



The Reformation Herald

October–December, 2005

Vol. XLVI, NO. 4

“God Gave Me a
**Second
Chance**”

- **Considering Consecration**
- **Vessels for the Living Water**
- **Don't Take It—It's Mine**



The Reformation Herald

GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

OCTOBER–DECEMBER, 2005, VOL. XLVI, NO. 4

3 Editorial

The secret of strength.

4 Considering Consecration

"Nothing less than entire consecration to His service will Christ accept."

8 Vessels for the Living Water

The prophecy of Ezekiel 47 must be fulfilled.

13 Don't Take It—It's Mine

God reserves a portion of our increase.

18 God Gave Me a Second Chance

The Holy Spirit does not give up easily.

20 Papua New Guinea Report

A brief summary of hard work in building the "Peace Chapel."

22 Worldwide Pictorial News

Progress of the worldwide work in pictures.

24 Children's Corner

Where is the Vulture's Value?



"Faith, patience, forbearance, heavenly mindedness, trust in Providence, and genuine sympathy with the erring, are the results of trial well borne. These are the graces of the Spirit, which bud, blossom, and bear fruit amid trials and adversity. Meekness, humility, and love always grow on the Christian tree."

—The Review and Herald, June 28, 1892.

The Reformation Herald

Official Church Publication of the
Seventh Day Adventist
Reform Movement

"The age in which we live calls for
reformatory action."
—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

Editor: D. Sureshkumar
Assistant to the Editor: B. Monteiro
Creative Services: N. Tyler

Subscription rates are as follows:
United States US \$ 8.95
Foreign (surface mail) US \$11.00
Foreign (air mail) US \$15.00
Single issue US \$ 3.50

THE REFORMATION HERALD® (ISSN 0482-0843) features articles on Bible doctrine that will enrich the spiritual life of those who seek to know more about God. It is published quarterly by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240, U.S.A.
Web: <http://www.sdarm.org>
e-mail: info@sdarm.org
It is printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association. Manuscripts.

inquiries, address changes, subscriptions, payments, and donations should be mailed to the address below. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Reformation Herald, P. O. Box 7240, ROANOKE, VA 24019.

Illustrations: Comstock on p. 14; Corbis on pp. 4, 7; N. Tyler on pp. 20, 21; Stock.xchang on front and back covers and pp. 2, 18, 19. Photodisc elsewhere, unless specified.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Title of Publication: <i>The Reformation Herald</i>	Editor: D. Sureshkumar, 817 Clearwater Ave., Roanoke, VA 24019	a. Total Number of Copies: 4,812 4,050	(2) In-County 0 0
2. Publication No: USPS 0663-550		b. Paid and/or Requested:	(3) Other Classes Mailed through the USPS 97 120
3. Filing Date: September 30, 2005	10. Owner: Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, 5240 Hollins Rd., Roanoke, VA 24019	(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions 1,920 1,446	e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail 135 140
4. Frequency of Issue: 4 quarterly+1 extra issue	11. Bondholders, Mortgage, and Other Security Holders: None	(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions 0 0	f. Total Free Distribution(Sum of 15d & f) 232 260
5. Number of Issues: 5	12. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and exempt status for federal income tax has not changed during preceding 12 months	(3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales, Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution 123 85	g. Total Distribution(Sum of 15c & f) 4,680 3,786
6. Price: \$8.95 in US, \$11.00 (surface), \$15.00 (air mail) in all other countries	13. Publication Title: <i>The Reformation Herald</i>	(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS 2,405 1,995	h. Copies not Distributed 132 264
7. Mailing Address: PO Box 7240, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240	14. Issue Date: Vol XLVI, No. 3	c. Total Paid and/or Requested [Sum of 15b(1),(2),(3),and(4)] 4,448 3,526	i. Total (Sum of 15g, and h.) 4,812 4,050
8. Headquarters: 5240 Hollins Rd., Roanoke, VA 24019	15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:	d. Free Distribution by Mail: (1) Outside-County 0 0	j. Percent paid and/or requested circulation: 95.04% 93.13%
9. Publisher: Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, 5240 Hollins Rd., Roanoke, VA 24019			16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: Vol. XLVI, No. 4, October–December, 2005
			17. Signature of Business Manager: Edwin E. Moreno

The Secret of Strength

He is the secret of strength. It is Christ, the son of God, the One to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who does the work.

