



Being Cast Out for Truth's Sake!

The Story of the Harmon Family

Keep in mind that the history of the past; especially that of the Advent Movement in the time of the Millerites, is being repeated to the very letter in our day and age!

Miller's Lectures in 1842

This second course created much more excitement in the city than the first. With few exceptions, the different denominations closed the doors of their churches against Mr. Miller. Many discourses from the various pulpits sought to expose the alleged fanatical errors of the lecturer; but crowds of anxious listeners attended his meetings, and many were unable to enter the house. The congregations were unusually quiet and attentive.

Mr. Miller's manner of preaching was not flowery or oratorical, but he dealt in plain and startling facts, that roused his hearers from their careless indifference. He supported his statements and theories by Scripture proof as he progressed. A convincing power attended his words, that seemed to stamp them as the language of truth. CET 21.

Experience in Class Meeting

My father's family still occasionally attended the Methodist church, and also the class meetings held in private houses.

One evening my brother Robert and myself went to class meeting. The presiding elder was present. When it came my brother's turn to bear testimony, he spoke with great humility, yet with clearness, of the necessity for a complete fitness to meet our Saviour when He should come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. While my brother was speaking, a heavenly light glowed upon his usually pale countenance. He seemed to be carried in spirit above present surroundings, and spoke as if in the presence of Jesus.

When I was called upon to speak, I arose, free in spirit, with a heart full of love and peace. I told the story of my great suffering under the conviction of sin, how I had at length received the blessing so long sought,--an entire conformity to the will of God,--and expressed my joy in the tidings of the soon coming of my Redeemer to take His children home.

When I had ceased speaking, the presiding elder asked me if it would not be more pleasant to live a long life of usefulness, doing others good, than to have Jesus come speedily and destroy poor sinners. I replied that I longed for the coming of Jesus. Then sin would have an end, and we would enjoy sanctification forever, with no devil to tempt and lead us astray.

After the meeting closed, I was conscious of being treated with marked coldness by those who had formerly been kind and friendly to me. My brother and I returned home feeling sad that we should be so misunderstood by our brethren, and that the subject of the near coming of Jesus should awaken such bitter opposition in their breasts. CET 35.

The Blessed Hope

On the way home we talked seriously concerning the evidences of our new faith and hope. "Ellen," said Robert, "are we deceived? Is this hope of Christ's soon appearing upon the earth a heresy, that ministers and professors of religion oppose it so bitterly? They say that Jesus will not come for thousands and thousands of years. If they even approach the truth, then the world cannot come to an end in our day."

I dared not give unbelief a moment's encouragement, but quickly replied: "I have not a doubt but that the doctrine preached by Mr. Miller is the truth. What power attends his words! what conviction is carried home to the sinner's heart!"

We talked the matter over candidly as we walked along, and decided that it was our duty and privilege to look for our Saviour's coming, and that it would be safest to make ready for His appearing, and be prepared to meet Him with joy. If He did come, what would be the prospect of those who were now saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming," and had no desire to see Him? We wondered how ministers dared to quiet the fears of sinners and backsliders by saying, "Peace, peace!" while the message of warning was being given all over the land. The period seemed very solemn to us; we felt that we had no time to lose.

"A tree is known by its fruits," remarked Robert. **"What has this belief done for us?** It has convinced us that we were not ready for the coming of the Lord; that we must become pure in heart, or we cannot meet our Saviour in peace. **It has aroused us to seek for new strength and grace from God.**

"What has it done for you, Ellen? Would you be what you are now if you had never heard the doctrine of Christ's soon coming? What hope has it inspired in your heart; what peace, joy, and love has it given you? And for me it has done everything. I love Jesus, and all Christians. I love the prayer meeting. I find great joy in reading my Bible and in prayer."

We both felt strengthened by this conversation, and resolved that we would not be turned from our honest convictions of truth, and the blessed hope of Christ's soon coming in the clouds of heaven. We were thankful that we could discern the precious light, and rejoice in looking for the coming of the Lord. CET 36, 37.

