armadale Campmeeting in Australia. The messages were reproduced in Australia, but the General Conference in Battle Creek, and the Review & Herald resisted the message of Prescott, particularly when he spoke on what was nailed to the cross; declaring he was holding error. Yet if that message was received, the only solid arguments they held against observing God's appointed feasts would be quickly dissolved. More interesting was the timing Ellen White wrote the article. When calculating according to the calendar God gave at creation, it was the very time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the "time of the latter rain" (Zechariah 10:1); the latter rain makes effectual the work of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God in the hearts of men; to prepare for the Great heavenly feast, we must first partake of Him fully here in by the rain of the Holy Spirit as the living manna which rains upon the spiritual Israel.

"Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, I go to prove them; I pray thee



have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." [Luke 14:16-24](#).

In this parable there are thoughts of the greatest importance. Christ's words were simple; His language was plain; but truths were uttered which involved eternal interests.

There is a deep earnestness in the invitation, "Come; for all things are now ready." How could those bidden make excuses of so trivial a character, and risk losing eternal life? And yet in every age of the world men are fulfilling this parable in refusing the invitation to the gospel feast. One urges as an excuse his temporal concerns; his property demands his attention. Another is hindered by the claims of society. But none of these excuses count with God. The refusal decides the eternal destiny of the soul; for the words of Christ are, "None of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Can anyone consider the condescension of God in preparing the gospel feast, and its great cost, and treat the invitation slightingly? No man, nor even the highest angel, can estimate the great cost; it is known only to the Father and the Son. The love of God for sinful man is beyond computation. It is the wonder of all heaven, but none can comprehend it. How could their loved Commander in the heavenly courts be permitted to endure such self-denial, such great sacrifice, to bring to man the gospel privileges? And yet with many these privileges are not considered of as much value as the approbation of their neighbours.

Had not God manifested His great love by providing the gospel feast at an expense that cannot be computed, and then bidden His guests, the sin of refusal would not involve eternal consequences. But those who frame these excuses will never realize the greatness and terribleness of the consequences until they shall personally see the saints of God welcomed into the heaven of bliss, and they themselves left outside. What would they not then give to be received into the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for His guests?

The preparations are as abundant as if everyone bidden would certainly accept the invitation. God Himself, through the atonement of Christ, has made unlimited provision for all who will come. The Jewish nation, to whom the invitation was first given, were highly favoured and exalted. And when they rejected the call, the Lord declared that none of those who were bidden, and refused the invitation, should taste His supper. Can the human mind really take in this great thought, that to refuse the heavenly solicitation is to be refused of Christ, cast off forever?

When the invitation was rejected, the messengers were sent to call in people whom the Jews despised and regarded as a curse in the earth,—the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. The call was to go to the high-ways and by-ways, and to reach the poor and outcast. These are not so filled with self-righteousness that they cannot appreciate the divine favour.

Christ is the light of the world, an ever-present and all-sufficient Saviour. Those who receive His grace are not to look upon themselves as a favoured few, as the only ones who shall be the recipients of His salvation. At the first the light was permitted to shine in clear, distinct rays upon the Jewish nation, giving them the privilege of co-operating with God in lighting the world with His glory. But they did not understand that divine goodness embraces the world; that it was the design of God that every human being should be included in those bidden. Now in Christ every wall of

exclusiveness has been broken down, with every caste, every grade, high or low, rich or poor. "Whoso heareth" may partake of the divine blessings designed for the world in the gospel feast, and is commissioned to repeat the invitation, "Come."

Ellen White wrote another article, published only 7 days later on the feast. See part 2 here.