

The Reformation Herald

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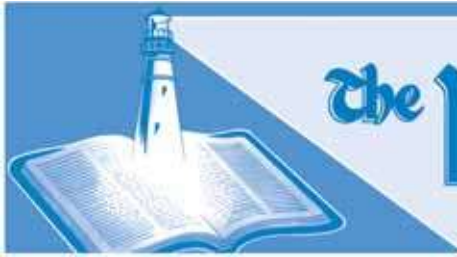
Special

80TH ANNIVERSARY

Week of Consecration

JUNE 17–26, 2005





The Reformation Herald

GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

APRIL–JUNE, 2005, VOL. XLV, NO. 2

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As we look back over the 80 years during which God has called the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement to uphold the sacred principles of present truth, we see a miracle of His grace. Struggles, hardship, and sacrifice for His cause are daily showered with blessings of providential mercy and divine protection. With deep solemnity, and living as we are in the last days of this earth's history, by His strength we continue to take our stand on the solid platform of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

This extraordinary mid-year week of prayer and consecration has been specially set aside as a time to consider carefully how the Lord has led us thus far, but more importantly, what are His intentions for our future. Our need is great, and believers all around the world are encouraged to assemble for these readings, and to remember also the isolated souls. Let us prayerfully reflect on each topic, "knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). "Truth must be practiced in order to be a power in the world. When truth abides in the heart, the daily experience is a revelation of the controlling power of Christ's grace. Never keep the truth in the outer court. Let the Holy Spirit stamp it on the soul."¹

Let us remember the last **Sabbath, June 25**, as a special **day of prayer with fasting** in behalf of our standing as a people united before a holy God. As many as are able and impressed to fast are urged to participate. On **Sunday, June 26**, a **special offering** will be gathered to promote new missions around the world. May our gracious Lord hear and answer our prayers and imbue us with the needed power to go forth in purity, energy and spotless integrity as that "spectacle unto the world" (1 Corinthians 4:9)—His faithful people in spirit and in truth!

Reference

¹ *This Day With God*, p. 70.

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—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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Creative Services: S. Lee

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EIGHTY YEARS

The Seventh-day Adventists, having a prophetic basis in Daniel 8:14, associated themselves in 1860 when they selected their name and pledged themselves to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. A few years later, in 1863, they were organized as a General Conference.

In a pamphlet written in 1897 entitled, “Methods of Labor,” Inspiration declares, “Some who now bear the message of truth will let the banner fall from their hands, and trail in the dust, and will then trample it under their feet. Some who are now in the darkness of error will receive the truth, and be converted, and will lift aloft the banner from the hands of those who now hold it.”¹

“The promises of God, which are given on condition of obedience, are for those who walk in the light of His holy word. Those who do His will may claim all the benefits the Lord has promised. The obedient do not simply cry, ‘Believe, all you have to do is believe in Christ;’ but their faith is like Noah’s and Abraham’s, which led them to keep the commandments.”²

“But, oh, sad picture! Those who do not submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit soon lose the blessings received when they acknowledged the truth as from heaven. They fall into a cold, spiritless formality; they lose their interest in perishing souls: they have ‘left their first love.’ And Christ says unto them, ‘Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent’ (Revelation

2:5). He will take His Holy Spirit from the church, and give [the Spirit] to others who will appreciate Him.”³

A spiritual revival and reformation began in 1888 and, eventually, in order that the banner of truth—the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus—might continue to be upheld, the first delegation session of the General Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was held at Gotha, Germany, from July 14–20, 1925. It is now 80 years since this body was organized. Yet just those 80 years are already equal to double the amount of time the Israelites spent wandering in the wilderness. At this juncture we need to consider seriously the Lord’s business and our duty before Him.

God has committed to us as a people a work to be accomplished on earth. Are we fulfilling that purpose with fidelity? On what conditions can we consistently claim those special promises bestowed upon “the apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10), as probation draws to a soon close? We are to proclaim the third angel’s message and to direct the minds of the people to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ has entered to make atonement for His people. The Sabbath message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of the earth may receive the warning. We must purify our souls through complete surrender to Christ and total obedience to the truth.

Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, Christ would have come to receive them.

It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan. But because of their unbelief, murmuring, rebellious actions, and hatred, He could not fulfill His covenant with them and was compelled to shut the majority out from the Promised Land. Likewise, it is the unbelief, worldliness, strife, and lack of consecration that delays the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan.⁴

If we continue this way, because of our disobedience, we may have to hang around here for many more years and, like our predecessors, risk the removal of the candlestick. Instead, we should hasten our Lord’s return by spreading the gospel to the world and by representing Christ in our life. It is our privilege not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved brethren and sisters, the time has come to re-consecrate our life to God. This is why we need this special week of prayer. We need these ten days of consecration for a deep searching of heart that the Lord may bestow upon us a stronger commitment for greater love toward Him and toward one another—love as it shines in brightest beams from the throne of glory. Let us, by God’s abundant grace, therefore make the most of this precious opportunity! **R**

References

- ¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 7, p. 18.
- ² *The Signs of the Times*, March 31, 1890.
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, July 16, 1895.
- ⁴ See *The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

A Preparing People

BY B. JAKSIC—writing from Australia

To us God sends the same message as He sent to Israel of old: “Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12). In these five words we have one of the most important messages for God’s people in all the Bible. These words contain a mighty challenge, and our eternal destiny depends upon our attitude toward this challenge.

“To Meet Thy God”

The second coming of the Lord has been the hope of God’s people throughout the centuries. It is the hope of God’s people today. They believe in His coming because their faith is established upon the Word of God, which tells us that His second coming is as definite as was His first advent.

“One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ’s second coming to complete the great work of redemption. To God’s pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in ‘the region and shadow of death,’ a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is ‘the resurrection and the life,’ to ‘bring home again His banished.’ The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer’s power and bring

them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope. Enoch, only the seventh in descent from them that dwelt in Eden, he who for three centuries on earth walked with his God, was permitted to behold from afar the coming of the Deliverer. ‘Behold,’ he declared, ‘the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all’ (Jude 14, 15). The patriarch Job in the night of his affliction exclaimed with unshaken trust: ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: . . . in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another’ (Job 19:25–27).”¹

Christ Himself taught clearly and definitely that He would come again. Before His ascension to His heavenly Father He left to His disciples and to us this most hopeful message: “I will come again” (John 14:1–3). He will not disappoint His people. He wants us to be prepared for this great and glorious event. Therefore He says, “Prepare to meet thy God.”

A wholehearted spiritual preparation

Our preparation for that glorious event must go deeper than mere formalism or outward display. Those who hope to live eternally with Christ must develop in this life,

before probation closes, those attributes that were exhibited in the life of Christ while He was on earth. His life was a revelation of the character of God. If we hope to be like Him when He appears, we must be like Him in our character and in our daily living today.

A thorough preparation on our part will touch the daily realities of our life. Preparation involves more than to call ourselves God’s people. It means more than to have our names on the church books. To be preparing for the second coming means more than to show a pious face. It means more than to know the truth and be able to defend it.

To be prepared to meet the Lord means to have the image of God restored in the soul. It means to live out all those fundamental truths that are so vital in our salvation. To be preparing means to be gaining victory over every known sin.

God does not ask the impossible when He says “Be ye also ready.” God’s people, by His wonderful grace, can be spiritually ready—they can be without “spot, or wrinkle” and “without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

Professing Christ

It is a tragic fact that many Christians profess Christ with their mouth but deny Him with their life. The message we teach has little value unless we practice it in our daily living. Our life will lack if our prayers have form without faith, if

we see our faults and do not correct them, if we profess the religion of Christ and do not bridle the tongue. "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).

Our words have an influence upon others. Few realize the importance of what they say. It is so easy to let the words pour out and then discover later how much damage has been done. Our life and our words are inseparable. Speech is one of the greatest gifts God has bestowed upon us. Solomon through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).

"God calls upon us to awake, for the end is near. Every passing hour is one of activity in the heavenly courts to make ready a people upon the earth to act a part in the great scenes that are soon to open upon us. These passing moments, that seem of so little value to us, are weighty with eternal interests. They are molding the destiny of souls for everlasting life or eternal death. The words we utter today in the ears of the people, the works we are doing, the spirit of the message we are bearing, will be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death."²

Preparation means transformation of character

The Word of God describes our characters "as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). It is impossible to build a Christlike character if we are not willing to fully surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit upon our heart. Our character can be transformed only through God's grace. It is the leaven of God's eternal truth that works secretly, silently, and steadily to transform the soul.

A Christlike character is not inherited; we cannot attain to perfection of character by relying upon our own efforts. It is only through the merits and power of Christ that we can reach perfection of Christian character. Yet we must take hold of

the strength that is offered to us. The Lord declares, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isaiah 27:5).

"None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through cooperation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory."³

Surrender of the will

One of the greatest battles fought within the human heart is the entire surrender of the will to the Lord. The transformation of our character begins when we can say, as did Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Although this surrender requires a real struggle on our part, it must ever be remembered that victory comes only after we surrender. No one ever gave up more than Christ did. He did it all for us. How willing, then, should we be to surrender our all to Him. This surrender is obtained through constant and intimate fellowship with God through prayer and seeking of His will.

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight—the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up.

"He who determines to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of an unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Selfishness and pride will make a stand against anything that would show them to be sinful. We cannot, of ourselves, conquer the evil desires and habits that strive for the mastery. We cannot overcome the mighty foe who holds us in his thrall. God alone can give us the victory. He desires us to have the mastery over ourselves, our own will and ways. But He cannot work in us without our consent and cooperation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to cooperate with God.

"The victory is not won without much earnest prayer, without the humbling of self at every step. Our will is not to be forced into cooperation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the will of God; but if you are 'willing to be made willing,' God will accomplish the work for you, even 'casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:5). Then you will 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure' (Philippians 2:12, 13).

"But many are attracted by the beauty of Christ and the glory of heaven, who yet shrink from the conditions by which alone these can become their own. There are many in the broad way who are not

fully satisfied with the path in which they walk. They long to break from the slavery of sin, and in their own strength they seek to make a stand against their sinful practices. They look toward the narrow way and the strait gate; but selfish pleasure, love of the world, pride, unsanctified ambition, place a barrier between them and the Saviour. To renounce their own will, their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires a sacrifice at which they hesitate and falter and turn back. Many 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able' (Luke 13:24). They desire the good, they make some effort to obtain it; but they do not choose it; they have not a settled purpose to secure it at the cost of all things.

"The only hope for us if we would overcome is to unite our will to God's will and work in cooperation with Him, hour by hour and day by day. We cannot retain self and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the mind of Christ. Pride and self-sufficiency must be crucified. Are we willing to pay the price required of us? Are we willing to have our will brought into perfect conformity to the will of God? Until we are willing, the transforming grace of God cannot be manifest upon us.

"The warfare which we are to wage is the 'good fight of faith' (1 Timothy 6:12). 'I also labor,' said the apostle Paul, 'striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily' (Colossians 1:29)."⁴

Complete surrender

"To have the religion of Christ means that you have absolutely surrendered your all to God, and consented to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit moral power will be given you, and not only will you have your former entrusted talents for the service of God, but their efficiency will be greatly multiplied. The surrender of

all our powers to God greatly simplifies the problem of life. It weakens and cuts short a thousand struggles with the passions of the natural heart. Religion is as a golden cord that binds the souls of both youth and aged to Christ. Through it the willing and obedient are brought safely through dark and intricate paths to the city of God."⁵

"Be not discouraged because your heart seems hard. Every obstacle, every internal foe, only increases your need of Christ. He came to take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. Look to Him for special grace to overcome your peculiar faults. When assailed by temptation, steadfastly resist the evil promptings; say to your soul, 'How can I dishonor my Redeemer? I have given myself to Christ; I cannot do the works of Satan.' Cry to the dear Saviour for help to sacrifice every idol and to put away every darling sin. Let the eye of faith see Jesus standing before the Father's throne, presenting His wounded hands as He pleads for you. Believe that strength comes to you through your precious Saviour."⁶

A life of obedience

True obedience is the result of a fully surrendered life. Before we can hope to develop a Christian character we must know by experience that obedience is not just an outward compliance to God's requirements; it is the work of love in our souls. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Love gladly obeys. The nearer we come to Christ, the more we love Him and the more obedient we will want to be. Our love for Him and our fellowship with Him bring our life into conformity to His will.

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses.

The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us."⁷

"God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. 'I delight to do Thy will, O My God,' He declared; 'yea, Thy law is within My heart' (Psalm 40:8). Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' (Luke 2:49). He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. 'My meat,' He said, 'is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work' (John 4:34). . . .

"He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves coworkers with God and Christ and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul. Of those who faithfully serve Him the Lord says, 'They shall be Mine . . . in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him' (Malachi 3:17)."⁸

Reaching our goal—being prepared

The importance of reaching goals or objectives is clearly taught in the Word of God. Christ was a man of supreme objectives. He came to die as our substitute, to break the power of Satan, to bring us eternal life. He did not fail in reaching

these objectives. One of the greatest of His objectives will be realized at His second coming, when He will take His people to His heavenly home.

We as a people must also have our objectives. The most challenging one is to be prepared to meet our God. We are to be “the light of the world.” By the Lord’s grace we can reach our goal—the perfection of character, thus being prepared. In order to reach our goal we must grow in Christ, we must walk with Christ, we must talk with Christ, we must know Christ, we must live like Christ, we must do the work of Christ.

Our objectives are reached when we acknowledge that all glory belongs to God, when our glory is laid in the dust. Our objectives are reached fully when we accept the counsel of the True Witness. When we have true love and faith. When we have spiritual discernment. When we are clothed in the white garments of Christ’s righteousness.

We also have to experience the Gethsemane objective. Here is where we learn whether we hate the sins of the world and love humanity. In Gethsemane we face the objective of drinking the bitter cup alone, of wrestling, agonizing, until victory is won.

“The way to heaven is a self-denying way. But when you think the way is too strait, and there is too much self-denial in the narrow path; when you say, How hard to give up all, ask yourselves the question, What did Christ give up for me? This question puts anything that we might call self-denial in the shade. Behold Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Look upon the great drops of blood that are forcing themselves from His pores while He is bearing the inexpressible agony of

soul. Look upon Him in the judgment hall while He is derided, mocked, and insulted by the infuriated mob. Behold Him clothed in that old purple robe, and hear the coarse jest and cruel mocking. See them place the crown of thorns on that noble brow, and smite Him with a reed, causing the thorns to penetrate His holy temples, so that the blood-drops trickle down His face and fall upon the ground. Hear the murderous throng eagerly crying for the blood of the Son of God. He is delivered into their hands, and pale, and weak, and fainting, He is led away to the hill of crucifixion. They stretch His form upon the cross, and drive the nails through His tender hands and feet. Behold Him hanging upon the cross through dreadful hours of agony until angels veil their faces from the scene, and the sun hides its light, refusing to shine upon the dreadful sight. Think of these things, and then ask, is the way too strait?

“Oh that every one might realize that Jesus has something in store for him vastly better than that which he would choose for himself! Would that all might come to understand the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the blessedness of righteousness! Would that all might see how powerless is all effort to contend with Omnipotence! Man is doing the greatest injury to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the mind and will of God. He is sowing to his flesh, and of the flesh he will reap corruption. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by God, who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of His creatures. In order to be happy ourselves, we must live to make others happy. We must yield our possessions, our talents, and our affections, in grateful devotion to Christ, and in this way

we may find happiness here and immortality hereafter.

“The most trying experiences in the Christian life may be the most blessed. The special providences of the dark hours may encourage the soul in the future attacks of Satan, and equip the servant of God to stand in fiery trials.”⁹

The time to attain consistent victory, the time to be a preparing—even a prepared—people is now, today, before life ends, before probation closes. We can reach all these objectives if we, by the grace of the Lord, so choose. The greatest and the most glorious of all our objectives is to gain the victory over every sin and to win heaven.

