

Testimony of Carlyle B. Haynes

Given in a sermon at the 1926 General Conference Session of SDAs
From *By Faith Alone* by Norval F. Pease, Pacific Press, 1962, (pp. 189-194)

The following is an excerpt from Carlyle Hayne's lengthy and stunning testimony delivered at the 1926 General Conference session at which significant debate about "righteousness by faith" occurred. Haynes told how, after having been a denominational evangelist for fifteen years, he had become engulfed in a deep spiritual darkness—a profound awareness of his own sin and separation from God and the realization that he had never taken the first simple childlike step of coming to Jesus Christ for himself. So, for the first time in his life, Haynes came to Jesus as a child with nothing to offer except his need and he received Christ and His mercy. Haynes described the joyous assurance of eternal life and the forgiveness of sin that followed. He was no longer in doubt about that anymore. He then went on to say ...

I found that something else was necessary. I had the same old problems; the same passions, appetites, lusts, desires, inclinations and dispositions; the same old will. I found it necessary to abandon myself—my life, my body, my will, all my plans and ambitions, to the Lord Jesus, and receive Him altogether. Not merely as the forgiver of my sins; not merely to receive His pardon; but to receive Him, as my Lord, my righteousness and my very life.

I learned the lesson that the Christian life is not any modification of the old life; it is not any qualification of it, any development of it, not any progression of it, any culture or refinement or education of it. It is not built on the old life at all. It does not grow from it. It is entirely another life—a new life altogether. It is the actual life of Jesus Christ himself in my flesh. And God has been teaching me that lesson. I don't think I have learned it altogether yet, but there is nothing on earth I want to learn so much as that. Years ago I used to browse around in old-book stores and seize upon dusty old historical books as supreme treasures, trying to find something that would throw light on some dark prophecy. Today...I am much more interested in my union with Jesus Christ, and in the development and growth and progress of His life in me....

Becoming a Christian, then, is not the acceptance of a body of teaching, nor a mental assent to a set of doctrines, nor believing the truth of the Bible in a mere intellectual way. It is not joining the church and partaking of the ordinances. It is entering into a new personal relation to Christ.

The inmost central glory of the gospel, therefore, is not a great truth, nor a great message, nor a great movement, but a great Person. It is Jesus Christ Himself.

Without Him there could be no gospel. He came, not so much to proclaim a message, but rather that there might be a message to proclaim. He Himself was, and is, the Message. Not His teachings, but Himself, constituted Christianity (pp. 193-194).