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Collection.
8-9 EXTRA FILE

12-44-1893

"Napier, New Zealand
April 9, 1893.

*Differs slightly
from L.B. 5-422*

"Elder A. T. Jones

Dear Brother:

"There is a subject which greatly troubles my mind. While I do not see the justice nor right in enforcing by law the bringing the Bible to be read in the public schools: yet there are some things which burden my mind in regard to our people making prominent their ideas on this point. These things I am sure will place us in a wrong light before the world. Cautions were given me on this point. There were some things shown me in reference to the words of Christ, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's,' placing the matter where the church have no right to enforce anything of a religious character upon the world.

"Yet, in connection with this were given words of caution. If such a law were to go into effect the Lord would overrule it for good, that an argument should be placed in the hands of those who keep the Sabbath, in their favor, to stand on the Bible foundation in reference to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. And the book which the state and Christian world have forced upon the notice of the people to be read in the schools, shall it not speak, and shall not the words be interpreted just as they are read?

"My brother, this objecting to the passing of a law to bring the Bible into the schools will work against us, those of our faith who are making so much of the Bible. A year ago there was something presented before me in reference to these things, and we shall have to use the Bible for our evidence to show the foundation of our faith. We shall be exceedingly cautious in every particular lest we shut out a single ray of light from those who are in darkness. I remember particularly this point 'That anything that should give the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, should not be obstructed at all.' Some things I can not present in distinct lines, but enough is clear to me that I want you to be very careful on what ground you tread, for our enemies will make a decided argument against us if we shall give them a semblance of a chance. I think the law-making powers will carry their point in this particular, if not now, a short period ahead. And it is very essential, as a people, we take the greatest care that no provocation be given our enemies which they will make capital of against us as a people, in a future crisis, in the matter of opposing so good a work as the introduction of the Bible into the public schools.

"I wish I could lay my hand on something I wrote on this subject at the last General conference that I attended. But I cannot bring it to light. I hope the Lord will help us to not make one wrong move; but please be cautious on this point.

2--A. T. Jones,

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"Brother A. T. Jones, I wish to call your attention to another matter. I was attending a meeting, and a large congregation were present. In my dream you were presenting the subject of faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ by faith. You repeated several times that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions. The matter was presented in that light that I knew minds would be confused, and would not receive the correct impression in reference to faith and works, and I decided to write to you. You state this matter too strongly. There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. I know your meaning, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds.

"While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works. God saves us under a law, that we must ask if we would receive, seek if we would find, and knock if we would have the door opened unto us. Christ offers Himself as willing to save unto the uttermost all who come unto him. He invites all to come to Him. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You look in reality upon these subjects as I do, yet you make these subjects, through your expressions, confusing to minds. And after you have expressed your mind radically in regard to works, when questions are asked you upon this very subject it is not laying out in so very clear lines in your own mind that you can not define the correct principles to other minds, and you are yourself unable to make your statements harmonize with your own principles and faith.

"The young man who came to Jesus with the question, "Good Master, what thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" and Christ saith unto him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God: but if you wilt enter into life keep the commandments." He saith unto him, "Which?" Jesus quoted several, and the young man said unto him, "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" Jesus said unto him "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Here are conditions, and the Bible is full of conditions.

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Then when you say there are no conditions, and some expressions are made quite broad, you burden the minds, and some can not see consistency in your expressions. They cannot see how they can harmonize these expressions with the plain statements of the Word of God. Please guard these points. These strong assertions in regard to works, never make our position any stronger. The expressions weaken our position, for there are many who will consider you an extremist, and will lose the rich lessons you have for them, upon the very subjects they need to know.

"Christ said, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.' I feel such an intense interest that every soul shall see, and understand and be charmed with the consistency of the truth. The evidence of our love to Christ is not pretension; but practice. My brother,

3--A. T. Jones

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it is hard for the mind to comprehend this point, and do not confuse any mind with ideas that will not harmonize with the word. Please to consider that under the teaching of Christ many of the disciples were lamentably ignorant; but when the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised, came upon them and made the vacillating Peter the champion of faith. What a transformation in his character. But do not lay one pebble for a soul that is weak in the faith to stumble over, in over-wrought presentations or expressions. Be ever consistent, calm, deep, and solid. Do not go to any extreme in anything, but keep your feet on solid rock. O precious, precious Saviour. 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he is it that loveth me, and he that believeth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.'

"This is the true test--the doing of the words of Christ. And it is the evidence of the human agent's love to Jesus, and he that doeth his will giveth to the world the practical evidence of the fruit he manifests in obedience, in purity, and in holiness of character. 'If a man love me, he will keep my words; and the Father will love him, and he will come unto him.' We, that is, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, and make our abode in him. O my brother, walk carefully with God. But remember that there are some whose eyes are intently fixed upon you, expecting that you will over-reach the mark, and stumble and fall. But if you keep in humility close to Jesus, all is well.

2 Peter 1:1-11. This is the faith which we must have, that works by love, and purifies the soul. There is no place in the school of Christ where we graduate. We are to work in the plan of addition, and the Lord will work on the plan of multiplication. It is through the constant diligence that will through the grace of Christ live on the plan of addition, making our calling and election sure, for if ye do these things 'add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.... For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'"

(Signed) Ellen G. White

Copy sent to Elders Olsen,
Jones, Daniels, and L. J. Rosseau.