The great climax

The real goal of Christ’s second coming is not the destruction of the earth but the creation of the glorious “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

How wonderful will it be to hear the words of our loving Saviour and Redeemer: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

My dear brethren and sisters, let us be ready, let us be prepared. The Lord is coming to take us to the kingdom that Jesus has prepared for us. May we all be there. R

References

- ¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 299.
- ² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 716.
- ³ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 531.
- ⁴ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 141–144.
- ⁵ *Messages to Young People*, p. 30.
- ⁶ *The Sanctified Life*, pp. 90, 91.
- ⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.
- ⁸ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 282, 283.
- ⁹ *The Review and Herald*, April 17, 1894.



A Remnant People

BY D. P. SILVA—writing from U.S.A.

The word “remnant” means: “a small part still left,” “what is left over,” “remainder,” “residue,” “a small remaining part,” “a fragment left over,” “a surviving trace.”

In the Word of God there are wonderful promises to the faithful remnant. At the same time, the remnant is identified with some special attributes. In the following scriptures, it is written:

“The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid” (Zephaniah 3:13).

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

In these scriptures we find the following characteristics: (1) “they shall not do iniquity”; (2) “nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.” Then, we have these promises: (1) they “shall feed and lie down,” and (2) “none shall make them afraid.”

In Revelation 12:17, it is registered: (1) they keep the commandments of God, and (2) they have the

testimony of Jesus Christ. In the same book, chapter 19:10, it is written that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Revelation 14:12, a parallel scripture, describes them: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

From the inspired writings we have enough information to identify the faithful remnant: (1) they are not liars; (2) they keep God’s commandments; (3) they believe and obey the divine instructions found in the Word of God; (4) they have the faith of Jesus. In other words: They believe the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ and, as a result, they obey God’s commandments.

The faith of Jesus

“The faith of Jesus has been overlooked and treated in an indifferent, careless manner. It has not occupied the prominent position in which it was revealed to John. Faith in Christ as the sinner’s only hope has been largely left out, not only of the discourses given but of the religious experience of very many who claim to believe the third angel’s message.”¹

“The third angel’s message is the proclamation of the commandments

of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness.

“‘The faith of Jesus.’ It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel’s message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.

“The only safety for the Israelites was blood upon the doorposts. God said, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you’ (Exodus 12:13). All other devices for safety would be without avail. Nothing but the blood on the doorposts would bar the way that the angel of death should not enter. There is salvation for the sinner in the blood of Jesus Christ alone, which cleanseth us from all sin. The man with a cultivated intellect may have

vast stores of knowledge, he may engage in theological speculations, he may be great and honored of men and be considered the repository of knowledge, but unless he has a saving knowledge of Christ crucified for him, and by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, he is lost. Christ ‘was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:5). ‘Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ,’ will be our only hope for time and our song throughout eternity.”²

“Remember that the exercise of faith is the one means of preserving it. Should you sit always in one position, without moving, your muscles would become strengthless and your limbs would lose the power of motion. The same is true in regard to your religious experience. You must have faith in the promises of God. . . . Faith will perfect itself in exercise and activity.

“It is of the greatest importance to us that we surround the soul with the atmosphere of faith. Every day we are deciding our own eternal destiny in harmony with the atmosphere that surrounds the soul. We are individually accountable for the influence that we exert, and consequences that we do not see will result from our words and actions. If God would have saved Sodom for the sake of ten righteous persons, what would be the influence for good that might go out as the result of the faithfulness of the people of God if everyone who professed the name of Christ were also clothed with His righteousness?”³

“Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.”⁴

“The questions that most concern us are, Do I believe with saving faith on the Son of God? Is my life in harmony with the divine law? ‘He

that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.’ ‘And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments’ (John 3:36; 1 John 2:3).”⁵

They have a working faith

“The forgiveness of sin is promised to him who repents and believes; the crown of life will be the reward of him who is faithful to the end. We may grow in grace by improving through the grace we already have. We are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world if we would be found blameless in the day of God. Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming. Works without faith are dead, and faith without works is dead. Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail in our behalf. Through faith in Him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God. The faith we are required to have is not a do-nothing faith; saving faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul. He who will lift up holy hands to God without wrath and doubting will walk intelligently in the way of God’s commandments.

“If we are to have pardon for our sins, we must first have a realization of what sin is, that we may repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. We must have a solid foundation for our faith; it must be founded on the Word of God, and its results will be seen in obedience to God’s expressed will. Says the apostle, ‘Without . . . [holiness] no man shall see the Lord’ (Hebrews 12:14). . . .

“We are living in an important and interesting period of this earth’s history. We need more faith than we have yet had; we need a firmer hold from above. Satan is working with all power to obtain the victory over us, for he knows that he has but a short time in which to work. Paul had fear and trembling in working out his salvation; and should not we fear lest a promise being left us, we should any of us seem to come short of it,

and prove ourselves unworthy of eternal life? We should watch unto prayer, strive with agonizing effort to enter in at the strait gate.”⁶

“When you respond to the drawing of Christ, and join yourself to Him, you manifest saving faith. . . . Faith familiarizes the soul with the existence and presence of God, and, living with an eye single to the glory of God, more and more we discern the beauty of His character, the excellence of His grace. Our souls become strong in spiritual power; for we are breathing the atmosphere of heaven. . . . We are rising above the world, beholding Him who is the Chief among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely, and by beholding we are to become changed into His image.”⁷

“Faith, saving faith, is to be taught. The definition of this faith in Jesus Christ may be described in few words: It is the act of the soul by which the whole man is given over to the guardianship and control of Jesus Christ. He abides in Christ and Christ abides in the soul by faith as supreme. The believer commits his soul and body to God and with assurance may say, Christ is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. All who will do this will be saved unto life eternal. There will be an assurance that the soul is washed in the blood of Christ and clothed with His righteousness and precious in the sight of Jesus. Our thoughts and our hopes are on the second advent of our Lord. That is the day when the Judge of all the earth will reward the trust of His people.”⁸

“Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing. Truth, uprightness, purity, have been pointed out as secrets of life’s success. It is

faith that puts us in possession of these principles.”⁹

“Faith is simple in its operation and powerful in its results. Many professed Christians, who have a knowledge of the sacred Word, and believe its truth, fail in the childlike trust that is essential to the religion of Jesus. They do not reach out with that peculiar touch that brings the virtue of healing to the soul.”¹⁰

They are justified by faith

“The faith that justifies always produces first true repentance, and then good works, which are the fruit of that faith. There is no saving faith that does not produce good fruit. God gave Christ to our world to become the sinner’s substitute. The moment true faith in the merits of the costly atoning sacrifice is exercised, claiming Christ as a personal Saviour, that moment the sinner is justified before God, because he is pardoned.”¹¹

“Faith in Christ is something more than belief in Him as the world’s Redeemer; it accepts Him as our Redeemer, our Saviour. Our will is to be governed by His will. We are to purify the affections, and regulate the temper, and shape the life, after the model given us in the life and character of Christ. This is an intelligent confession of Christ. This is a faith that is shown by works, and it is the only genuine, saving faith.”¹²

“Faith is a living, abiding principle. Its object is truth—divine, eternal, changeless truth. Genuine, saving faith is inseparable from repentance and conversion, and will manifest the fruits of the Spirit. It is a continual, conscious trust in Jesus. The sinner’s only hope is in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. There is no resting in any efforts of our own, yet these efforts must be made.”¹³

“Do you believe with all your heart that Jesus is your Saviour? Do you bring Him into your life, and weave Him into your character, until you are one with Christ? Many accept Jesus as an article of belief, but they have no saving faith in Him

as their sacrifice and Saviour. They have no realization that Christ has died to save them from the penalty of the law which they have transgressed, in order that they may be brought back to loyalty to God. Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression? Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but that you may be saved from your sins; that you, through the merits of His righteousness, may be reinstated to the favor of God. Do you know that a holy and just God will accept your efforts to keep His law, through the merits of His own beloved Son who died for your rebellion and sin?

They accept the counsel of the True Witness

“You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that His death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ’s blood. The eyes of fallen men may be anointed with the eyesalve of spiritual comprehension, and they may see themselves as they really are—poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. They may be brought to realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

“The faith essential for salvation is not mere nominal faith, but an abiding principle, deriving vital power from Christ. It will lead the soul to feel the love of Christ to such a degree that the character will be refined, purified, ennobled. This faith in Christ is not merely an impulse, but a power that works by love and purifies the soul. It accomplishes something, bringing the soul under discipline, elevating it from defilement, and bringing it into connection with Christ, till it appropriates His virtue to the soul’s need. This is saving faith.”¹⁵

They love God and their neighbors

“The whole duty of man is summed up by the Saviour. He says, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Matthew 22:37, 39). In the word the plan of salvation is plainly delineated. The gift of eternal life is promised on condition of saving faith in Christ. The drawing power of the Holy Spirit is pointed out as an agent in the work of man’s salvation. The rewards of the faithful, the punishment of the guilty, are all laid out in clear lines. The Bible contains the science of salvation for all those who will hear and do the words of Christ.”¹⁶

They are reformers, restorers, repairers

“The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah’s day was a symbol, as outlined in the words of Isaiah: ‘They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities.’ ‘They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in’ (Isaiah 61:4; 58:12).

“The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God’s law—the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard.”¹⁷

“[Isaiah 58:8, 9, 12–14 quoted.] Here are given the characteristics of those who shall be reformers, who will bear the banner of the third angel’s message, those who avow themselves God’s commandment-

keeping people, and who honor God, and are earnestly engaged, in the sight of all the universe, in building up the old waste places. Who is it that calls them, The repairers of the breach, The restorers of paths to dwell in? It is God. Their names are registered in heaven as reformers, restorers, as raising the foundations of many generations.”¹⁸

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.”¹⁹

“You who profess to love God, take Jesus with you wherever you go; and, like the patriarchs of old, erect an altar to the Lord wherever you pitch your tent. A reformation in this respect is needed, a reformation that shall be deep and broad. Parents need to reform; ministers need to reform. They need God in their households. They need to build the waste places of Zion, to set up her gates and make strong her walls for a defense of the people.”²⁰

They are a little company who resists the supremacy of Satan

“The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be

complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They shall be betrayed ‘both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends.’”²¹

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. At that time the gold will be separated from the dross. . . . Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness.”²²

“The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God’s people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath.

“Satan will arouse indignation against the minority who refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God. Wealth, genius, education, will combine to cover them with contempt. Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by

boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. By false representations and angry appeals, men will stir up the passions of the people. Not having a ‘Thus saith the Scriptures’ to bring against the advocates of the Bible Sabbath, they will resort to oppressive enactments to supply the lack. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for Sunday laws. But those who fear God cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield will be fought the last great conflict in the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Today, as in the days of Esther and Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate His truth and His people.”²³

They will be overcomers

“At last the victory was gained. The army following the banner with the inscription, ‘The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,’ was gloriously triumphant. The soldiers of Christ were close beside the gates of the city, and with joy the city received her King. The kingdom of peace and joy and everlasting righteousness was established.”²⁴

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- ¹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 168.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 173.
- ³ *In Heavenly Places*, p. 104.
- ⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 396.
- ⁶ *Faith and Works*, pp. 48, 49.
- ⁷ *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 183.
- ⁸ *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 531.
- ⁹ *Education*, p. 253.
- ¹⁰ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1074.
- ¹¹ *Our High Calling*, p. 52.
- ¹² *The Bible Echo*, June 1, 1887.
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- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1891.
- ¹⁶ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 187.
- ¹⁷ *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 677, 678.
- ¹⁸ *The Review and Herald*, October 13, 1891.
- ¹⁹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.
- ²⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 320, 321.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 231.
- ²² *Prophets and Kings*, p. 188.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 605, 606.
- ²⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 41, 42.

A Devotional People

BY ROLLY DUMAGUIT—writing from Belize

A people preoccupied with their religious duties, consecrated, ardent, enthusiastic, and practicing their faith with vigor—these are the ones upon whom the Lord will bestow His supreme regard, utilizing them to finish His work. Tracing down the long line of history, we can see that “in every period of this earth’s history, God has had His men of opportunity, to whom He has said, ‘Ye are My witnesses.’ In every age there have been devout men, who gathered up the rays of light as they flashed upon their pathway, and who spoke to the people the words of God. Enoch, Noah, Moses, Daniel, and the long roll of patriarchs and prophets—these were ministers of righteousness. They were not infallible; they were weak, erring men; but the Lord wrought through them as they gave themselves to His service.”¹

In certain cases, these faithful ones communicated God’s final warning to a people, a nation, or to the world doomed to destruction. To proclaim such messages often meant hardship, derision, and even death. With prayers, fasting, and often reluctance, the servants of God went forth, courageously discharging their duties.

The devotional life of Enoch

“Of Enoch it is written that he lived sixty-five years, and begat a son. After that he walked with God three hundred years. . . . But after the birth of his first son, Enoch reached a higher experience; he was drawn into a closer relationship with God. He realized more fully his own obligations and responsibility as a son of God. And as he saw the

child’s love for its father, its simple trust in his protection; as he felt the deep, yearning tenderness of his own heart for that firstborn son, he learned a precious lesson of the wonderful love of God to men in the gift of His Son, and the confidence which the children of God may repose in their heavenly Father. The infinite, unfathomable love of God through Christ became the subject of his meditations day and night; and with all the fervor of his soul he sought to reveal that love to the people among whom he dwelt. . . .

“Enoch was a man of strong and highly cultivated mind and extensive knowledge; he was honored with special revelations from God; yet being in constant communion with Heaven, with a sense of the divine greatness and perfection ever before him, he was one of the humblest of men. The closer the connection with God, the deeper was the sense of his own weakness and imperfection.

“Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them, and spent much time in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer. Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul; he lived in the very atmosphere of heaven. . . .

“In the midst of a life of active labor, Enoch steadfastly maintained his communion with God. The greater and more pressing his labors, the more constant and earnest were his prayers. He continued to exclude himself, at certain periods, from all

society. After remaining for a time among the people, laboring to benefit them by instruction and example, he would withdraw, to spend a season in solitude, hungering and thirsting for that divine knowledge which God alone can impart. Communing thus with God, Enoch came more and more to reflect the divine image. His face was radiant with a holy light, even the light that shineth in the face of Jesus. As he came forth from these divine communings, even the ungodly beheld with awe the impress of heaven upon his countenance.”²

The devotional life of Abraham

“Of Abraham it is written that ‘he was called the friend of God,’ ‘the father of all them that believe’ (James 2:23; Romans 4:11). The testimony of God concerning this faithful patriarch is, ‘Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’ And again, ‘I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him’ (Genesis 26:5; 18:19). It was a high honor to which Abraham was called, that of being the father of the people who for centuries were the guardians and preservers of the truth of God for the world—of that people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah. But He who called the patriarch judged him worthy. It is God that speaks. He who understands the thoughts afar off, and places the right estimate upon men,

says, 'I know him.' There would be on the part of Abraham no betraying of the truth for selfish purposes. He would keep the law and deal justly and righteously. And he would not only fear the Lord himself, but would cultivate religion in his home. He would instruct his family in righteousness. The law of God would be the rule in his household."³

"Abraham, 'the friend of God,' set us a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained. In following years, there were those among the roving Canaanites who received instruction from Abraham; and whenever one of these came to that altar, he knew who had been there before him; and when he had pitched his tent, he repaired the altar, and there worshiped the living God."⁴

Abraham's life was filled with faith, action, and prayer. Before any undertaking he would first see to it that God's providence would be consulted. Tracing his travels from Mesopotamia to Canaan, to Egypt and throughout his sojourns in the wilderness, Abraham traveled without chart, compass, or maps. His lone guide was the voice of God. Note his courage and valor in rescuing the dwellers of Sodom. See him talking with God as a friend and receiving the promise that he would be a father of a great nation. Feel his anguish when called to slay his beloved son as an offering. Then you will know that his success both in material and spiritual things was due to his fidelity and devotion to God.