The soldiers of Alexander the Great were reckoned invincible. Why? Was it because they were naturally stronger and more courageous than all their enemies? No, it was because they were led by Alexander. Their strength was in his leadership. Under another leader they would often have been defeated.

Well, our Captain is the Lord of hosts. He has met the chief foe of all and has vanquished him single-handedly. Those who follow Him invariably go forth conquering and to conquer.

We who are called are to put our trust in Him, and then by victorious life we are to praise Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. To walk in the light is to keep moving onward in the right direction.

Source of power

"There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon [us]."¹

Church members have a general tendency to think of the Christian experience as simply, "sin and repent," "sin and repent." But God holds out promises to keep us from falling. (Jude 24, 25.) By exposing our mind and our heart to the beautiful, noble, and perfect character of Jesus, we allow that character to be reproduced in us. If we want the character of Christ to be reproduced in our life, our heart has to be exposed to Christ.

Since we are considered the "Elijah People," we ought to stand with the prophet and hear once again God's voice. "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."²

Removing obstacles

We have a special message to bear. The Lord is to be our Light, and we are to reflect the light He gives us. We must be sanctified wholly. Every moment we must be on our guard lest we be overcome by our adversaries. All boasting is sinful. Let us put away all self-exaltation, and heed the invitation of Christ. He says, "Come unto Me; copy My character; take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." When we manifest Christlikeness by revealing His meekness, then we will demonstrate that we are born into the kingdom of Christ.

Satan is at work with vehement power to divert the mind of the multitudes, so that they shall not understand and obey the truth. He will entangle them with every snare that he can devise.

The church is not a place to pretend we are healthy. It is the place for spiritual healing. If "turning the other cheek" or "giving our shirt away" or "going the extra mile" is what it takes to witness to non-Christians, then do it. If "doormat for Christ" is going to be effectively testifying the presence of God in our lives, "DOORMATS—THEN, WE SHALL BE." This is REFORMATION. This is

what is meant by reflecting Christ and preaching Christ.

A new formation

Reformation does not focus on merely changing symptoms. Rather, it genuinely affects both the external and the internal aspects of life. It begins internally with the renewing of mind. Circumstances cannot work reforms. The Scripture proposes a reformation in the heart. What Christ works within will be worked out under the direction of a converted intellect and is reflected in the life of the believers. The plan of beginning outside and trying to work inward has always failed and always will. The reformation will be inward as well as outward. The external aspects of reformation:

1. Habits of personal devotion.
2. Our interaction in the church.
3. The behavior in the home.
4. Healthful living.
5. Proper Sabbath observance.
6. Our relationship with our neighbors and fellow beings.
7. Visible reflection of Christian life.

"Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin."³

"We have great victories to gain, and a heaven to lose if we do not gain them."⁴ **R**

References

¹ *Messages to Young People*, p. 133.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

³ *Steps to Christ*, p. 39.

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 267.



Considering Consecration

BY LES GIBSON

Is consecration important? “Nothing less than entire consecration to His service will Christ accept. This is the lesson which every one of us must learn.”¹

What is consecration? What is the lesson that we must learn? Is this something that will require a lifetime?

The following study on consecration will simply scratch the tip of the iceberg to stimulate our thinking on a deep subject absolutely vital to our salvation.

We are told, “Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ This is a daily matter. **Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day.** Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. . . .