Our Last Testimony in Class Meeting

Not long after this, we again attended the class meeting. We wanted an opportunity to speak of the precious love of God that animated our souls. I particularly wished to tell of the Lord's goodness and mercy to me. So great a change had been wrought in me that it seemed my duty to improve every opportunity of testifying to the love of my Saviour.

When my turn came to speak, I stated the evidences I enjoyed of Jesus' love, and that I looked forward with the glad expectation of meeting my Redeemer soon. The belief that Christ's coming was near had stirred my soul to seek more earnestly for the sanctification of the Spirit of God.

Here the class leader interrupted me, saying, "You received sanctification through Methodism, through Methodism, sister, not through an erroneous theory."

I felt compelled to confess the truth, that it was not through Methodism that my heart had received its new blessing, but by the stirring truths concerning the personal appearing of Jesus. Through them I had found peace, joy, and perfect love. Thus my testimony closed, the last that I was to bear in class with my Methodist brethren.

Robert then spoke in his meek way, yet in so clear and touching a manner that some wept and were much moved; but others coughed dissentingly, and seemed quite uneasy.

After leaving the classroom, we again talked over our faith, and marveled that our Christian brethren and sisters could so ill endure to have a word spoken in reference to our Saviour's coming. We were convinced that we ought no longer to attend the class meeting. The hope of the glorious appearing of Christ filled our souls, and would find expression when we rose to speak. It was evident that we could have no freedom in the class meeting; for our testimony provoked sneers and taunts that reached our ears at the close of the meeting, from brethren and sisters whom we had respected and loved. CET 37, 38.

The Pastor's Visit

[Note that those who were in error were the ones who cast out those who had the clear light of Bible Truth on their side! Also especially notice that no attempt was made by the Pastor or the church to show from the Bible where the Harmon family was in error! These same things are taking place among us right now, brother and sisters!]

"Our family were all deeply interested in the doctrine of the Lord's soon coming. My father had stood as one of the pillars of the Methodist church. He had acted as exhorter, and as leader of meetings held in homes at a distance from the city. However, the Methodist minister made us a special visit, and took the occasion to inform us that our faith and Methodism could not agree. He did not inquire our reasons for believing as we did, nor make any reference to the Bible in order to convince us of our error; but he stated that we had adopted a new and strange belief that the Methodist Church could not accept.

My father replied that he must be mistaken in calling this a new and strange doctrine; that Christ Himself, in His teachings to His disciples, had preached His second advent. He had said: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3. When He was taken up to heaven, as His faithful followers stood gazing after their vanishing Lord, "behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:10, 11.

"And," said my father, warming with his subject, "the inspired Paul wrote a letter to encourage his brethren in Thessalonica, saying: 'To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day.' 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

Cast Out

'For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.' 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

"This is high authority for our faith. Jesus and His apostles dwell upon the event of the second advent with joy and triumph; and the holy angels proclaim that Christ, who ascended to heaven, shall come again. This is our offense,--believing the word of Jesus and His disciples. This is a very old doctrine, and bears no taint of heresy."

The minister did not attempt to refer to a single text that would prove us in error, but excused himself on the plea of a want of time. He advised us to quietly withdraw from the church, and avoid the publicity of a trial. We were aware that others of our brethren were meeting with similar treatment for a like cause, and we did not wish it understood that we were ashamed to acknowledge our faith, or were unable to sustain it by Scripture; so my parents insisted that they should be acquainted with the reasons for this request.

The only answer to this was an evasive declaration that we had walked contrary to the rules of the church, and the best course would be to voluntarily withdraw from it to save a trial. We answered that we preferred a regular trial, and demanded to know what sin was charged to us, as we were conscious of no wrong in looking for and loving the appearing of the Saviour. CET 43, 44.

Thus, for no reason other than their steadfast testimony about their belief in the soon coming of Christ, the Harmon Family was separated from the Methodist Church. although the Bible was on the side of the Harmon's, the Pastor clung to the status-quo while offering no Bible evidence of wrong on the part of those he was casting out.