The devotional life of Moses

"Younger than Joseph or Daniel was Moses when removed from the sheltering care of his childhood home; yet already the same agencies that shaped their lives had molded his. Only twelve years did he spend with his Hebrew kindred; but during these years was laid the foundation of his greatness; it was laid by the hand

of one little known to fame. . . .

"From the humble home in Goshen the son of Jochebed passed to the palace of the Pharaohs, to the Egyptian princess, by her to be welcomed as a loved and cherished son. In the schools of Egypt, Moses received the highest civil and military training. Of great personal attractions, noble in form and stature, of cultivated mind and princely bearing, and renowned as a military leader, he became the nation's pride. The king of Egypt was also a member of the priesthood; and Moses, though refusing to participate in the heathen worship, was initiated into all the mysteries of the Egyptian religion. Egypt at this time being still the most powerful and most highly civilized of nations, Moses, as its prospective sovereign, was heir to the highest honors this world could bestow. But his was a nobler choice. For the honor of God and the deliverance of His down-trodden people, Moses sacrificed the honors of Egypt. Then, in a special sense, God undertook his training.

"Not yet was Moses prepared for his lifework. He had yet to learn the lesson of dependence upon divine power. He had mistaken God's purpose. It was his hope to deliver Israel by force of arms. For this he risked all, and failed. In defeat and disappointment he became a fugitive and exile in a strange land.

"In the wilds of Midian, Moses spent forty years as a keeper of sheep. Apparently cut off forever from his life's mission, he was receiving the discipline essential for its fulfillment. Wisdom to govern an ignorant and undisciplined multitude must be gained through self-mastery. In the care of the sheep and the tender lambs he must obtain the experience that would make him a faithful, long-suffering shepherd to Israel. That he might become a representative of God, he must learn of Him.

"The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt, the affection of his foster mother, his own position as the grandson of the king, the

luxury and vice that allured in ten thousand forms, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, had made an impression on his mind and character. In the stern simplicity of the wilderness all this disappeared.

"Amidst the solemn majesty of the mountain solitudes Moses was alone with God. Everywhere the Creator's name was written. Moses seemed to stand in His presence and to be overshadowed by His power. Here his self-sufficiency was swept away. In the presence of the Infinite One he realized how weak, how inefficient, how short-sighted, is man.

"Here Moses gained that which went with him throughout the years of his toilsome and care-burdened life—a sense of the personal presence of the Divine One. Not merely did he look down the ages for Christ to be made manifest in the flesh; he saw Christ accompanying the host of Israel in all their travels. When misunderstood and misrepresented, when called to bear reproach and insult, to face danger and death, he was able to endure 'as seeing Him who is invisible' (Hebrews 11:27).

"Moses did not merely think of God, he saw Him. God was the constant vision before him. Never did he lose sight of His face. . . .

"The results of that training, of the lessons there taught, are bound up, not only with the history of Israel, but with all which from that day to this has told for the world's progress. The highest testimony to the greatness of Moses, the judgment passed upon his life by Inspiration, is, 'There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face' (Deuteronomy 34:10)."⁵

The devotional life of the apostles

"And [the new believers], continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having

favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:46, 47).

“The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this they realized what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them.

“These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised.”⁶

The devotional life of the remnant

“Communion with God will ennoble the character and the life. Men will take knowledge of us, as of the first disciples, that we have been with Jesus. This will impart to the worker a power that nothing else can give. Of this power he must not allow himself to be deprived.

“We must live a twofold life—a life of thought and action, of silent prayer and earnest work.”⁷

“Prayer and effort, effort and prayer, will be the business of your life. You must pray as though the efficiency and praise were all due to God, and labor as though duty were all your own.”⁸

When I was traveling in the Philippines and boarded a ship, one of my fellow passengers was a

Moslem priest. At a designated hour of prayer, even amidst the noisy crowd, he sneaked into a corner of the room, took out his prayer cloth, and prostrated down facing the east to send his regular prayer to Allah. I wonder how many Reformers in these perilous times are as active as this priest was in their devotion to God. We need to be sincere in our personal prayers and in our family worship; to be very regular in attendance at all our church meetings, and to be very active in sharing and witnessing for the truth to others.

a. Personal prayer and Bible study

Just as water, food, and air are indispensable to physical life, likewise prayer and Bible study are indispensable to spiritual life. The apostle Paul admonishes us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Lord Jesus reminds us also to “search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life” (John 5:39).

Satan attacks us on every side and at every moment. That is why “no man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His word. Here are revealed the wiles of the tempter and the means by which he may be successfully resisted. Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages, by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually: ‘Lead us not into temptation’ (Matthew 6:13).”⁹

“Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind.”¹⁰

“Watch, brethren, the first dimming of your light, the first neglect of prayer, the first symptom of spiritual slumber.”¹¹

We can send our petitions to God wherever we are, whatever we are doing and whenever we have need. “We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart’s desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.”¹²

b. Family worship

Family worship is the most important hour in our family life. Make it interesting and let everybody participate. These services are the thermometer of our spirituality; they bind together the family in one cord of love, unity, and devotion to God. Let us remember that the family that prays together stays together.

“In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and to ask Him for His help and guidance and watchcare during the day! How fitting, also, when evening comes, for parents and children to gather once more before Him and thank Him for the blessings of the day that is past!

“The father, or, in his absence, the mother, should conduct the worship, selecting a portion of Scripture that is interesting and easily understood. The service should be short. When a long chapter is read and a long prayer offered, the service is made wearisome, and at its close a sense of relief is felt. God is dishonored when the hour of worship is made dry and irksome, when it is so tedious, so lacking in interest, that the children dread it.

“Fathers and mothers, make the hour of worship intensely interesting. There is no reason why this

hour should not be the most pleasant and enjoyable of the day. A little thought given to preparation for it will enable you to make it full of interest and profit. From time to time let the service be varied.

Questions may be asked on the portion of Scripture read, and a few earnest, timely remarks may be made. A song of praise may be sung. The prayer offered should be short and pointed. In simple, earnest words let the one who leads in prayer praise God for His goodness and ask Him for help. As circumstances permit, let the children join in the reading and the prayer.¹³

c. Public prayer

One of the most essential factors for our spiritual growth is faithful attendance at all our church meetings and gatherings. The apostle Paul says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

"Let our prayers ascend to God for His converting, transforming grace. Meetings should be held in every church for solemn prayer and earnest searching of the word to know what is truth. Take the promises of God, and ask God in living faith for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is shed upon us, marrow and fatness will be drawn from the word of God."¹⁴

"Some, fearing they will suffer loss of earthly treasure, neglect prayer and the assembling of themselves together for the worship of God, that they may have more time to devote to their farms or their business. They show by their works which world they place the highest estimate upon. They sacrifice religious privileges, which are essential to their spiritual advancement, for the things of this life and fail to obtain a knowledge of the divine will. They come short of perfecting Christian character and do not meet the measurement of God. They

make their temporal, worldly interests first, and rob God of the time which they should devote to His service. Such persons God marks, and they will receive a curse rather than a blessing."¹⁵

d. Sharing and witnessing

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1, 2).

"The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God."¹⁶

"It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of soul-saving depends alone upon the ministry. The humble, consecrated believer upon whom the Master of the vineyard places a burden for souls is to be given encouragement by the men upon whom the Lord has laid larger responsibilities. Those who stand as leaders in the church of God are to realize that the Saviour's commission is given to all who believe in His name. God will send forth into His vineyard many who have not been dedicated to the ministry by the laying on of hands."¹⁷

"The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."¹⁸

Conclusion

"When the churches become living, working churches, the Holy Spirit will be given in answer to their sincere request. Then the truth of God's word will be regard-

ed with new interest, and will be explored as if it were a revelation just from the courts above. Every declaration of inspiration concerning Christ will take hold of the inmost soul of those who love Him. Envy, jealousy, evil surmising, will cease. The Bible will be regarded as a charter from heaven. Its study will absorb the mind, and its truths will feast the soul. The promises of God now repeated as if the soul had never tasted of His love, will then glow upon the altar of the heart, and fall in burning words from the lips of the messengers of God. They will then plead with souls with an earnestness that cannot be repulsed. Then the windows of heaven will be open for the showers of the latter rain. The followers of Christ will be united in love.

"The only way the truth can be presented to the world, in its pure and holy character, is for those who claim to believe it, to be exponents of its power. The Bible requires the sons and daughters of God to stand on an elevated platform; for God calls upon them to represent Christ to the world. As they represent Christ, they represent the Father. Unity of believers testifies of their oneness with Christ, and this unity is required by the accumulated light which now shines upon the pathway of the children of God."¹⁹

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A Peculiar People

BY D. SAMY DOSS—writing from South Africa

We are known for a lot of things. At one time we may be known for our beauty or handsomeness. At other times we may be known for our shabbiness or ugliness. Some may know us by our jobs. Others may know us by the cars we drive or the house we live in. We may be known by our excellence in certain fields. I think that eventually we, being Christians, will become known by our Christian living. In fact, God will identify us as His own only if we live holy lives in harmony with His holy Word.

We live peculiar lives. Lives that are unique, distinct, distinguished and denominated.

“God’s people are to be distinguished as a people who serve Him fully, wholeheartedly, taking no honor to themselves, and remembering that by a most solemn covenant they have bound themselves to serve the Lord, and Him only. . . .

“Who are these?—God’s denominated people—those who on this earth have witnessed to their loyalty. Who are they?—Those who have kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; those who have owned the Crucified One as their Saviour.”¹

This is the result of having accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Once we have gained the essential knowledge of Him who created us, we soon understand God’s grace and what it truly means to walk with Christ, who foreknew us from the beginning as His precious, peculiar treasure. If we are

faithful to the core in our belief that we are indeed a special people of God, then we stand out exceptionally and remarkably, living a life that is Christlike. All—our character, appearance, attitude, disposition, deportment, conversation, thoughts, motives and purposes—will bear the heavenly signet.

What does it mean to be peculiar?

By definition, the term “peculiar” has several meanings just as any term in the English language has several synonyms or equivalents and connotations.

Peculiar means special; unique; to have characteristics exclusively of one’s own; to be the property of one; distinct; separate; to belong particularly or exclusively to one, as an exclusive possession of God; treasured possession of God; encircled.

Not odd or weird

While we may be unique and distinct, we are not odd, eccentric, queer or weird. While we may be peculiar in many aspects pleasing in the sight of God, though not in the sight of men, we ought not to be peculiar in senseless forms or idiosyncrasies in which God would not delight. His peculiar people are not fanatics or cultists. We should not be like those who are majoring in minors and attach undue importance to unwanted practices just to be seen as odd or eccentric. In other words, we are not to be like the Pharisees who trod weightier matters underfoot and were bothered too much concerning lighter and insignificant

matters just to be seen and applauded by men.

“While you shall not conform to the world, remember that our faith bears the stamp of singularity, and makes us a peculiar people. Therefore, all odd notions and individual peculiarities and narrow plans that would give false impressions of the greatness of the work, should be avoided. None of the workers should manufacture crosses and duties; for the Bible has given the rule, the cross, the way.”²

Peculiar people—people of God’s own possession by creation

The whole earth and everything in it belongs to God (Psalms 24:1; 50:10); yet of all His possessions, there is one that He prizes above all others. His promise is, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine” (Exodus 19:5).

“We are [God’s] by creation and by redemption. Our very bodies are not our own, to treat as we please, to cripple by habits that lead to decay, making it impossible to render to God perfect service. Our lives and all our faculties belong to Him.”³

This concept of God’s special possession is captured in two unusual words used in the New Testament: *peripoiesis* (1 Peter 2:9) and *periousios* (Titus 2:14). The King James Version renders these with the adjective “peculiar.” Unfortunately, this English word can mean either (1) odd, curious, eccentric, or (2) special, distinctive or of own possession.

Some people unwittingly attach the first of these meanings to the biblical passages. However, the second meaning, which is less familiar, is actually much closer to the biblical idea. Yet it, too, does not fully convey the true meaning of the words. In 1 Peter 2:9 the church is referred to as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession (*laos eis peripoiesin*).” In Titus 2:14 the word likewise connotes the idea of people of His special possession.

God’s own possession by redemption

We are God’s prized possession because of the tremendous price He paid to acquire us—the sacrifice of His Son.

We become the people of God by His creation and redemption. When God redeems us, we become His own. To redeem is to “buy back.” It draws its meaning from the marketplace. This word is used elsewhere to refer to the release of a slave or prisoner by the payment of a ransom. God redeemed His people Israel from slavery in Egypt. More importantly, Christ has redeemed His people from slavery to sin (Isaiah 1:2–9). We once belonged to sin and were held captive by the evil one. While we were in slavery to sin, we could not enjoy fellowship with God. Christ paid a costly ransom price for us in shedding His own blood for us. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Only the precious blood of Christ—not the blood of any man or even any angel—could redeem us.

“All who cherish the Lord as their portion in this life will be under His control, and will receive the sign, the mark of God, which shows them to be God’s special possession.”⁴

If Christ has redeemed you, then no longer are you to serve sin,

but instead your Lord and Master. He owns you now. You are not your own and cannot do as you please! You have been redeemed not only for your personal happiness and gratification, but for His glory. You were freed from sin and are now His possession.

This exalted position of our being God’s special treasure carries with it some weighty responsibilities. We are called to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9), and we are to be “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Just as Israel, God’s treasured people in the Old Testament, was called upon to bear witness in their world, so the church, God’s *peripoiesis*, is now being called upon to bear witness in our world.

A unique and special treasure being purified

We become God’s people by purification. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and since God is perfect in holiness and hates sin, His people must be purified if they are to enjoy fellowship with Him. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). God cannot look upon evil, and evil men cannot see God. In other words, only holy men can see God, as it is written in Hebrews 12:14, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” So, to become holy, there must be purification (sanctification) so that God will be able to look upon us favorably, and so that we will one day see God.

Every time we sin, we become defiled by that sin. How do we become purified under the new covenant? “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We do not need to go through some rigorous, elaborate ritual, but are simply to turn to God in prayer, repenting of our sins, confessing them to the Lord. He will cleanse us. And since God’s grace has then abound-

ed, shall we continue in sin? Nay, God forbid. (See Romans 6:1–15.)

“The religion of Jesus Christ never degrades the receiver. If it finds men and women earthly, common, coarse, unkindly in words, harsh in speech, selfish and self-caring, truth received in the heart commences its purifying, refining process. In words, in dress, in all our habits, there is seen reformation and those things that please God. Then all the world may see its influence in the transforming process.”⁵

As people of God, we should follow the Lord’s injunction: “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16); “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

A peculiar people who bear witness unto the world

We can bear witness only by imitating Christ in our life—not doing things in the natural, carnal way but rather doing everything in Christ’s way. The fruit of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22, 23, and there are also several aspects of Christian standards which our Saviour mentioned in His Sermon on the Mount:

Take, for instance, the issue of revenge. The old carnal way meant that if someone wronged me, I had a right to confront him and get my pound of flesh. Then the idea of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was instituted not to give limitless or ultimate rights to retaliate—it was rather intended to restrain by limiting the punishment to a response comparable to the offense. But now Christ has come, and we are a new people bought by His blood. He bids us follow a much higher standard: For example, to be struck on the cheek was a term of insult. It was to hit the other person on the cheek with the back of the hand. When we are insulted, our natural response is to strike back, each blow becoming harder and harder. But Jesus is telling us instead to respond to evil with grace. “Recompense to no man evil for

evil” (Romans 12:17). When we do this, we are being like Christ who suffered the ultimate humiliation; He died at the hands of those He came to save. Jesus had every right to be angry, to fight back, to call down the angels of heaven and destroy all of mankind. But instead, He submitted to the evil of men and brought good out of it.

We have been called to be a peculiar people, people who act just as Jesus did. We are to love our enemies. If you love only those who love you, you do no better than the publicans—those corrupt tax-collectors, the greatest abusers of people in their day. If you greet only those whom you like, you do no better than the vilest pagan. Instead, God commands us to love others as He loves us. The reason why we should be a unique, special and treasured possession of God is that He has called us, ordained us, chosen us and identified us as His own sons and daughters. We become sons and daughters of God through receiving Christ, and “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

To be among the people of God is to obey His commandments and keep His covenant. You will want to please Him because He has changed your heart, writing His law in it. “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6). What an awesome privilege!