“It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to **be transformed into His likeness.**”²

“God wants every worker who claims to believe the present truth to consecrate himself, body, soul, and

spirit, to the work of seeking to save the perishing souls around him.”³

What does “consecrate” mean? It is defined as “to make sacred, to dedicate to some purpose.”⁴

Do we have a biblical example of this? Yes, we do, but first let us take heed of a few inspired quotes to help us grasp the solemnity of the subject:

“There are thousands who claim to have the light of truth who take no steps in advance. They have no living experience, notwithstanding they have had every advantage. **They do not know what consecration means.**”⁵

“**There are few really consecrated men among us, few who have fought and conquered in the battle with self.** Real conversion is a decided change of feelings and motives; it is a virtual taking leave of worldly connections, a hastening from their spiritual atmosphere, a withdrawing from the controlling power of their thoughts, opinions, and influences. The separation causes pain and bitterness to both parties. It is the variance which Christ declares that He came to bring. But the converted will feel a continual longing desire that their friends shall forsake all for Christ, knowing that, unless they do, there will be a final and eternal separation. The true Christian cannot, while with unbelieving friends, be light and trifling. The value of the souls for whom Christ died is too great.”⁶

Moses defines consecration

Let us consider the tragic occasion when the children of Israel had fallen into temptation by forming a molten image and worshiping it:

“When Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, **Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day**” (Exodus 32:25–29).

“When Moses saw the idolatry of Israel and his indignation was so aroused at their shameful forgetfulness of God that he threw down the tables of stone and broke them, Aaron stood meekly by, bearing the censure of Moses with commendable patience. The people were charmed with Aaron’s lovely spirit and were disgusted with the rashness of Moses. But God seeth

not as man sees. He condemned not the ardor and indignation of Moses against the base apostasy of Israel.”⁷

So then, reader, what do we do? Strap on a sword and kill everyone that doesn’t believe like we do? But wait—did Jesus come to destroy or save humanity? To those disciples who, even with good intentions, had murderous thoughts, Jesus gave a strong rebuke, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Luke 9:55, 56). He is our Example.

In light of Christ’s words, let us observe how Moses as a true general reveals what is actually meant by genuine consecration. The *consecrated* sons of Levi used their swords in defense of God’s law, which had been broken. So we are to be *consecrated*, and use our swords as explained in Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Our sword is the word of God, and we likewise are to use it in defense of God’s law. But notice in our example, which came first—Consecration, or the use of the sword? Obviously, consecration. So it is today. We need to be consecrated first, and then we can come “to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty” and not be cursed bitterly by the Angel of the Lord (see Judges 5:23). Aaron also needed to be consecrated (see Exodus 28:3).

A word study

What does “consecration” mean, biblically? The word “consecrate” occurs 28 times in 28 verses in the King James Version. In Exodus 28:3, “consecrate” comes from the root word in Hebrew *qadash* (kaw-dash). This word *qadash* occurs in the Hebrew 174 times in 154 verses. It is not always translated as “consecrate,” so we should check other words translated from the root word to find the true meaning of “consecrate.”

A. From the Scriptures:

1. *Sanctify*: 70 times in 65 verses.
2. *Consecrate*: 28 times in 28 verses.
3. *Dedicate*: 28 times in 28 verses.
4. *Purify*: 26 times in 24 verses.
5. *Hallow*: 37 times in 35 verses.
6. *Be Holy*: 41 times in 39 verses.
7. *Holy*: 613 times in 546 verses.

B. From the Spirit of Prophecy:

1. *Sanctify*: 2,043 times.
2. *Consecrate*: 2,461 times.
3. *Dedicate*: 445 times.
4. *Purify*: 1,337 times.
5. *Hallow*: 304 times.
6. *Be Holy*: 21,429 times.

“From the pillar of cloud Christ declared concerning the Sabbath: ‘Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth *sanctify* you’ (Exodus 31:13). The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the *Sanctifier*. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of *sanctification*. True *sanctification* is **harmony with God**, oneness with Him

What does “consecrate” mean? It is defined as “to make sacred, to dedicate to some purpose.”

Due to lack of space, this article will not examine all this information. But, because “nothing less than entire consecration to His service will Christ accept,”⁸ we are urged to investigate this further. In the meantime, let us at least examine a few examples:

1. Sanctify

Examples in the Old Testament: “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified [consecrated] it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:3).

