

Review and Herald, February 17, 1885, Advent Experience--No. 2

"Previous to the Passing of the Time in 1844"

p. 1, par. 1, [NUM2].

Adventists can never forget the experiences of that year. Nothing of like nature was ever observed in the history of this people. Father Miller had been laboring some ten years in proclaiming the evidences of Christ's soon coming. Other prominent laborers had become connected with him in the work. For two or three years previous to '44, the doctrine had attracted a great deal of attention. It was commented upon in the papers, and the Adventist laborers were everywhere welcomed in the orthodox churches, as great revivals followed their labors. The most earnest Christians of the various sects were favorable to the doctrine, and they loved the spirit which went with it. Eminent scholars and theologians gave attention to it by writing articles which were printed in the leading papers, some of the same class of persons opposing the doctrine. But the replies of its defendants were thought to be triumphantly successful, and certainly the opposition only added to the intensity of the interest. p. 1, par. 2, [NUM2].

As the time drew nearer and nearer, the influence of the movement became more and more extended. It was the general subject of remark--the principal topic of conversation through large sections of country. The most intense interest prevailed among the Adventists themselves. The arguments brought out by Mr. Miller and his fellow laborers seemed so clear to them that their confidence was perfect that the Lord's coming was indeed just before them. They felt in their souls that they should behold their Lord in the very near future. p. 1, par. 3, [NUM2].

The spirit of labor for the unconverted, and the intense interest felt for the salvation of souls, we can little realize in this age of cold formality. The power of the Spirit of God was present in their meetings, so that many who came with idle curiosity or as scoffers, were brought to give themselves to God, and humble themselves by confessing their sins with the deepest penitence and bitter weeping, and then to rejoice with all their souls as the Lord poured His blessing upon them. Anyone who heard the singing at that time will not be likely to forget it. It seemed to have a peculiarly solemn and penetrating power, a heavenly sweetness which charmed the listener and softened the heart. Many went to the meetings to hear it. p. 1, par. 4, [NUM2].

The preaching was very solemn, becoming more and more so as the time drew nearer and nearer. The work went with mighty power in '43 and '44, in all directions, especially in the Eastern States of this country. We have abundance of evidence to show that it extended more or less to all parts of the world. We will not undertake in this article to give anything like a general or connected account of the work of the first message during that interesting period. We were too young to have anything more than a local knowledge. The life of Father Miller will present many interesting facts; also those excellent works of Elder White, "*Life Incidents*", or "*Life Sketches*", for sale at the Offices and Depositories. We think that all the readers of the "*Review*" should peruse these works. Everyone who is a believer in the present work ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the first angel's message. p. 2, par. 1, [NUM2].

We will only mention a few things which came under our personal observation.

We remember distinctly a course of Advent sermons delivered by Columbus Green in Waterbury, Vermont, we think in the early part of 1843. They were given in the Methodist church in the village. The impression of the solemnity of that meeting and the preaching of Mr. Green I can never forget, though I was but a small boy at the time. The house was densely packed with people, and everything was as still as death except the voice of the speaker. His countenance was very pale, and his words had the solemnity of the Judgment, as he discoursed upon the false shepherds and their terrible doom in the day of the Lord. As the speaker was portraying these things in burning words, Mr. Stone, the Congregationalist minister of the place, and one who had no love for the Advent doctrine, arose from the midst of the congregation, while his face wore a look of defiance, and stood up as if accepting the remarks as applicable to himself. Mr. Green talked all the more earnestly, and with language terribly pointed, pictured the doom which awaited those belonging to the class of false shepherds. Though more than forty years have passed, the scene is as vivid as if it happened yesterday. p. 2, par. 2, [NUM2].

We also distinctly recall a camp meeting held by the Adventists at Cabot, Vermont, which my parents attended. Elder Shipman and a large number of other leading preachers were in attendance. It was a very large meeting. We remember the preaching from the large stand in the grove, and the sea of upturned faces, earnest and solemn. The small meetings in the tents, and the

earnest labor for souls in the little meetings held in them between the regular services, we recall very distinctly.

Unlike our camp meetings almost all the time between the regular services was filled up in meetings in the small tents. Someone would commence to pray or sing, and a number would begin to gather in. There was labor for some soul yet in the dark, and earnest pleading went up to God in his behalf till he would break down and seek God for himself; when victory came, there was great rejoicing. There were more thorough and heartfelt confessions of sin than we usually see in these days. These meetings went on in many places, and many souls were converted in this manner. p. 2, par. 3, [NUM2].

One could go out in the grove in the early morning, and many persons could be seen kneeling here and there, pleading earnestly for God's blessing. The voice of prayer could be heard in many directions. There was an entire absence of levity and the visiting spirit. Earnestness, devotion, and love for the coming of Christ were everywhere present. Oh! that more of these were now present. p. 3, par. 1, [NUM2].

I well remember the meetings which just preceded the passing of the time. In my native town the Adventists had no meetinghouse of their own. So they fitted up a large room in the upper story of the starch factory owned by "Parker and Butler," both deacons of the Baptist church and both zealous Adventists. Here meetings were constantly held, with large crowds in attendance. Just before the time passed meetings were held nearly all the time. Most of the believers left their crops in the fields ungathered, giving the poor liberty to supply their own wants. They felt it would be a denial of their faith to lay up their store as for another season when they believed the Lord was coming in a few weeks. p. 3, par. 2, [NUM2].

We remember one wealthy and very economical farmer who had a large orchard. He went out into it just before the passing of the time, and seeing many apples on the ground, gathered them into the house. In the night his conscience so troubled him at what he had done that he got up and threw them out. This was, of course, an extreme case. But it shows something of the intensity of spirit which prevailed. The appointed time came the last week in October. Scarcely any of the believers dug their potatoes that year till the ground froze; but they suffered little loss thereby, as the weather continued mild. Potatoes dug early that year rotted very badly, while those left in the ground till later were saved. p. 3, par. 3, [NUM2].

Just before the time passed, meetings were held constantly. There was no fanatical excitement among the believers where I was, but a very solemn, humble feeling, each one most anxious how his own case should stand in the Judgment. Persons became very honest at that time. Sins were confessed which no one dreamed had been committed. Many who had thought sprinkling was just as good as immersion concluded it was best to go down into the water as their Lord did, though no special effort was made to get them to do so. People could see things then with very little argument which before no one could make them believe. There were no "ascension robes" or any such follies whatever. But many were anxious to have robes of character that would pass the test of the Judgment. p. 3, par. 4, [NUM2].

During the night when the time passed meetings continued all night. There was a drunken, noisy rabble howling around, and making the night hideous. But the believers were praying most earnestly for God to guard, shield, and save them. If ever men gave evidence of honesty and true faith, they did then. Their whole hearts were in the work. They most certainly expected their probation was just closing. Tears and earnest pleadings for God's acceptance were heard on every hand. But the morning came, and the Lord did not come. Still, many continued to expect Him for days. But soon all realized they were disappointed, and their hearts were very sad. The bitterness of that disappointment none can realize but those who passed through it. Of this we will speak next week.--G.I.B. p. 4, par. 1, [NUM2].