But along with great privilege comes great responsibility. Christ is purifying unto Himself His own special people, and if He has chosen you, it is that you may become zealous for good works. Are you zealous? Or are you lethargic, hesitant and indifferent in your service to Christ? God wants people that are serious about His business—doing His will. He did not save you to do His will grudgingly. He did not

redeem you to obey His word half-heartedly and render half-hearted service. He is looking for zealots—those who will do anything God says at a moment’s notice with greatest enthusiasm. You may have to try and restore a marriage that is breaking up. You may reach out to someone that is down and out and rejected by society. You might help a drunkard overcome his sin. The Bible says, “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

Visible characteristics (external—without)

a. Keep the commandments and the faith of Jesus in loving response to His love (1 John 4:19; John 14:15; Revelation 14:12). “The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken’ (Deuteronomy 26:18, 19). God accepts those who will work for His name’s glory, to make His name a praise in a world of apostasy and idolatry. He will be exalted by His commandment-keeping people.”⁶

b. Follow a “Thus saith the Lord.” “God’s word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is not to be set aside for a ‘Thus saith the church’ or a ‘Thus saith the state.’ The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.”⁷

c. Reformation in dress. “When the church is converted, there will be a very great reformation in dress.”⁸

d. Reformation in Sabbath observance. “What does the Lord require of us? The observance of His Sabbath, ‘as a perpetual covenant.’ God wishes every family to bear this sign. Thus we may show that we are loyal and true to His commandments.”⁹

e. Reformation in health principles. “[God] calls for decided reformation. All creation is groaning under the curse. God’s people should place themselves where they will grow in grace, being sanctified, body, soul, and spirit, by the truth. When they break away from all health-destroying indulgences, they will have a clearer perception of what constitutes true godliness. A wonderful change will be seen in the religious experience.”¹⁰

f. In the world, but not of the world (John 17:16).

“Of the zealous, self-sacrificing disciples of Christ, it is written that Jesus was not ashamed to call them brethren, so fully did they manifest His Spirit, and bear His likeness. By their works they constantly testified that this world was not their home; their citizenship was above; they were seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Their conversation and affections were on heavenly things. They were in the world, but not of the world; in spirit and practice they were separate from its maxims and customs. Their daily example testified that they were living for the glory of God. Their great interest, like that of their Master, was for the salvation of souls. For this they toiled and sacrificed, counting not their lives dear unto themselves. By their life and character they made a bright track heavenward. Upon such disciples, Jesus can look with satisfaction as His representatives. His character will not be misrepresented through them.”¹¹

“Our only safety is to stand as God’s peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices.”¹²

g. No guile—pure and gracious conversation. “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:37). It is said of God’s peculiar remnant that “in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne

of God” (Revelation 14:5). “If we represent Christ to the world, we shall be pure in heart, in life, in character; we shall be holy in conversation; there will be no guile in our hearts or upon our lips.”¹³

h. Zealous of good works. Jesus says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). The Scriptures are provided “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:17).

i. Practicing pure religion. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

j. Studying the Word. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

k. Propagating the gospel. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

l. Being prayerful. “Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18).

Within characteristics

a. Growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

b. Rooted and grounded in faith (Colossians 2:7).

c. Having the hope of salvation. “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord” (Lamentations 3:26).

d. Having a true conversion. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

e. Repented of sins. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your

sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

f. Hating sin. “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Psalm 45:7).

g. Obeying God’s voice. “Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live” (Jeremiah 38:20).

h. Having compassion and a burden for souls. “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Peter 3:8).

i. Having been justified (Acts 13:39).

j. Becoming sanctified (purified) (Acts 20:32).

k. To be glorified (Romans 8:30).

l. Desirous and hopeful of being with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

The apple of His eye — God guards His own

God sets His watchcare over the people of His own. Jesus has promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:27–29). “The Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye” (Deuteronomy 32:9, 10).

“Heavenly angels are commissioned to watch the sheep of Christ’s pasture. When Satan with his deceptive snares would deceive if possible the very elect, these angels set in operation influences that will save the tempted souls if they will take heed to the Word of the Lord, real-

ize their danger, and say: ‘No, I will not enter into that scheme of Satan. I have an Elder Brother on the throne in heaven, who has shown that He has a tender interest in me, and I will not grieve His heart of love. I know and am assured that He is watching over His children, keeping them as the apple of His eye. There is no diminishing of His love. I will not grieve the heart of Christ; I will try not to become a tempter to others.’”¹⁴

Should not the fact that in God’s eyes we are His treasured possession be an immense source of comfort and the greatest incentive to holy living? My dear brothers and sisters, dwell upon this awesome truth—what you are to God and what God is to you—especially when you are going through rough waters and troubled-filled times that are consuming all your attention.

May God bless all of us as we have enjoined ourselves to be laborers together with HIM, accepting Jesus Christ as our gracious Lord and Saviour, as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of being God’s own treasured possession—His PECULIAR PEOPLE. Let us prove ourselves worthy before Him who has laid His life for each one of us. Let us be faithful to the core, realizing the nearness of the coming of our dear Lord and Saviour. Amen. R

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A Missionary People

BY EDUARDO LAINEZ—writing from Honduras

In the book of Isaiah, chapters 51 and 52, the Lord presents a beautiful prophecy of hope and comfort for His beloved and afflicted people who were to pass through a long, exhausting period of anguish under captivity by their enemies. They are called to behold and consider their heritage through their forefather Abraham, the friend of God—a man of a deep faith of which he was not ashamed. Abraham trusted in God’s promise to bless him in multiplying his seed to become a great nation through the power of the Almighty, revealed to a world unacquainted with Him and His true character of goodness and love.

The Lord invites us to behold and consider the great privilege offered in the following words: “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him” (Isaiah 51:1, 2). The expression “I called him alone” reveals that Abraham could offer to God no objection or excuse when the call came to come out from his homeland and from every familiar sight to follow the steps where

divine Providence would lead into unknown territories. He was to undertake an evangelistic mission in behalf of an ignorant and idolatrous people, revealing the justice, mercy, and truth of the God of heaven. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Hebrews 11:8).

To impress His people with a sense of privilege and responsibility, the Lord bids us “look unto the rock whence ye are hewn.” In other words, we must never forget that we are called to accomplish a mission similar to that of our father Abraham. To be the children of Abraham is not merely to make boastful claims of this calling. Rather it involves a valiant, sacred commitment to be self-denying evangelists as Abraham was.

It was God’s purpose that through their captivity, His beloved people would learn important lessons which would help them seek Him with all their heart and be more keen to achieve God’s main purpose in making of them a great nation. In the prophecy we are considering, the Lord promises to free His people and restore them to a position whereby they could exert a saving

influence both to the surrounding nations and the whole world. The prophecy says: “For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody” (Isaiah 51:3). It is the Lord’s desire that His people rejoice with gratitude for His bountiful redemption in delivering them from their enemies, for restoring them to be a free nation where they could enjoy peace and tranquility without the least fear of being forcefully separated from their dear ones, that they might worship their God in freedom. For these blessings they were to be eager to proclaim the great things that God had wrought in their behalf.

“A light of the people”

In continuation the Lord says, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, “Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people” (Isaiah 51:4). Clearly God is appealing to Israel to fulfill with fidelity their role as His designated missionaries—and not only to them anciently, but to us today as

well. He is directing us to take heed to this high calling as spiritual Israel who trust in the present truth and His salvation in these last days, revealing the light of truth that is to enlighten every soul on the face of the earth.

When we understand the grace of our Father and our Redeemer Jesus Christ, we who believe in and accept the plan of redemption have a deep appreciation for our deliverance from the cruel slavery of sin. We cannot refrain from expressing in words and actions our great joy and gratitude to our wonderful heavenly Father for providing this blessed salvation. As we are imbued with the glorious thought of it, we go everywhere possible to share the blessed experience we have found in knowing our loving Shepherd.

In Isaiah 60:1–3, the Lord bids us: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

We are living in the time of fulfillment of this prophecy; the world is enveloped in spiritual darkness, crime and disregard of others’ rights are the order of the day. There is no civil security and people know not what terrible thing could occur at any moment since the majority do not fear God; they are held captive in the clutches of Satan and are impulsively actuated by his spirit, triggering pain and heartbreak in the entire human family.

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us: “This is a time of spiritual darkness in the churches of the world. Ignorance of divine things has hidden God and the truth from view. The forces of evil are gathering in strength. Satan flatters his coworkers that he will do a work that will captivate the world. While partial inactivity has come upon the church, Satan and his hosts are

intensely active. The professed Christian churches are not converting the world; for they are themselves corrupted with selfishness and pride, and need to feel the converting power of God in their midst before they can lead others to a purer or higher standard.”¹

Now more than ever the call of God to arise and shine with the light of the knowledge of God is of great importance, for many souls are longing for a better way than they have known before. It is our duty to help them by directing their feet in the pathway of truth. The most effective way to do this is by shining as an example of loyal fidelity to the principles of the word of God, explicitly obeying His commandments through faith in Jesus.

In Matthew 5:16, the Lord expressed this grand truth when He said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

“Awake, put on thy strength”

The messages contained in the book of Isaiah for ancient Israel resound with even greater significance in our day: “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion” (Isaiah 52:1, 2). Here we are presented with a repetition of the call to awake from spiritual slumber that the enemy of souls has cast upon God’s people in these last days—His people who are dwelling on the very borders of the eternal world with such a brief time before seeing our Redeemer face to face. “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11). If the church would not sleep, if Christ’s disciples would watch and pray, they would have the

light to comprehend and discern the movements of the enemy.

“The end is near! God calls upon the church to set in order the things that remain. Workers together with God, you are empowered by the Lord to take others with you into the kingdom. You are to be God’s living agents, channels of light to the world, and round about you are angels of heaven with their commission from Christ to sustain, strengthen, and uphold you in working for the salvation of souls. . . .

“In view of what might be done if the church would meet its God-given responsibilities, will its members sleep on, or will they arouse to a sense of the honor conferred upon them through the merciful providence of God? Will they gather up their hereditary trusts, avail themselves of the present light, and feel the necessity of rising to meet the urgent emergency that now presents itself? Oh, that all may arouse and manifest to the world that theirs is a living faith, that a vital issue is before the world, that Jesus will soon come. Let men see that we believe that we are on the borders of the eternal world.”²

Another expression which the Lord uses in these verses is: “Shake thyself from the dust; . . . loose thyself from the bands of thy neck.” To shake oneself from the dust signifies entering into intense activity; we can compare this perfectly to metal tools which are used to perform various tasks. As long as the tools are being used, they stay clean and sharp, but once they are left idle, dust covers them and they become rusty and soon are useless for the purpose for which they were made.

“Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck.” What are the bands that are preventing us from doing God’s work with fervor? For some it may be the cares and temporal things of this life. Jesus bids us, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Luke

21:34). These things absorb our time. Soon days, months, and years will pass and we have not done the work in behalf of souls within our reach. All ends up only in good intentions, as the hope of starting to work is left for tomorrow. And there may never be a “tomorrow.” All of a sudden the persons whom we were thinking to talk to may be beyond our reach. Some circumstances can change their work or residence or they can even die unexpectedly. The same could happen to us. Despite our best intentions, through some circumstance we may never return to see these souls, and can only lament over what we could have done but never did.

For others, the attraction of the world occupies the mind, and does not allow them to have a clear discernment or comprehension of the value of their own souls, the souls of their brethren, or of any human being made in the image of God.

All this hinders us from having a complete consecration to God. We are also prevented from having a patient and persevering faith to work for the salvation of those for whom Christ has given His life. We need the Holy Spirit of God to move upon the depth of our heart that we may see by faith our loving Redeemer Jesus Christ hanging on the rugged cross in painful agony, paying the price for our guilt. Then His love will subdue our life and it will be impossible to remain passive, indifferent and stingy to share the gift of salvation with others for whom Christ died.

The servant of the Lord bids the churches in every conference to “stand out separate and distinct from the world—in the world, but not of

it, reflecting the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, being pure, holy, and undefiled, and in faith carrying light into all the highways and byways of the earth.

“Let the churches awake before it is everlastingly too late. Let every member take up his individual work and vindicate the name of the Lord by which he is called. Let sound faith and earnest piety take the place of slothfulness and unbelief. When faith lays hold upon Christ, the truth will bring delight to the soul, and the services of religion will not be dull and uninteresting.”³

The church, a practical school

The main purpose in the organization of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ was to provide a means for the gospel to be carried to every corner of the earth. With this aim, the twelve were chosen from among His disciples, men of various characters and cultures; some of them seeming to have but little promise or intellectual endowments. But Jesus saw in them sincerity of heart and under His instruction they became capable men that could be entrusted with the great work of evangelism, carrying forth the work begun during the brief period of His ministry. In Mark 3:13, 14 we read that Christ went “up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.”

When the word of God says “that they should be with him,” it does not signify that they were in a state of inactivity, for if they were not with Him in constant activity, they would not have been able to

learn from their Master the most effective methods, which they should put into practice after Christ’s ascension. After instructing them, Christ sent them to preach the gospel first to their brethren, the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Only then were they to go out to work among other nations, until the gospel would be given to all the world. In this same way the church needs to instruct its members so that each one may occupy a place in the Lord’s vineyard—each one must be active in his or her sphere of particular missionary duty.

“Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged.

“Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath-school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts.”⁴

Living water springing up unto life eternal

During His earthly ministry Christ went to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles (John 7:10), a feast of seven days which brought great rejoicing to every inhabitant in Israel. This occurred at the close of the Jewish year shortly after the Day

of Atonement when God had accepted His people in peace. It was a commemoration of God's mercy toward them during their pilgrim journey in the desert. Among the various ceremonies of the feast there was one which had great significance and was the cause of great rejoicing:

"At the first dawn of day, the priests sounded a long, shrill blast upon their silver trumpets, and the answering trumpets, and the glad shouts of the people from their booths, echoing over hill and valley, welcomed the festal day. Then the priest dipped from the flowing waters of the Kedron a flagon of water, and, lifting it on high, while the trumpets were sounding, he ascended the broad steps of the temple, keeping time with the music with slow and measured tread, chanting meanwhile, 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem' (Psalm 122:2).

"He bore the flagon to the altar, which occupied a central position in the court of the priests. Here were two silver basins, with a priest standing at each one. The flagon of water was poured into one, and a flagon of wine into the other; and the contents of both flowed into a pipe which communicated with the Kedron, and was conducted to the Dead Sea."⁵

This entire ceremony was performed as a reminder of the fountain of fresh water that flowed forth from the rock by the instruction of God through Moses, and by which all the people quenched their burning thirst. Jesus went up to this feast and began to preach publicly in the Temple, and the confusion was great among the multitude of hearers who could not believe that He was the promised Messiah. Though they had marveled at His teachings, the majority had doubts as to His claim to be the Son of God. Yet it was He who had quenched the physical thirst of their forefathers in the desert and now He was eager to satisfy the spiritual thirst of many worshipers on this occasion. At the close of this great national feast, Christ did not miss the beautiful opportuni-

ty to present Himself clearly as the only One capable of satisfying the spiritual thirst of the soul, for He knew that even with all the dazzling outward pomp of the feast, many hearts were still empty and dry without knowing where to find Him.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38).

None who have received Christ with true faith in their heart will be stagnant in their experience. Everywhere they go they will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to testify of God's goodness, and they will feel the desire to make known to others how they, too, can experience this in their life. Just as the natural waters of a river run day and night, imparting life along their course, so every true Christian is a fountain of living water springing up unto life eternal.