“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 [consecrate] them.... And hallow [consecrate] my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

The Sabbath is God’s sign to you and me, and the same Hebrew word *qadash* is used in all three examples to show us that God’s *consecrated* people will be found keeping the Sabbath holy.

in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And **the Sabbath is the sign** of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified [consecrated] through obedience.”⁹

In the New Testament also we have examples:

“*Sanctify* them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, that they also might be *sanctified* through the truth.” John 17:17–19.

(Sanctify = consecrate.) This is translated from the Greek word *hagiazō*.

2. Consecrate

“Let not one evil word escape our lips, because our lips, our voice, belong to the Lord, and must be *consecrated* to the Lord and to His service. These lips must not dishonor Jesus, for they belong to Him. He has bought them and I must speak nothing that will offend Jesus.

My ears must be closed to evil. **Thus day by day we can consecrate ourselves to God.** The ears must not be defiled by listening to any gossip that faultfinding ones would have us hear, **for I not only cause them to sin in allowing them to talk of others' faults, but I sin myself in listening to them.** I can prevent much evil speaking in thus having ears *consecrated* to God. I can say before the evil is done, 'Let us pray,' then ask God to enlighten both our minds to understand our true relation to one another and our true relation to God."¹⁰

3. Hallow

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and *hallowed* it" (Exodus 20:11).

"And let them make me a *sanctuary*; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). "Sanctuary" was translated from the Hebrew word *miqdash* whose root word is *qadash*—"A consecrated place or thing." We see now that our study of consecration is part of the sanctuary doctrine.

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2 Corinthians 6:16; Philippians 2:5).

The word "temple" comes from the Greek *naos* which means, "a fane, shrine, temple." God wants our minds to merge into His, our wills to become His, so that we can become like He is: Pure, Holy, Undefiled. We are God's temple. He wants to change us from glory to glory (from character to character. See 2 Corinthians 3:18; Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7).

Jesus says, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, *Hallowed* be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). "This name is *hallowed* [consecrated] by the angels of heaven, by the inhabitants of unfallen

worlds. When you pray, '*Hallowed* be Thy name,' you ask that it may be *hallowed* in this world, *hallowed* in you. God has acknowledged you before men and angels as His child; pray that you may do no dishonor to the 'worthy name by which ye are called' (James 2:7). God sends you into the world as His representative. In every act of life you are to make manifest the name of God. This petition calls upon you to *possess His character*. **You cannot hallow [consecrate] His name, you cannot represent Him to the world, unless in life and character you represent the**

neglect the solemn obligations that God has placed upon us? Of what avail will be a list of church resolutions, if we have not the Spirit of God in our homes? *Christ is watching to see who are training their families for the great family above.* Suppose one of your little children whom you have failed to correct, should be taken away in one of its fits of temper, what would be the result? I leave you to answer the question."¹²

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the

Absolute consecration, the entire surrender of the entire being to the work of the Spirit of God—this only is acceptable to God.

very life and character of God. This you can do only through the acceptance of the grace and righteousness of Christ."¹¹

"Our blessed Saviour taught us to pray, 'Our Father, which art in heaven. *Hallowed* [consecrated] be thy name.' Do we realize what is the meaning of this prayer? Do we realize that we must *hallow* that name in our families, and that if we allow our children to manifest the attributes of Satan, that name is not *hallowed* in our households? If we want the holy angels to take charge of our little ones, we must bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and teach them to hallow the name of God. We teach them to say, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' But do you teach them the meaning of this prayer?..."

"Do you wonder that God does not walk through the midst of us when we allow Satan to work his way in our households, and when we

sabbath day, and *hallowed* [consecrated] it" (Exodus 20:11).