The Spirit of Prophecy comments: "Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life."⁶

"Those who have united with the Lord in the covenant of service are under bonds to unite with Him in the great, grand work of soul saving."⁷

An infallible promise

Christ received from His Father authority in heaven and on earth and, based on this authority, He commissioned His disciples to go into all the world to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18–20). One of the main commands was to teach the new converts to keep all things which He had ordained and to exemplify them in their daily life as when Jesus was with them on earth.

If they would be faithful to accomplish His work in their personal life and do missionary work in behalf of others, He would be with them until the end of the world. This precious promise has refreshed and encouraged all believers in Christ even in the most solemn stages in the history of the Christian church. This same promise is valid in our day—when we are closer than ever to the fulfillment of our blessed hope—and we are not alone when we work for the salvation of others even at the peril of our life. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ has promised to be with us and in us at every moment and in every place.

A necessity laid upon us

Dear brethren and sisters, youth and children, my desire in the Lord Jesus Christ is that during the course of this week of prayer, the Holy Spirit may enlighten our understanding and touch the most sensitive cords of our heart. May we comprehend the shortness of time and see our opportunity, our privilege, our responsibility, and be active and joyful participants in the grand missionary program of God! With the apostle Paul we can declare, "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me" (1 Corinthians 9:16, 17).

May the heavenly unction abundantly rest upon each brother and sister in the blessed faith of Christ Jesus; may we be recognized in heaven and on earth as those who have learned of Jesus and are a missionary people! R

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 65.
- ² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 436, 437.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 437.
- ⁴ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 149.
- ⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 448, 449.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 19.

A Healthy People

BY LIVIU TUDOROIU—writing from Canada

Those who destroy themselves by their own acts will never have eternal life. They that will continue to abuse the health and life given them of God in this world, would not make a right use of health and immortal life were they granted them in God's everlasting kingdom."¹

The invasion of information

It is nearly impossible to fathom all the strange marvels found in our society today. The invasion of information is as dense as the fog in springtime. Everywhere you hear about hybrids and genetic mutants, along with cloned birds, sheep, horses and even attempts with people. The magazines everywhere invite you to a multicolored diversity of recipes such as how to become skinny in just a few days, how to gain perfect symmetry of your face, how to take this or that vitamin to keep your body in good shape and, if you have sufficient courage, you can even enroll "online" to be part of a free experiment for a "scientific institute" that works on a top secret project to create the "great universal soldiers." On the streets of our

world can be heard the expression: "What's new?" This has since been updated to "What's up?"

So the topic "A Healthy People" will not make much sensation in a world where the hands, the feet, vital organs, and—finally some may imagine—even the brain can be replaced. It seems to me that as long as this little elephant called "Science" grows more and more without ethics or moral standards, our world may become so robotic that one day we will get the language of an "iron tongue" speaking about beautiful cemeteries, good hospitals, necessary divorces, and in the end, natural selection, as so-called "father" Charles Darwin tried to teach us. That is why this wonderful ideal initially designed by God—"a healthy people"—soon will become our worldwide utopia.

The missing link

"Many are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they shall come to Christ, the wellspring of life. Complaints of weariness, loneliness, and dissatisfaction will then cease.

Satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind, and health and vital energy to the body."²

Detrimental to the fact that there is widespread public interest in health and happiness, the physical and mental values of mankind are depreciating daily. There is a missing link. Something is wrong with the expectation about health and happiness—a lot of money is spent in vain just as it was in the case of the woman in the Bible who spent all that she had in search of a cure for her issue of blood. We read in Mark 5:25–29 that "a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague."

The Spirit of Prophecy likewise records this event:

"In the throng there was a woman who had long been troubled

with a painful malady. For twelve years she had suffered with this disease. She had spent all she had on physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. She was told of Christ's power, but she did not think herself worthy of His notice. 'If I may but touch His garment,' she thought, 'I shall be whole.' She watched her opportunity, and Christ in His infinite love knowing her heart's desire, moved in her direction. By faith she put forth her hand, and, touching the hem of His garment, was instantly made whole. Her faith was not in the garment, but in the virtue which the garment covered."³

This poor sufferer found her last and only hope in Jesus. It has always been like this. Jesus is so often the last in our affairs. We come to Him only when we have no other solution. We cannot talk about health, thinking of a perfect diet and a wrong spirit, or vice versa. We know that perfect health has more to do with our state of mind than with a yogi's concept of eating some special diet to become a spiritual guru elevated above the rest of society and to be worshiped like a little god. In our Christian life everything should start with Jesus. Maybe it is not in vogue anymore or maybe we have tended to build our own way of thinking, or our own way to heaven outside of what is written, but in order to be a healthy people we need Christ in our entire life. The fatal mistake that the Christians might fall into is to contrast spiritual health against physical health. It is necessary to maintain a balance between these two pillars in our life. In most of the healings that Jesus performed the prevailing question was: "Do you believe?" In the life of Jesus, spiritual health was first and the physical came as a natural result. Health is important in order to maintain the harmony of our character that has been built on our knees in earnest prayer. I do not believe that there was ever a person healthier than Jesus. He was an example for all. So let us learn from the life of "The Man" who divided history.

Hidden treasure

The object that we are looking for can be found usually in the last place where our mind will search.

In the life of Jesus, it is very hard to see whether He had a rigorous program of eating, sleeping, and working. The biblical record does not allocate a lot of space to the subject as far as what He ate, when He slept and how much, and so forth, but there is plenty of information for us to understand that His weary life was full of events, sorrow, and a lot of rejection. In spite of these, the power that He received came from two sources that marked His life and confounded the science of the world: "Fasting and prayer." It is amazing to see a Man like Jesus living according to the highest standard of health reform in a very austere condition in the Palestine of two thousands years ago. He was involved in the work of healing much more than in the work of preaching. Yes, He was the Master of the world, but His hand was always in the right time at the right place to touch the weak and helpless, to feed the hungry, and to resurrect the dead, without making even a single mistake.

Fasting

Today's medicine has begun to consider more carefully the issue of fasting and its impact upon health. This topic has been explored for centuries, and medical science has reached a stage of understanding the connection between fasting and improving health. Let us read some of the inspired records which could revolutionize the world of medical science if seriously considered:

"Our Saviour **fasted** nearly six weeks that He might gain for man the victory upon the point of appetite. How can professed Christians with enlightened consciences, and with Christ before them as their pattern, yield to the indulgence of those appetites which have an enervating influence upon the mind and body? It is a painful fact that habits of self-gratification at the expense of health and moral

power are at the present time holding a large share of the Christian world in the bonds of slavery.

"Many who profess godliness do not inquire into the reason of Christ's long period of **fasting** and suffering in the wilderness. His anguish was not so much from the pangs of hunger as from His sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race. He knew that appetite would be man's idol and would lead him to forget God and would stand directly in the way of his salvation."⁴

Fasting is one of the very first treatments that can be given easily to all those who have abused their life in the indulgence of appetite. The performance of such treatment results in a strengthening of the will power, sharpening the mind, cleansing the body, and humbling the heart to create a predisposition for prayer.

Prayer

"Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. . . .

"God is bending from His throne to hear the cry of the oppressed. To every sincere prayer He answers, 'Here am I.' He uplifts the distressed and downtrodden. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. In every temptation and every trial the angel of His presence is near to deliver."⁵

We can only wonder how it was possible for Jesus to spend the entire night in prayer and supplication, and in the morning be so amicable and well disposed as to start a new day—only to be again confronted by unbelief and questioning from the professedly religious leaders. Even the disappointing behavior of His own disciples often added to the complexities and trials of His life. Prayer was the source of His success; it is one of the conditions for maintaining a good state of mind. It was the source of power, hope, and happiness in the life of Jesus. To communicate with God the Father, to

uplift continually the mind toward heaven is one of the most important channels of health. It is a human law that by contemplating we become changed. According to today's scientific sources we need ten seconds to undergo a transformation of personality and three weeks to create a new habit. Prayer might help in these two aspects of our mental health as well. Prayer is a good medication against stress, insecurity, fear, anxiety, depression and many other spiritual problems.

Fresh air, sunshine and a natural environment

Fresh air will purify the blood, refresh the body, and help to make it strong and healthy. "The invigoration produced will be reflected upon the mind, imparting to it tone and clearness, as well as a degree of composure and serenity. It gives a healthful stimulus to the appetite, renders the digestion of food more perfect, and induces sound, sweet sleep. Living in close, ill-ventilated rooms, weakens the system, makes the mind gloomy, the skin sallow, and the circulation feeble; the blood moves sluggishly, digestion is retarded, and the system is rendered peculiarly sensitive to cold. One should so accustom himself to fresh, cool air that he will not be affected by slight changes of temperature. Of course he should be careful not to sit in a draft or in a cold room when weary, or when in a perspiration."⁶

Ellen White relates an interesting experience:

"One autumn evening I was traveling in a crowded car. The exhalations from so many lungs and bodies rendered the atmosphere very impure, and caused a sickening sensation to come over me. I raised my window, and was enjoying the fresh air, when a lady in earnest, imploring tones, cried out, 'Do put down that window! You will take cold and be sick; the night air is so unhealthful!' I replied, 'Madam, we have no other air than night air, in this car or out of it. If you refuse to breathe the night air, you must stop

breathing.' In the cool of the evening it may be necessary to guard against chilliness by extra clothing; but there should be a free circulation of pure air through the room during sleeping hours. The free air of heaven, by day or night, is one of the richest blessings we can enjoy."⁷

We need not wonder why people having a stagnant, sedentary type of labor cannot easily be healthy. The lack of fresh air will always be a sure path towards premature death. Air for the lungs is what prayer is for the spirit. A lack of air and well oxygenated rooms will, in the long run, enfeeble the immune system to such a degree that cancer will be at home in such an environment. Many dangerous germs are carried to and fro by an infected, polluted air. That is why instead of luxurious furniture in the house we should have plenty of trees in reasonably close proximity, and instead of flowers pictured on the walls we need a real garden. Instead of having lights in the houses at midnight we would be better off to have the light of the moon and the shining rays of the sun during the daytime. Artificial life will never replace the Creator's authentic and original design, just as the truth cannot be replaced with some smart explanation in defense of sin.

"It is not God who has brought upon us the many woes which mortals now inherit. Our own folly has led us to deprive ourselves of things that are precious, of the blessings which, if properly used, are of inestimable value in the maintenance of health. If you would have your home sweet and inviting, make it bright with air and sunshine. Remove your heavy curtains, open the windows, throw back the blinds, and enjoy the **rich sunlight**, even if it be at the expense of the colors of your carpets. . . .

Water and cleanliness

"Upon rising in the morning, most persons would be benefited by taking a sponge or hand bath. This

will remove all impurities from the skin, and keep it moist and supple, thereby aiding the circulation. Persons in health should on no account neglect frequent bathing. Whether a person is sick or well, respiration is rendered more free and full by bathing. The mind and body are alike invigorated. The muscles become more flexible, every faculty of the intellect is made brighter. The bath is a soother of the nerves. Instead of increasing the liability of taking cold, it fortifies against cold, because it improves the circulation; the blood is brought to the surface, and a more easy and regular flow of the vital fluid is obtained."⁸

"The children of Israel were in no case to allow any impurities to remain upon their clothing or upon themselves. Those who had any personal uncleanness were to be shut out of the camp until the evening, and then were required to cleanse themselves and their clothing before they could return. They were also commanded to carry all their refuse to a great distance from the camp. And this was a sanitary measure, as well as a religious regulation. The Lord requires no less of His people now than He did anciently. **A neglect of cleanliness will induce disease.** Sickness does not come without a cause. Violent epidemics of fevers have occurred in villages and cities that were considered perfectly healthful, and these have resulted in death or broken constitutions. In many instances the premises of the very ones who fell victims to these epidemics, contained the agents of destruction which sent forth deadly poison into the atmosphere, to be inhaled by the family and the neighborhood. It is astonishing to witness the prevailing ignorance relative to the effects which slackness and recklessness produce upon health.

"When Lord Palmerston, premier of England, was petitioned by the Scottish clergy to appoint a day of fasting and prayer to avert the cholera, he replied, 'Cleanse and disinfect your streets and houses, pro-

mote cleanliness and health among the poor, and see that they are plentifully supplied with good food and raiment, and employ right sanitary measures generally, and you will have no occasion to fast and pray. Nor will the Lord hear your prayers while these, His preventives, remain unheeded.’”⁹

A life of physical activity

There is a persistent seeking for comfort and relaxation in the worst sense of the word. Physical labor was conceived by God for humanity’s sake. But who really believes in this provision? A good amount of scientific effort is directed to serve this purpose: How can I live without making physical effort? What can I invent to make my life easier than it is? And what do you think? Instead of making life more comfortable, instead of saving time, the slavery of our civilization affects the morality, the education and cultures of the nations, up to the final destruction.

A hundred years ago the fastest speed that human beings could dream about was not higher than the speed of a horse. And the people of that generation still managed to arrive everywhere on time.

Moreover, in front of the houses they had a bench where in the afternoon they could relax a little bit, sitting and socializing with the neighbors, and so forth. The social relation of that generation was healthier than ours. They had a more natural environment and all the assets necessary to make life enjoyable.

Today we have supersonics, cell phones, and e-mail, but we do not know our neighbors well enough to share the gospel with them. It is the end of the world!

“The physical constitution of Jesus, as well as His spiritual development, is brought before us in these words, ‘the child grew,’ and ‘increased in stature.’ In childhood and youth attention should be given to physical development. Parents

should so train their children in good habits of eating and drinking, dressing, and exercise, that a good foundation will be laid for sound health in afterlife. The physical organism should have special care, that the powers of the body may not be dwarfed, but developed to their full extent. This places the children and youth in a favorable position, so that, with proper religious training, they may, like Christ, wax strong in spirit.”¹⁰


“Men who have good physical powers should educate themselves to think as well as to act, and not depend upon others to be brains for them. It is a popular error with a large class to regard work as degrading. Therefore young men are very anxious to educate themselves to become teachers, clerks, merchants, lawyers, and to occupy almost any position that does not require physical labor. Young women regard housework as demeaning. And although the physical exercise required to perform household labor, if not too severe, is calculated to promote health, they will seek for education that will fit them to become teachers or clerks, or will learn some trade which will confine them indoors to sedentary employment. The bloom of health fades from their cheeks, and disease fastens upon them, because they are robbed of physical exercise and their habits are perverted generally. All things because it is fashionable! They enjoy delicate life, which is feebleness and decay.”¹¹

There are many conditions for accomplishing the desire to have a healthy lifestyle and the list can be long, but what is important is to know Christ. If we know Him, then He will lead us into all truth, including the question of how to live a healthy lifestyle. I am fully confident that the new world will come very soon, with the tree of life, whose leaves will be used for the healing of the nations. In the Garden of Eden from which our first parents were

banished, the roses of Sharon and Carmel will blossom and the Lamb of God will reign with the saints in a healthy world, a healthy environment, in a place where appetite and passion will be servants and not masters.

“A healthy people” is an aim that comes from above. All who think about heaven and salvation should understand that, without having Christ in control of their lives, there will be no real victory over appetite, self-indulgence, hatred, pride and many other deformities of human nature. Without Christ there can only be a sick, hypocritical mind that deceives itself. Forgiveness is the solution for many problems in the personal life, family life, church life and even world affairs. Forgiveness is the last remedy that Jesus uttered on the cross of Calvary for humanity. Forgiveness is a state of mind, it is a constant behavior, it is a mental choice, a proof of conversion. Forgiveness is a gate towards deliverance and the ultimate solution for mental relief.

A healthy people “shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:11, 12).

May we be willing to learn of our Lord Jesus His humble lifestyle. Amen. 

References

- ¹ *A Solemn Appeal*, p. 74.
- ² *Counsels on Health*, p. 241.
- ³ *The Signs of the Times*, October 25, 1899.
- ⁴ *Confrontation*, pp. 50, 51 (emphasis supplied).
- ⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 356.
- ⁶ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 104.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107 (emphasis supplied).
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 106 (emphasis supplied).
- ¹⁰ *Child Guidance*, p. 187.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 158.

A Giving People

BY ROBERTO M. DUARTE—writing from U.S.A.

A lay Bible worker was studying the Scriptures with an interested soul, whose name was Jane. The subject of tithing had been entered upon during the course of studies. The verse was cited, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

After about a year, Jane declared, “I know now that this verse is true—exactly as it is written.”

“Why?” asked the layworker.

“For several years, my husband and I were not able to have any children. We wanted a baby so much, but for whatever reason, we could never have one. But now that we have been returning our tithes . . .” she beamed with great delight as she gazed fondly upon her big, healthy, beautiful newborn, “God has opened the windows of heaven, and poured me out a blessing—and now there isn’t room enough in the house for all these baby things!”

A few weeks later, however, Jane made another comment about tithing, explaining one concern, “I am convinced that we are blessed by tithing just based on the miracle of our baby. But my husband would be better convinced if he could see some evidence in the form of actual cash.”

So, together with the layworker, she prayed. Within a few short

months, Jane and her husband were contacted by an insurance company and were granted a huge payoff, totally unexpected. The amount had apparently been due to them for many years but had long since been deemed impossible ever to collect. For years, all appeals for it had been utterly in vain. Now the bounty which suddenly fell into their hands amounted to quite a generous sum—around 1000% of all that they had returned to the Lord in tithe.

Systematic benevolence

“The last merciful message is entrusted to God’s humble, faithful servants of this time. God has led along those who would not shun responsibility, and has laid burdens upon them, and has through them presented to His people a plan of systematic benevolence in which all can engage and work in harmony. This system has been carried out and has worked like magic. It liberally sustains the preachers and the cause. As soon as the preachers ceased their opposition and stood out of the way, the people heartily responded to the call and prized the system. Everything is made convenient and easy for the preachers that they may work, free from embarrassment. Our people have taken hold with a will and an interest which is not to be found among any other class.”¹

“Our heavenly Father did not originate the plan of systematic benevolence to enrich Himself, but to be a great blessing to man. He

saw that this system of beneficence was just what man needed.”²

The plan in early Adventism

“As reported by J. N. Loughborough, several workers, including J. N. Andrews, who was summoned for the purpose, met for two days in Battle Creek to study a Bible-based system of finance for the emerging church.”³

The plan which they developed was published in the *Review and Herald*, February 3, 1859, opening with the following words:

“Dear Brethren and Sisters: We wish to call your attention to a plan of Systematic Benevolence to support the proclamation of the third angel’s message, which may be in harmony with the plain declarations of Holy Scripture.”

“With the citing of New Testament support, a scriptural framework was assembled for the projected procedures, and it was suggested that ‘we gather from these facts some instruction relative to our own duty.’ The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church could have gone more easily to the Old Testament and brought in the obligation of the tithe, but at this juncture, regardless of the attractiveness of the tithe, they were not sure that it was not one of those *ceremonial* obligations that ceased at the cross. In the occasional mention of organization they were looking to the New Testament with its seven deacons, not to the Old Testament with the appointment by Moses of the seven-

ty. In finance they were looking to the New Testament and Paul's counsel in 1 Corinthians 16:2 that 'upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,' rather than to Malachi's direction to 'bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house' (Malachi 3:10). They conceded that the tithing system was a good plan, and it did have a strong bearing on the conclusions reached and set before the church. Here is the argument set forth in the address:

"If Paul found it essential to complete success that method should be observed in raising means for benevolent purposes, it is certainly not unreasonable to conclude that we should find the same thing beneficial in promoting a similar object. As Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we may rest assured that his suggestions were not only safe to follow, and calculated to ensure success, but also that they were in exact accordance with the will of God. We shall not therefore displease Him by adopting the suggestions of His servant Paul.' . . .

"The next paragraph delineated the points supported by Scripture, which it was thought should form the basis for the plan Sabbathkeeping Adventists ought to follow:

"Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.' This implies: 1. A stated time for the business, viz., the first day of the week. 2. The concurrent action of each individual, for he adds, 'Let every *one* of you' lay by him in store. 3. This is not a public collection, but a private act of setting apart for the Lord a portion of what one possesses. 4. The amount to be given is brought home to the conscience of each individual by the language, 'as God hath prospered him.'"⁴

"Systematic Benevolence was early endorsed by Ellen White, and she linked it with the tithe. First she assured the church in June, 1859, 'The plan of systematic benevolence is pleasing to God' (1T, p. 190), and

then in January, 1861, in a *Testimony* article entitled 'Systematic Benevolence,' she wrote: 'Rob not God by withholding from Him your tithes and offerings.' The article closed with Malachi 3:8-11 quoted in full (Ibid., pp. 221, 222). At the outset there was no separation of tithes from offerings. The demand for funds was mainly for the support of the ministers and the evangelistic outreach.

"Some years later, in an article published in the *Testimonies* entitled 'Tithes and Offerings,' Ellen White wrote of Systematic Benevolence:

"The special system of tithing was founded upon a principle which is as enduring as the law of God. This system of tithing was a blessing to the Jews, else God would not have given it them. So also will it be a blessing to those who carry it out to the end of time.'—3T, pp. 404, 405.

"There were developments through the years, as the work of the church broadened, that called for a separation of funds into two groups, 'tithes' and 'offerings.' Also the precise use of the tithe, sacred to the support of the ministry of the church, was repeatedly brought to the attention of the leaders and members."⁵

"The method of reckoning the tithe was, in the year 1876, discerned to be actually one tenth of the income to the individual from whatever source it might come. . . . A pamphlet entitled 'Systematic Benevolence, or The Bible Plan of Supporting the Ministry,' published in 1878 by the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, states the matter concisely in a question and an answer: 'How much ought I to give for the support of the gospel?'

"After carefully viewing the subject from all points, we answer, a tithe of all our income."⁶

"It is God who blesses men with property, and He does this that they may be able to give toward the advancement of His cause. He sends the sunshine and the rain. He causes vegetation to flourish. He gives health and the ability to acquire

means. All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. In turn, He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings. Should means flow into the treasury in accordance with this divinely appointed plan—a tenth of all the increase, and liberal offerings—there would be an abundance for the advancement of the Lord's work."⁷

A testing truth

"The greatest sin which now exists in the church is covetousness. God frowns upon His professed people for their selfishness."⁸

"There is order in heaven, and God is well pleased with the efforts of His people in trying to move with system and order in His work on earth. I saw that there should be order in the church of God, and that system is needed in carrying forward successfully the last great message of mercy to the world. God is leading His people in the plan of systematic benevolence, and this is one of the very points to which God is bringing up His people which will cut the closest with some. With them this cuts off the right arm, and plucks out the right eye, while to others it is a great relief. To noble, generous souls the demands upon them seem very small, and they cannot be content to do so little. Some have large possessions, and if they lay by them in store for charitable purposes as God has prospered them, the offering seems to them like a large sum. The selfish heart clings as closely to a small offering as to a larger one, and makes a small sum look very large. . . .

"You profess to believe the truth; let your works testify to the fact. Unless your faith works, it is dead. Nothing but a living faith will save you in the fearful scenes which are just before you.

"I saw that it is time for those who have large possessions to begin to work fast. It is time that they were not only laying by them in store as God is *now* prospering them, but as

He *has* prospered them. In the days of the apostles, plans were especially laid that some should not be eased and others burdened. Arrangements were made that all should share equally in the burdens of the church of God according to their several abilities. Said the angel: 'The ax must be laid at the root of the tree.' Those who, like Judas, have set their hearts upon earthly treasure will complain as he did. His heart coveted the costly ointment poured upon Jesus, and he sought to hide his selfishness under a pious, conscientious regard for the poor: 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?' He wished that he had the ointment in his possession; it would not thus be lavished upon the Saviour. He would apply it to his own use; sell it for money. He prized his Lord just enough to sell Him to wicked men for a few pieces of silver. As Judas brought up the poor as an excuse for his selfishness, so professed Christians, whose hearts are covetous, will seek to hide their selfishness under a put-on conscientiousness. Oh, they fear that in adopting systematic benevolence we are becoming like the nominal churches! 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.' They seem to have a conscientious desire to follow exactly the Bible as they understand it in this matter; but they entirely neglect the plain admonition of Christ: 'Sell that ye have, and give alms.'

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them.' Some think this text teaches that they must be secret in their works of charity. And they do but very little, excusing themselves because they do not know just how to give. But Jesus explained it to His disciples as follows: 'Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' They gave to be regarded noble and generous by men. They received praise of men,

and Jesus taught His disciples that this was all the reward they would have. With many, the left hand does not know what the right hand does, for the right hand does nothing worthy of the notice of the left hand. This lesson of Jesus to His disciples was to rebuke those who wished to receive glory of men. They performed their almsgiving at some very public gathering; and before doing this, a public proclamation was made heralding their generosity before the people; and many gave large sums merely to have their name exalted by men. And the means given in this manner was often extorted from others, by oppressing the hireling in his wages, and grinding the face of the poor.

"I was shown that this scripture does not apply to those who have the cause of God at heart, and use their means humbly to advance it. I was directed to these texts: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' I was shown that Scripture testimony will harmonize when it is rightly understood. The good works of the children of God are the most effectual preaching that the unbeliever has. He thinks that there must be strong motives that actuate the Christian to deny self, and use his possessions in trying to save his fellow men. It is unlike the spirit of the world. Such fruits testify that the possessors are genuine Christians. They seem to be constantly reaching upward to a treasure that is imperishable."⁹

"Home missionaries and foreign missionaries are needed, and there cannot be too large a number. Everything we do should be done with reference to the salvation of souls, the glory of God.

"There should be no extravagance in building fine homes, in buying costly furniture, in indulging in worldly dress, or in providing luxurious food; but in everything let us think of the souls for whom Christ has died. Let selfishness and pride die. Let none continue to expend

means to multiply pictures to be sent to their friends. Let us save every dollar that can be saved, that the matchless charms of Christ may be presented before the souls of the perishing. Satan will suggest many ways in which you may expend money. But if it is spent for self-gratification—for unnecessary things, no matter how trifling their cost—it is not spent for the glory of God. Let us look well to this matter, and see if we are denying ourselves as we should. Are we making sacrifices, that we may send the light of truth to the lost? . . .

"Each one should strive to do for Jesus all that it is possible for him to do, by personal effort, by gifts, by sacrifices. There should be meat in the house of the Lord, and that means a full treasury, that responses may be made to Macedonian cries coming from every land. How pitiful it is that we are obliged to say to these who cry for help, 'We cannot send you men or money. We have an empty treasury.' Let all the pennies, dimes, and dollars that are lost to the cause through selfish love of pleasure, through desire to meet the world's standard, through love of ease, be turned into the channel that flows to God's treasury. It is the rills flowing into one that finally make the river. Let us be conscientious Christians, be laborers together with God.

"Why is it that there is so little genuine love for Christ in the church?—It is because the love of self has taken the place of love for Him who died on Calvary's cross for the sins of the world. Let us be of one heart, of one mind, and let us draw near to God, that he may draw near to us, and fill us with his intense love for perishing souls. Let every heart beat in unison, in interest for the cause of Christ. New fields of work must be opened, souls are to be added to the faith, new names will appear on the church records—names that will appear in the immortal records in heaven. O that we might realize what might be done with the money expended for the gratification of self!"¹⁰

Perhaps we can learn something from the attitude of a little girl who had received ten coins as a gift. Her father was teaching her about the principle of tithing, and he spread out the coins on the table, separating one coin from the rest.

“My daughter,” he explained, “all of these coins are really God’s. He is the One that has supplied them for you to use as His steward. This one will be for Him, and the rest for you.”

“But, Daddy, if they are all God’s, then He should get the big pile, and I’ll just take the one.”

“No, my dear, that is not necessary. He is willing to give you the big pile and He asks only that you reserve the one for Him.”

“Oh, Daddy, that is so kind of Him! Then let’s be sure to pick out the brightest and most beautiful coin of all for God!”

Are we this eager to give so lovingly our best portion to God, or do we often come up with hardhearted excuses?

Lame excuses

“Some have not come up and united in the plan of systematic benevolence, excusing themselves because they were not free from debt. They plead that they must first ‘owe no man anything.’ But the fact that they are in debt does not excuse them. I saw that they should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. Some feel conscientious to ‘owe no man anything,’ and think that God can require nothing of them until their debts are all paid. Here they deceive themselves. They fail to render to God the things that are His. Everyone must bring to the Lord a suitable offering. Those who are in debt should take the amount of their debts from what they possess, and give a proportion of the remainder.

“Some have felt under sacred obligations to their children. They must give each a portion, but feel themselves unable to raise means to aid the cause of God. They make

the excuse that they have a duty to their children. This may be right, but their first duty is to God. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. Rob not God by withholding from Him your tithes and offerings. It is the first sacred duty to render to God a suitable proportion. Let no one throw in his claims and lead you to rob God. Let not your children steal your offering from God’s altar for their own benefit.

“I saw that anciently the covetousness of some led them to withhold a suitable proportion; they made their offering stunted. This was recorded in heaven, and they were cursed in their harvest and their flocks just as they withheld. Some were visited with affliction in their families. God would not accept a lame offering. It must be without blemish, the best of their flocks, and the best fruits of their fields. And it must be a freewill offering, if they would have the blessing of the Lord rest upon their families and their possessions. . . .

“In the arrangement of systematic benevolence, hearts will be tested and proved. It is a constant, living test. It brings one to understand his own heart, to see whether the truth or the love of the world predominates.”¹¹

A blessing in store

Brothers and sisters, our heart is being tested. There is a message that needs to circle the globe—the entire earth—the message of the first, second, and third angels. It must go to the whole world—to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. This will require faithful tithes and an abundance of not merely generous, but truly sacrificial, freewill offerings. The population of an entire planet must be reached—what a multitude! It’s an impossible task! Yet how reminiscent it is of one late afternoon in the life of Jesus, when Andrew, the disciple, bemoaned: “There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes:

but what are they among so many?” (John 6:9).

Indeed we might echo in our day, “what are they among so many?” Likewise today, there is a people with very few loaves, fishes, or dollars on hand. They are described as “an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord” (Zephaniah 3:12). Yet just as in the case of the lad who brought his lunch to the Miracle-worker, these meager means can be multiplied. Just as the disciples were bidden to divide the people into organized companies and distribute the food Christ had blessed, so today God’s servants can miraculously spread their Lord’s message through His plan of systematic benevolence. God declares, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

In the miracle of the loaves, twelve baskets of fragments remained after the multitude had been fed. So it will be today. Remember Jane, that soul in our day who hungered after the present truth, in whom new life literally sprang forth through faith in God’s promises. He has many such souls out there. Shall we exercise such faith to ensure that they hear the message? Beloved, the day is far spent; the night is at hand. Like the young lad whose faith at the close of the day brought a blessing to so many, let us each make haste in bringing our barley loaves to Jesus! **R**

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 375, 376.
- ² *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 405.
- ³ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years*, vol. 1, p. 388.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 389, 390 (italics in the original).
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 393 (italics in the original).
- ⁶ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 523 (appendix note to p. 27).
- ⁷ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 75.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 194.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 191–194 (italics in the original).
- ¹⁰ *The Review and Herald*, January 27, 1891.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 220, 221.

A Sealed People

BY MATHEUS DE SOUZA SILVA—writing from Brazil

In describing the awesome realities of the heavenly courts, John the Revelator relates an inspiring scene: “All the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:11–14).

The emperor Decius (A.D. 201–251), eager to enforce pagan worship as the official religion within his realm, waged war to exterminate the Christians. He decreed that without exception, all Christians would be put to death to pay homage to the gods worshipped by the emperor. In every locality a tidal wave of persecution was launched. In the courtyard of a prison in the city of Carthage, an attack was directed against a lone group of faithful souls. They were tied to the stake and exposed to the burning sun. For two days straight they were left this way, prostrated without food or water. Beside them was a pagan altar. If at any time any of the victims would be inclined to waver in their loyalty to God, they could

simply extend a hand to offer incense to an idol and thus be given immediate relief from their torment.