"The Lord, by close and pointed truths for these last days, is cleaving out a people from the world and purifying them unto Himself. Pride and unhealthful fashions, the love of display, the love of approbation—all must be left with the world, if we would be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created us."¹³

"In the epistle of Paul to Titus, chap. ii, 13, 14, we read, 'Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify* [consecrate] unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' This great work is to be performed for those only who are willing to be *purified*, willing to be peculiar, and who manifest a zeal in good works. How many shrink from the *purifying* process! They are unwilling to live

out the truth, unwilling to appear singular in the eyes of the world. **It is this mingling with the world which destroys our spirituality, pureness, and zeal.** Satan's power is constantly exercised to stupefy the sensibility of God's people, that their consciences may not be sensitive to wrong, and that the **sign of distinction** between them and the world may be destroyed."¹⁴

"A solemn statement was made to ancient Israel that the man who should remain unclean and refuse to *purify* (*consecrate*) himself, **should be cut off from among the congregation** (*excommunicated, disfellowshipped*). This has a special meaning for us. If it was necessary in ancient times for the unclean to be *purified* by the blood of sprinkling, how essential for those living in the perils of the last days, exposed to the fierce temptations of Satan, to have the blood of Christ applied to their hearts daily. 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the *purifying* of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' "¹⁵

"**Consecrate** [*dedicate, hallow, sanctify, make holy, purify*] yourself to God in the morning; **make this your very first work....** This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate."¹⁶

"The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary will bear fruit unto eternal life. The contemplation of this sacrifice will be the glory of those who, as the fruit of it, will live through the eternal ages.

"With this lesson Christ connects the self-sacrifice that all should practice. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it,' He declares; 'and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be;

if any man serve me, him will my Father honour' (John 12:25, 26).

"This is the only honor we should seek. And we should seek it with a determination and an earnestness proportionate to the value of the treasure we have in view—eternal life in the kingdom of God.

"Christ claims the complete *consecration* of man to Himself. **This is the condition upon which man is exalted.** As he submits his mind, his body, his soul, to God, so he will be honored. **Self-renunciation is the great law of self-preservation, and self-preservation is the law of self-destruction.**"¹⁷

"[Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego] possessed genuine sanctification. True Christian principle will not stop to weigh consequences.... With the most intense longing the children of God desire to know what He would have them do, that their works may glorify Him."¹⁸

Conclusion

Brother and sister, this is a very important subject. Let us consider the importance of this matter and continually seek first the kingdom of God, and be converted daily.

We are to make consecration "our very first work," so how can we move on to the next step, if we fail to understand the first? How can we consecrate ourselves to God if we don't know what it means? "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Is this a salvational issue?

We are told, "Walk in the light while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.... **Absolute consecration, the entire surrender of the entire being to the work of the spirit of God—this only is acceptable to God.**"¹⁹

As we become converted each day, we will be conquerors by the

blood of the Lamb. God promises to send the Holy Spirit to teach us the right use of our sword, the word of God. Other conversions will follow as others will likewise be taught to remove the controlling power of their thoughts from all worldly connections, to become consecrated conquerors as well. **Praise God!** R

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 42.
- ² *Steps to Christ*, pp. 70, 71. [Emphasis supplied here and elsewhere.]
- ³ *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 23.
- ⁴ *Random House Webster's Dictionary*, Third Edition.
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, January 10, 1888.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 82, 83.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 300, 301.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 42.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 350.
- ¹⁰ *The Upward Look*, p. 237.
- ¹¹ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 107.
- ¹² *The Review and Herald*, July 16, 1895.
- ¹³ *Counsels on Health*, p. 106.
- ¹⁴ *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, p. 65.
- ¹⁵ *The Review and Herald*, January 9, 1883.
- ¹⁶ *Steps to Christ*, p. 70.
- ¹⁷ *The Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1897.
- ¹⁸ *The Review and Herald*, February 1, 1881.
- ¹⁹ *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, pp. 906, 907.



Vessels for the Living Water

BY B. MONTEIRO

Dimensions. The more angles from which you see something, the greater perspective you have of it. In the realm of art, if something can be created to appear to be 3-dimensional, it will look more realistic and thus be more attractive to the eye. Accomplished artists routinely make use of shading and similar techniques to make things more natural-looking. This way their work has more dimension to it.

A prism made of clear glass reveals the beauty of dimensions. When light hits the various angles of the prism, the rays of pure white light break down to reveal the lovely colors of the rainbow, a symbol of God's justice and mercy.

These basic aspects of the natural world of creation carry spiritual lessons for us. As we seek to be collaborators with Jesus Christ in the salvation of a lost world, we can be more effective witnesses to reveal the elements of His light if we each equip ourselves to operate on more than one dimension. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the **breadth, and length, and depth, and height;** and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye

might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:17–19).