Some Christians groaned under the torture of the oppressive heat and were consumed with thirst. When one of them revealed the first sign of weakness or wavering, a fellow victim would repeat clearly and unmistakably: “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Revelation 7:14–17).

Thus consoled by the word of God, the sufferers ceased to groan; a smile illuminated their faces, and with calmness and sweet peace, they withstood the terrible test, maintaining their loyalty to God until the end.

Prophecy indicates that a time of trouble such as has never been is coming soon to the remnant church. “The beloved of God pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready

to lend them help.”¹

Nevertheless, the Lord declares that “even when mothers may forget their children, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye” (Zechariah 2:8). “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20).

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters, as members of the family of reformers we have a great privilege to participate in this special week of prayer and to consider the solemn message of the sealing of God’s people. The message of Revelation chapter 7 is one of the most sublime yet controversial doctrines taught by those who profess to keep the Sabbath in these last days.

What is the sealing?

The sealing of the 144,000 is one of the pillars of the Adventist faith. This message found in Revelation chapter 7 is the essence of the third angel’s message of Revelation 14:9–11. The sealing is a significant point of present truth revealed in the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6–13. The seal points to the restoration of the character of God in the 144,000 believers by means of the gospel of Christ. It goes hand in hand with the proclamation of all the requirements of His holy law (Revelation 14:12) in the time of the end. The sealing is the final work performed in behalf of God’s people.

When does the sealing occur?

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (Revelation 11:19). “Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great antitypical day of atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God’s protection.”²

“In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin the work of the investigative judgment. The cases of the righteous dead have been passing in review before God. When that work shall be completed, judgment is to be pronounced upon the living. How precious, how important are these solemn moments! Each of us has a case pending in the court of heaven. We are individually to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. In the typical service, when the work of atonement was performed by the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary, the people were required to afflict their souls before God, and confess their sins, that they might be atoned for and blotted out. Will any less be required of us in this antitypical day of atonement, when Christ in the sanctuary above is pleading in behalf of His people, and the final, irrevocable decision is to be pronounced upon every case?”³

What is the seal?

Any official government seal must bear three things:

1. The name of the governor
2. His office
3. The territory over which he holds jurisdiction or dominion.

We find in the law of God His name, His office, and the territory over which He has dominion. All these attributes are found in the fourth commandment of the holy law of God. This is the only commandment which reveals the Lord’s

identity and His relationship to us as our Creator. We see here that in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them (Exodus 20:8–11). Here God identifies Himself as:

1. The Lord—Jehovah, the self-existent One;

2. The Creator—He is the one that made all things;

3. He has dominion over the whole universe—the heavens, the earth, the seas, and so forth.

As our Creator, God has authority to command His creatures, and in harmony with the fourth commandment He directs, “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” “Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.” “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. . . . And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” (Exodus 31:16, 17; 35:2; Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

“The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.”⁴

“Again the destroying angel is to pass through the land. There is to be a mark placed upon God’s people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath.”⁵

“The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God.”⁶

“God will most assuredly call the world to judgment to avenge the death of His only-begotten Son, the One who stood at the bar of Pilate and Herod. That One is now in the heavenly courts making intercession for the people who refused Him.

Shall we choose the stamp of the world, or shall we choose to be God’s separate, peculiar people? Shall we receive a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ for the ‘Thus saith’ of man? The papal power, the man of sin, decides that the Roman Catholic Church has changed the law of God. In the place of the seventh day they have baptized and presented to the world a child of the papacy, the first day of the week, to be observed as a holy day of rest. The Protestant world has received this child of the papacy, has cradled it, and given to it the honor that God has placed on the seventh day.”⁷

How many will be sealed?

“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Revelation 7:4).

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Chapter 14:1).

“I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer’s inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed.”⁸

“The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice [of God]. . . .

“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name.”⁹

Among the 144,000 are the faithful ones who have died in the threefold message since 1844

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Revelation 14:13).

“Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth . . . awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt’ (Daniel 12:2). All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. ‘They also which pierced Him’ (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.”¹⁰

To confirm that the sealing work was well underway already in 1859, we cite an extract from a letter written by Sister White in that year:

“Dear Brother:

“I hardly know what to say to you. The news of your wife’s death was to me overwhelming. I could hardly believe it and can hardly believe it now. God gave me a view last Sabbath night which I will write. . . .

“**I saw that she was sealed** and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000.”¹¹

At the 1909 General Conference, Elder Irwin asked Sister White:

“‘Will those who have died in the message be among the 144,000?’ In reply, Sister White said: ‘Oh yes, those who have died in the faith will be among the 144,000. I am clear on that matter.’”¹²

The understanding that those who were faithful to the three angels’ messages would be part of the 144,000 was a teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. Let us quote from some of them:

James White

“Those who die under the third angel’s message are a part of the 144,000; there are not 144,000 in addition to these, but these help make up that number. They are raised to mortal life shortly before Christ comes, and . . . are changed to immortality when Christ appears.”¹³

Uriah Smith

“Those who die after having become identified with the third angel’s message, are evidently numbered as a part of the 144,000; for this message is the same as the sealing message of Revelation 7, and by that message only 144,000 were sealed. But there are many who have had their entire religious experience under this message, but have fallen in death. They die in the Lord, and hence are counted as sealed for they will be saved. But the message results in the sealing of *only* 144,000; therefore these must be included in that number. Being raised in the special resurrection (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 1:7) which occurs when the voice of God is uttered from the temple, at the beginning of the seventh and last plague (Revelation 16:17; Joel 3:16; Hebrews 12:26), they pass through the period of that plague, and hence may be said to come ‘out of great tribulation’ (Revelation 7:14), and being raised from the grave only to mortal life, they take their stand with believers who have not died, and with them receive immortality at the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:52), being then, with the others, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Thus, though they have passed through the grave, it can be said of them at last, that they are ‘redeemed from among men’ (Revelation 14:4), that is, from among the living; for the coming of Christ finds them among the living, waiting for the change to immortality, like those who have not died, and as if they themselves had never died.”¹⁴

H. R. Johnson

“Among those who shouted victory over the beast and over his image were those who had come forth from their graves in the special resurrection, and were seen on the sea of glass. They were ‘the living saints, 144,000 in number’ (EW 15).”¹⁶

Conditions to receive the seal

Faithfulness to the Lord and to His truth are among the fundamental

characteristics of the sealed ones; they must live a pure and holy life in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation. This group keeps itself in the grace of Christ, loyal even in the relatively minor aspects of the Christian life. “The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid” (Zephaniah 3:13).

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:14–16).

A peculiar people

“Those who will be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ to the immortal inheritance, will be peculiar. Yes, so peculiar that God places a mark upon them as His, wholly His. Think ye that God will receive, honor, and acknowledge a people so mixed up with the world that they differ from them only in name?”¹⁷

“Jesus is coming; and will He find a people conformed to the world? and will He acknowledge these as His people that He has purified unto Himself? Oh, no. None but the pure and holy will He acknowledge as His.”¹⁸

“We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s children unless we are such entirely.”¹⁹

“God has a people upon this earth. Who are they? They are those who will purify their souls by obeying the truth as it is in Jesus.”²⁰

Upholding a high moral standard

“The health and purity of the church must be preserved, that she may stand before God unsullied, clad in the robes of Christ’s righteousness.”²¹

One of the most heinous sins in these last days, and one which

requires prompt and decided action on the part of the church, is the transgression of the seventh commandment.

“If they [who profess to be commandment-keepers] commit fornication and adultery, their crime is of tenfold greater magnitude than is that of [others] . . . who do not acknowledge the law of God as binding upon them.”²²

In no case should this sin be passed over lightly in the church. Very clear instruction is given with regard to those who violate the seventh commandment.

“[The young] see how lightly the sin of breaking the seventh commandment is regarded, and the one who commits this horrid sin thinks that all he has to do is to confess that he was wrong and is sorry, and he is then to have all the privileges of the house of God and be held in [the] embrace or fellowship of the church.

“They have thought it was not so great a sin, but have lightly esteemed the breaking of the seventh commandment. This has been sufficient to remove the ark of God from the camp, if there were no other sins to cause the ark to be taken away and weaken Israel. . . .

“Those who break the seventh commandment should be suspended from the church, and not have its fellowship nor the privileges of the house of God.”²³

Appeal

“Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you” (Jeremiah 26:13).

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be with-

out spot before God—candidates for heaven.”²⁴

“The angel is to place a mark upon the forehead of all who are separated from sin and sinners.”²⁵

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement.”²⁶

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God.”²⁷

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.”²⁸

Beloved brethren and sisters, this is a life-or-death message, there is no halfway course. We must be firmly determined to be part of the 144,000 victors by God’s grace (Revelation 15:2), or we will be forever lost.

At this special and solemn time, as we, the remnant people, are completing 80 years of our pilgrimage, contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3), let us reconsecrate our heart to God and remove from our life and from our home every idol, vanity, and worldly lust.

Remember the appeals of Jacob and of Joshua:

“Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem” (Genesis 35:2–4).

“If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn

and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem” (Joshua 24:20–25).

May the Lord preserve us as a separate and peculiar people! Amen. **R**

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A Spirit-Filled People

BY E. G. WHITE

An urgent gift for us

Day after day is passing into eternity, bringing us nearer to the close of probation. Now we must pray as never before for the Holy Spirit to be more abundantly bestowed upon us, and we must look for its sanctifying influence to come upon the workers, that the people for whom they labor may know that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. We need spiritual eyesight now as never before, that we may see afar off, and that we may discern the snares and designs of the enemy, and as faithful watchmen proclaim the danger. We need spiritual power that we may take in, as far as the human mind can, the great subjects of Christianity, and how far-reaching are its principles.¹

“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,” said Jesus, “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. . . .

The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that [Jesus] could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be

given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

Of the Spirit Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me” (John 16:14). The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit

“When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of

judgment” (John 16:8). The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the cooperation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ’s ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, ‘Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine’ (Acts 5:28).

Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord’s promise; they talk *about* Christ and

about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people 'to will and to do of His good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive."²

The results of receiving God's Spirit

When God's people humble the soul before Him, individually seeking His Holy Spirit with all the heart, there will be heard from human lips such a testimony as is represented in this scripture: "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" (Revelation 18:1). There will be faces aglow with the love of God, there will be lips touched with holy fire, saying, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm, steadfast, free from extravagance. But let all who have had the light of truth shining clear and distinct upon their pathway, be careful how they cry peace and safety. Be careful what influence you exert at this time.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the early church, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). The Spirit of Christ made them one. This is the fruit of abiding in Christ.

Jesus longs to bestow the heavenly endowment in large measure upon His people. Prayers are ascending to God daily for the fulfillment of the promise; and not one of the prayers put up in faith is lost. Christ ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. When, after Christ's ascension, the Spirit came down as promised, like a rushing, mighty wind, filling the whole place where the disciples were assembled, what was the effect?—Thousands were converted in a day. We have taught, we have expected that an angel is to come down from heaven, that the earth will be lightened with his glory, when we shall behold an ingathering of souls similar to that witnessed on the day of Pentecost.

Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth. He silences every other voice than that which comes from Him who is the truth and the life. God gives to every soul opportunity to hear the voice of the True Shepherd, to receive the knowledge of God and our Saviour. When the heart receives this truth as a precious treasure, Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, while the whole heavenly universe exclaims, Amen and amen! We have absolute need of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. We have no time to confer with flesh and blood.

We have need of divine illumination. Every individual is striving to become a center of influence; and until God works for His people, they will not see that subordination to God is the only safety for any soul. His transforming grace upon human hearts will lead to unity that has not yet been realized; for all who are assimilated to Christ will be in harmony with one another. The Holy Spirit will create unity.

"He shall glorify me." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 16:14; 17:3). The Holy Spirit glori-

fies God by so revealing His character to His people that He becomes the object of their supreme affections, and by making manifest His character in them.

They see clearly that there never was any righteousness in the world but His, no excellence in the world but that derived from Him. When the Spirit was poured out from on high, the church was flooded with light, but Christ was the source of that light; His name was on every tongue, His love filled every heart. So it will be when the angel that comes down from heaven having great power shall lighten the whole earth with his glory.

The church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, and He comes personally by his Holy Spirit into the midst of His church.

The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, and the powers of hell shall not prevail against it. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ the great center from which radiates all glory.

How can we stand in the day of test if we do not understand the words of Christ? He said: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:25, 26). It is the Holy Spirit that is to bring to our remembrance the words of Christ. The theme Christ chose to dwell upon in His last discourse to His disciples was that of the office of the Holy

Spirit. He opened before them a wide tract of truth. They were to receive His words by faith, and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, was to bring all things to their remembrance. The consolation given by Christ in this promise was found in the fact that the divine influence was to be with His followers to the end. But this promise is not accepted and believed by the people today, and therefore is not cherished by them, nor is its fulfillment seen in the experience of the church. The promise of the gift of the Spirit of God is left as a matter to be little considered by the church. It is not impressed upon the people, and the result is only that which might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the mind and soul, but divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, which would if possessed, bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, although it is offered to us in infinite plenitude. Just as long as the church is satisfied with small things, it is disqualified to receive the great things of God.

But why do we not hunger and thirst after the gift of the Holy Spirit, since it is the means whereby the heart may be kept pure? The Lord designs that divine power shall cooperate with human effort. It is all-essential for the Christian to understand the meaning of the promise of the Holy Spirit just prior to the coming of our Lord Jesus the second time. Talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it; for the Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than parents are to give good gifts to their children. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

We are living in the last days, when error of a most deceptive character is accepted and believed, while truth is discarded. The Lord will hold both ministers and people

responsible for the light which shines in our day. God calls upon all who claim to believe present truth to work diligently in gathering up the precious jewels of truth, and placing them in their position in the framework of the gospel. Let them shine in all their divine beauty and loveliness, that the light may flash forth amid the moral darkness. This cannot be accomplished without the aid of the Holy Spirit, but with the aid of the Spirit we can do all things. When we are endowed with the Holy Spirit, we by faith take hold of infinite power. There is nothing to be lost of that which comes from God. The Saviour of the world sends His divine messenger to the soul, that men may dig for the truth, that by its revelation they may dispel the multitude of errors. This is the Christian’s work.

The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul. He who looks to Christ in simple, childlike faith, is made a partaker of the divine nature through the agency of the Holy Spirit. When led by the Spirit of God, the Christian may know that he is made complete in Him who is the head of all things. As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will He again be glorified in the closing work of the gospel, when He shall prepare a people to stand the final test, in the closing conflict of the great controversy.

When the earth is lightened with the glory of God, we shall see a work similar to that which was wrought when the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the power of a risen Saviour. The light of heaven penetrated the darkened minds of those who had been deceived by the enemies of Christ, and the false representation of Him was rejected; for through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, they now saw Him exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance unto

Israel, and remission of sins. Christ was glorified through the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon men.

The revelation of Christ by the Holy Spirit brought to them a realizing sense of His power and majesty, and they stretched forth their hands unto Him by faith, saying, “I believe.” Thus it was in the time of the early rain; but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Saviour of men will be glorified, and the earth will be lightened with the bright shining of the beams of His righteousness. He is the fountain of light, and light from the gates ajar has been shining upon the people of God, that they may lift Him up in His glorious character before those who sit in darkness.

It is Christ in His fullness as a sin-pardoning Saviour, that the sinner must see; for the unparalleled love of Christ, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, will bring conviction and conversion to the hardened heart.

Oh that we as a people might humble our hearts before God, and plead with Him for the endowment of the Holy Spirit!³

What the Holy Spirit actually does—how He works

Whom Christ pardons He first makes penitent, and it is the office work of the Holy Spirit to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The sinner acknowledges the perfection of God, the righteousness of Christ, and thus glorifies God. By beholding this perfection the sinner sees his sins, and repents, and believes in the atonement of Jesus Christ, “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).⁴

Let there be a work of reformation and repentance. Let all seek for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As with the disciples after the ascension of Christ, it may require several days of earnestly seeking God and putting away of sin.

When God's people are worked by the Holy Spirit, they will manifest a zeal that is according to knowledge. When they are guided by the Spirit, they will no longer lead others in false paths. They will reflect the light that God has been giving for years. The spirit of criticism will be put away. Filled with the spirit of humility, they will be of one mind, united with one another and with Christ.⁵

Your energy and efficiency in the upbuilding of My kingdom, Jesus says, depend upon your receiving of My Spirit. You must be partakers of My grace, in order to be a savor of life unto life. Then there will be no rivalry, no self-seeking, no desire for the highest place. You will have that love which seeks not her own, but another's wealth.⁶

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, thousands were converted. Angels of God that excel in strength, clothed with the brightness of heaven, came to the help of the church, and swept back the forces of Satan. The work of the Holy Spirit was not limited to apostolic days; it is not confined to any church, large or small: the field of His ministration is the world. "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). But the instrumentalities through which the Holy Spirit works are the members of Christ's body, those who believe in His name. It is through these light bearers that the gospel is to be carried to all the nations of the earth.⁷

Christ declared that the Holy Spirit should not speak of Himself, but that "he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). The Holy Spirit was to glorify the Redeemer of the world, who came to demonstrate the love of the Father by a life of suffering and humiliation, and by a death of shame. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by manifesting in the members of the church the self-denial, the self-sacrifice, the devotion of those who truly follow the great Exemplar. They shed a heavenly influence, and reveal in their charac-

ters the loveliness of Christ, working in harmony with the Holy Spirit. They can be silent concerning their own finite selves, but can extol the greatness of Christ, wakening an interest in others by the revealing of His marvelous love. They are able to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Oh, let the tongue be silent concerning the pictures of self! let there be shame that the money expended in this way has not gone into the treasury to reproduce the likeness of Christ, to set forth His matchless charms. Jesus alone should engage the attention. Those who have attracted attention to self should change this course of action, and turn the minds of men to Him who is deserving of the whole heart's love. They should see the sinfulness of aiding the enemy of God and man by placing objects before the mind to divert the attention from Christ and heaven.

This work of selfishness grieves the Holy Spirit of God. Did not Christ have travail of soul that the redemption of a lost world might be made sure? Then shall not the followers of Christ, those whom He has left as His representatives, be moved with soul anguish, and travail in spirit that souls may be brought to Christ? "We are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Christ worked unceasingly for the souls of men, and why are the members of the church standing all the day idle? Go, work in the Master's vineyard. Repent with tears and humiliation that you have wasted so much time upon unimportant matters when souls were perishing.

As stewards of God's grace, have you not a personal interest in the work of saving your fellowmen? Shall Christ have died in vain for them because He does not have the cooperation of His professed followers? God requires that you shall be filled with the Holy Spirit. The work of Christ is sacred, and the command is, "Be ye clean, that bear the

vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah 52:11). He requires perfection of character in His agents. The influence of His church must all tend toward the building up of His cause in the earth.

Each member must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His office work. Let no one feel that he must engage in a warfare at his own charges. To neglect a single means which God has provided is to exclude the rays of light that should shine forth to the world and to rob the souls for whom Christ died of the light of life. Human effort must be combined with divine power.

Stumbling blocks are placed before those who are looking for light, because the professed followers of Christ are devoid of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The professed people of God do not study the life of Christ as they should. Satan has filled their minds with interest in things of minor importance, and the eternal realities are set aside. It is this that makes so great a dearth of laborers; this is why the sowers and reapers are so few. . . .

Let us work in the Spirit of Christ for our fellowmen. In great cities and smaller cities, in highways and byways, let us go forth to hold up Jesus as the one able to cleanse from sin. Every member of the church may be a working member, if he can do no more than say, "Come." For the word declares, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).⁸

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A Triumphant People

BY D. SURESHKUMAR—writing from U.S.A.

The picture of a triumphant people

John the Revelator states: “I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Revelation 15:2–4).

“The angel from heaven came to John in majesty. His countenance beamed with the excellent glory of heaven. He revealed to John scenes of deep and thrilling interest concerning the church of God, and brought before him the perilous conflicts they were to endure. John saw them pass through fiery trials, and made white and tried, and, finally, victorious overcomers, gloriously saved in the kingdom of God. The countenance of the angel grew radiant with joy, and was exceeding glorious, as he showed to John the final triumph of the church of God. John was enraptured as he beheld the final deliverance of the church.”¹

So this is the scene of the final deliverance, the triumph of God’s church.

“The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant.”²

“Christians are engaged in a warfare. The church militant is not the church triumphant. The followers of Christ, marching toward Zion, must fight at every step.”³

More than nineteen centuries have passed since the apostles rested from their labors. Written under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the history of their strenuous, exhausting labor and their sacrifices for Christ is still among His children for their edification. It was recorded in order that by it God’s children might be encouraged to greater sincerity in the cause of the Saviour.

Who will triumph?

The Revelator describes a special people who are going to triumph.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). These are the people that are going to triumph that we read about in Revelation 15. “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimo-

ny of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). These are they who believe that he who loves Him keeps His commandments. They are in harmony with that law that rests in the ark in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

Indeed, there is a group of people who are going to triumph and it is the church, the remnant that will enlighten the earth with its glory. “‘God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people.’”⁴

This is a movement of people, the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon,⁵ a movement with a message from heaven which has great authority, for they follow after Christ.

Historical records

Emperors, kings, governors, priests, and rulers tried to destroy the temple of God to eradicate God’s children. But in spite of imprisonment, persecution, harassment, and death, faithful men continued to forward the work with devotion and there was a remnant in all periods of earth’s history to bear the banner of Christ. Many times they were almost destroyed by the aggression of their opponents. But with determined faith

and unfailing courage they moved forward with the hope of triumph.

One after another the enemy tried to eradicate the foremost architects of God's church. Stephen was stoned; James was slain by the sword; Paul was beheaded; Peter was crucified; John was exiled. But more and more faithful ones took the place of those who fell, and more blocks were added in the building of God's temple. Slowly the temple of the church of God ascended. Although many workmen were killed, the work of the Lord progressed. The Waldenses, John Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome, Martin Luther and Zwingli, Cranmer, Latimer, and Knox, the Huguenots, John and Charles Wesley, and many others brought to the foundation material that will continue throughout eternity.

Many centuries of violent persecution followed but there was never a lack of persons who valued the Work of God more than their life. There were people who could not be bought or sold and who stood firm as the needle to the pole. Of such it is written: "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:36-38).

We are to bring to the foundation material that will stand

All these righteous men and women have done their part. But we must continue, for the work is not yet complete. We who are living in this age have a work to do, a part to act. We are to bring to the foundation material that will stand the test of fire—gold, silver, and precious stones, "polished after the similitude of a palace" (Psalm 144:12). To those who thus build for God, Paul speaks words of encouragement and warn-

ing: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (1 Corinthians 3:14).

These are the people by whom God will give His last message to this world "in this generation" (Genesis 7:1). But He cannot have such a church to give the message until He shall have a people who will love their fellowmen and be ready to make sacrifices for their salvation.

Those who say, "I am part of the church, I am part of the remnant church," but have the world in them, are not going to triumph. Those who are indifferent are not going to triumph. The church that will triumph will not be a professed church that is joined to the world or its customs. It is not enough to say, "I am part of the church" and have other gods with them. "The Lord hath a controversy with His people, and although in His great mercy He bears long with them, yet if they persist in living in transgression of His law, they will not stand in the day of His rebuke."⁶

The great time of trouble begins after the close of probation. But God's people are prepared for the trying hour before them. The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint, though severely tried.

"The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects. He has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God."⁷

A death penalty, similar to that issued by Ahasuerus will be pronounced for all who do not honor

Sunday. "A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance."⁸

But the remnant make God their defense. "If the people of God will put their trust in Him and by faith rely upon His power, the devices of Satan will be defeated in our time as signally as in the days of Mordecai."⁹

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Revelation 15:2).

The greatest trial

"Our greatest trials will come from those who profess godliness. It was so with the world's Redeemer; it will be so with His followers. I should doubt whether I were a child of God, if the world, or even all professed Christians spoke well of me. Those who are in earnest to win the crown of eternal life need not be surprised or disheartened because at every step toward the heavenly Canaan they meet with obstacles and encounter trials. The opposition which Christ received came from His own nation, who would have been greatly blessed had they accepted Him. In like manner the remnant church receives opposition from those who profess to be their brethren."¹⁰

Notice again the last sentence of this prophecy: "In like manner the remnant church receives opposition from those who profess to be their brethren." The remnant church is going to receive opposition, but from whom? From those who say, "We are the remnant church"—from those who profess to be their brethren. That is where the hostility is going to come from.

God draws a line right there in the middle of this great big group of people. He draws the line between those who profess to be His children, the remnant church, and those whose characters show who they

actually are. They are actually obedient. They do not just make a profession, but they actually obey.

The characteristics of the triumphant

Who are those that will triumph? Here are their characteristics, from the Bible. If you have these characteristics in your life, you will be part of the triumphant company.

1. The people who triumph will not be joined to the world. They will separate themselves from the world and worldliness.¹¹ (James 4:4.)

2. These triumphant ones will be a people who are faithful to the truth and to the church. The church is a pillar and the ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

3. These triumphant people will take the final warning to the entire world and proclaim the message of that other angel with power. “The third angel’s message will triumph, and we must hold fast to the truth and triumph with it.”¹² “The truth of the third angel’s message is bound to triumph, and those who purify their souls from all defilement will triumph with it.”¹³

4. The church that triumphs will actually keep the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; 14:12) by the power that Jesus provides. They will not only make a profession.

5. The people who triumph will not be seeking worldly recognition or honor (Revelation 13:15–17; chapters 14 and 15).

6. The people who triumph will have conquered selfishness. As a result of the death of Christ on Calvary’s cross, they no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them (2 Corinthians 5:15).

7. They are wholehearted in doing God’s will, not half-hearted. They do not do mere lip service but actual heart service.¹⁴ They understand that mere forms are as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. Many are content with lip service, but the few who triumph will have a sincere, earnest, affectionate longing after God.

8. They walk humbly with God in meekness and contrition of spirit, and the Lord recognizes them and gives them the grace of His Holy Spirit, in order that they may do the work, according to their ability, which God would have them do. Micah 6:6–8.

9. They are laborers together with God. They claim no wisdom of their own, but acknowledge that divine power alone can enable them (1 Corinthians 3:9).

10. The church triumphant will be a church that has gone through a mighty conflict, as described in Revelation 13, 14, 15, and 17:14. They withstand all difficulties. “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25–27).

11. These people understand that it is not by belonging to the church that they belong to Christ, but that they must belong to Christ in order to belong to the church. And the difference between these two things is the difference between Christianity and the mystery of iniquity.

12. These are part of the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. “In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5).

13. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14).

The experience of Jacob

The hour had come. The patriarch Jacob was facing one of the darkest chapters of his life. The cruelty of his sons in slaying the innocent inhabitants of an entire city sadly reflected to some degree the patriarch’s own negligence in guid-

ing his family aright. God was dishonored and all their lives were now in serious jeopardy. Events had escalated to a real crisis, and where could Jacob turn? What hope did exist in the face of such obvious guilt?

The outlook appeared painfully bleak. There seemed to be absolutely nowhere to turn, no arm to lean upon, no sweet light to dispel the darkness. The only glimmer of hope that he found was in humbly bowing down to beseech the tender mercies of a compassionate Saviour.

“Jacob ‘had power over the Angel, and prevailed’ (Hosea 12:4). Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal prevailed with the Majesty of heaven. He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner’s plea.”¹⁵

Unwavering effort and unconditional faith is essential for victory. Jacob was in fear and anguish while he tried in his own power to gain the victory. He mistook the heavenly visitor for a foe, and struggled with him while he had any strength left. But when he threw himself upon the compassion of God he found that he was enclosed in the arms of immeasurable love, and instead of being in the hands of an enemy, he realized his sins were pardoned. This was his victory.

Jacob’s efforts to remove wrong were accepted by God. Jacob was humbled, and required his family to humble themselves, and to lay off all their ornaments, for he was to make atonement for their sins by offering a sacrifice unto God that He might be entreated for them, and not leave them to be destroyed by other nations. God accepted the efforts of Jacob to remove the wrong from his family, and appeared unto him, and blessed him, and renewed the promise made to him, because His fear was before him. This was his victory.

As evidence that Jacob had been forgiven, his name was changed from one that was a reminder of his sin to

one that commemorated his victory. “Thy name,” said the angel, “shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:28).

Jacob’s experience repeated by us

“Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His experience testifies to the power of importunate prayer. It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer, of unyielding faith. The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian, are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth, or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power.”¹⁶

“We can do nothing of ourselves. In our helpless unworthiness we must trust in the merits of the crucified and risen Saviour. None will ever perish while they do this. The long, black catalogue of our delinquencies is before the eye of the Infinite. The register is complete; none of our offenses are forgotten. But He who listened to the cries of His servants of old, will hear the prayer of faith, and pardon our transgressions. He has promised, and He will fulfill His word.”¹⁷

The privilege entrusted to us

“We have an enemy which we must meet, who is vigilant; who is not off his guard one moment. The claims of our country are not higher than the claims of God. If hardships are borne and trials endured by our soldiers fighting in behalf of the country to obtain the mastery and bring into obedience the rebellious, how much more willing should the soldiers of Christ endure privation, self denial, and any taxation for Christ’s sake. The Captain of our

salvation was made perfect through suffering that He might bring many sons and daughters to the Lord. We are standing under the blood-stained banner of the cross of Christ. We are to meet Satan and his host. We must conquer in the name of Jesus or be conquered. Armed with the mind of Christ we shall be more than overcomers. As faithful soldiers of the cross we are not to fight against principalities and powers, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. There is no rest in this war, no release. Obedience and faith must characterize us as Christ’s servants.”¹⁸

The Lord wants us to be triumphant over the powers of darkness. He is ready and willing to save all who come to Him. It is through Him that “we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand” (Romans 5:2). With the sword of truth He defeated the enemy. Equipped with this sword, and protected by the shield of faith, we, the church militant, shall be able to stand unyielding before Satan’s attack. Continuing to resist the enemy, we shall always increase in power and at last become the church triumphant.

Conclusion

“If the church will put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness, withdrawing from all allegiance with the world, there is before her the dawn of a bright and glorious day. God’s promise to her will stand fast forever. He will make her an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.”¹⁹

We are to examine ourselves and ask, “Am I a member of the church because I am enrolled in the books of the church? Or am I a member of the church because my name is in the book of life, since I have given myself to Christ, and belong to Him, and live and move and have my being in Him?”

“I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9, 10).

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” “And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 7:14–17; 21:4). R

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The Forming of the Fold

*The gracious God is calling souls
so tenderly, He calls them sheep.
In pastures fair He gives them care;
each one He promises to keep.*

*How lovely is the picture when
describing sweetly from on high,
He says, uniquely Mine they are;
they're just the apple of My eye.*

*So many sheep are far away
beyond the shelter of a fold.
These, too, He promises to bring—
some young, some middle-aged, some old.*

*But where is safe enough to bring them?
Where is it that light beams strong
In such a world so dark with woe
that what is right is told it's wrong?*

*It's only where God's truth is held,
a fold where principles are kept—
Where Ten Commandments reign supreme
to guide His sheep for whom He wept.*

*This fold must climb an upward path;
its ranks cannot be false or fake,
for God is true—and His pure church
He's already begun to make.*

*Will you be there, will I, my friend?
To stand the test of surety,
be grounded in the faith of saints,
and shine in loving purity?*

*Then let's press on the upward course,
not fearing friend or even foe,
regardless what the world may say,
and shunning all that's from below.*

*Without a spot or wrinkle there,
this fold will soon seem very odd.
Yet glowing will its victory be
when wholly for the Lamb of God.*

*It's time to look to that dear Lamb.
For us He suffered to be slain.
The time is ripe for His dear fold
to ne'er more take that call in vain.*

—bbm