Rivers of living water

Jesus promises every believer, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** (But **this spake he of the Spirit,** which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:38, 39).

Other passages of Scripture likewise refer to this spiritual water: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And **he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,** that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For **he shall be as a tree planted by the waters,** and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Psalm 1:1–3; Jeremiah 17:7, 8).

One of the most powerful illustrations of this spiritual water is found in Ezekiel 47. We are told that this prophecy applies with greatest force in the last days. We read from Ezekiel's vision: "[The Lord God] brought me again unto the door of the [temple]; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of

the river. Now when I had returned, behold, **at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.** Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and **there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed;** and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because **their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine**" (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Health and healing

The Spirit of Prophecy refers to the above passage in Ezekiel when speaking of medical missionary work in the last days.

"[Ezekiel 47:8-12 quoted.] **Such a river of life and healing God designs that, by His power working through them, our sanitariums shall be.**"¹

As the message of health reform is considered the right arm and an the entering wedge to open the way for the presentation of the three angels' messages, it is an essential first dimension to prepare the heart of many souls to receive the truth.

"The representation given in Ezekiel 47:1-12 is an illustration

of the way in which the truth for this time is to go. A large work is to be done by many who have begun in a small way. Many souls will be reached, not through display, not through any devising on the part of man, but through the working of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of human agencies. The Saviour worked in this way. **When His methods become the methods of His followers, His blessings will attend their labors.**"²

What were the Saviour's methods? We know that He went from place to place, investing more time

"The representation given in Ezekiel 47:1-12 is an illustration of the way in which the truth for this time is to go."

in healing the sick than in preaching sermons. There is wisdom in His way of doing things.

Pouring forth in every direction

The Spirit of Prophecy also makes reference to Ezekiel 47 in connection with the publication and dissemination of present truth, a work which was not to be limited to one place. A spreading out of resources benefits not only the souls who receive the truth, but also the laborers who share it.

"Our work has been presented to me as, in its beginning, a small, very small, rivulet. To the prophet Ezekiel was given the representation of waters issuing 'from under the threshold of the house eastward,' 'at the south side of the altar.' Read Ezekiel 47. Especially mark verse 8: 'Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.' So our work was presented to me as extending to the east and to the west, to

the islands of the sea, and to all parts of the world. . . . It is burden bearing that gives strength and development. And for the workers in different localities to be largely freed from responsibility means to place them where their characters will remain undeveloped and their powers will be repressed and weakened. The work is the Lord's, and it is not His will that the strength and efficiency shall be concentrated in any one place."³

"God calls for Christian families to go into communities that are in darkness and error, and

work wisely and perseveringly for the Master. To answer this call requires self-sacrifice. While many are waiting to have every obstacle removed, souls are dying without hope and without God in the world. Many, very many, for the sake of worldly advantage, for the sake of acquiring scientific knowledge, will venture into pestilential regions and endure hardship and privation. Where are those who are willing to do this for the sake of telling others of the Saviour? Where are the men and women who will move into regions that are in need of the gospel, that they may point those in darkness to the Redeemer?

"If families would locate in the dark places of the earth, places where the people are enshrouded in spiritual gloom, and let the light of Christ's life shine out through them, a great work might be accomplished. Let them begin their work in a quiet, unobtrusive way, not drawing on the funds of the conference until the interest becomes so extensive that they cannot manage it without ministerial help."⁴

The hands of God are not limited to depending on institutional effort in order to shed His light to the world—isolated individuals are to wield a powerful influence for the Master, as water flowing in every direction.

“[Ezekiel 47:8–12 quoted.] From the beginning God has wrought through His people to bring blessing to the world. To the ancient Egyptian nation God made Joseph a fountain of life. Through the integrity of Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved. Through Daniel God saved the life of all the wise men of Babylon. And these deliverances are as object lessons; they illustrate the spiritual blessings offered to the world through connection with the God whom Joseph and Daniel worshiped. **Everyone** in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. **As he receives from the Saviour grace to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life.**”⁵

In places where there is no institutional sanitarium established, God can equip His servants to do a work of service which many underestimate. “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 43:10).

“Some utterly fail to realize the importance of missionaries being also medical missionaries. A gospel minister will be twice as successful in his work if he understands how to treat disease. Continually increasing light has been given me on this subject. Some, who do not see the advantage of educating the youth to be physicians both of the mind and of the body, say that the tithe should not be used to support medical missionaries, who devote their time to treating the sick. In response to such statements as these, I am instructed to say that the mind must not become so narrowed down that it cannot take in the truth of the situation. A minister of the gospel

who is also a medical missionary, who can cure physical ailments, is a much more efficient worker than one who cannot do this. His work as a minister of the gospel is much more complete....

“As the medical missionary cares for the sick, if he is well equipped with knowledge and with instruments for putting that knowledge into practice, he will surely break down prejudice. Women should be educated in medical missionary lines, that as they go forth to heathen countries they may help those of their sisters who need help. In His service the Lord

Christ's commission

Most of us are familiar with “the great commission” to go, teach, and baptize (Mark 16:15, 16). But too often we overlook the methods which Christ has given in order to carry out this commission successfully.

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick,

“Where are the men and women who will move into regions that are in need of the gospel?”

will open doors whereby His word can find entrance.

“Living the gospel, maintaining its principles—this is a savor of life unto life. Doors that have been closed to him who merely preaches the gospel, will be opened to the intelligent medical missionary. God reaches hearts through the relief of physical suffering. A seed of truth is dropped into the mind, and is watered by God. Much patience may be required before this seed shows signs of life, but at last it springs up, and bears fruit unto eternal life.

“How slow men are to understand God's preparation for the day of His power! God works today to reach hearts in the same way that He worked when Christ was upon this earth. In reading the word of God, we see that Christ brought medical missionary work into His ministry. Cannot our eyes be opened to discern Christ's methods? Cannot we understand the commission He gave to His disciples and to us?”⁶

cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Matthew 10:5–14).

“And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye

go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where” (Luke 9:2–6).

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (Luke 10:1–11).

Two dimensions: medical missionary canvassing with the spread of publications

We see above a door-to-door work in search of lost sheep. How does this all happen?

“Medical missionary work is the right hand of the gospel. It is necessary to the advancement of the cause of God. As through it men and women are led to see the importance of right habits of living, the saving power of the truth will be made

known. **Every city is to be entered by workers trained to do medical missionary work.** As the right hand of the third angel’s message, God’s methods of treating disease will open doors for the entrance of present truth.”⁷

“As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed. We are to work as gospel medical missionaries, to heal the sin-sick souls by giving them the message of salvation. **This work will break down prejudice as nothing else can.**”⁸

“Workers—**gospel medical missionaries**—are needed now. You cannot afford to spend years in preparation. Soon doors now open to the truth will be forever closed. Carry the message now. Do not wait, allowing the enemy to take possession of the fields now open before you. Let little companies go forth to do the work to which Christ appointed His disciples. Let them labor as evangelists **scattering our publications**, and talking of the truth to those they meet. Let them pray for the sick, ministering to their necessities, not with drugs, but with nature’s remedies, and teaching them how to regain health and avoid disease.”⁹

“**Canvassers should be able to give instruction in regard to the treatment of the sick.** They should learn the simple methods of hygienic treatment. Thus they may work as medical missionaries, ministering to the souls and the bodies of the suffering. This work should now be going forward in all parts of the world. **Thus multitudes might be blessed by the prayers and instruction of God’s servants.**

“We need to realize the importance of the canvassing work as one great means of finding out those who are in peril and bringing them to Christ. Canvassers should never be prohibited from speaking of the love of Christ, from telling their experi-

ence in their service for the Master. They should be free to speak or to pray with those who are awakened. The simple story of Christ’s love for man will open doors for them, even to the homes of unbelievers.

“As the canvasser visits the people at their homes, he will often have opportunity to read to them from the Bible or from books that teach the truth. When he discovers those who are searching for truth he can hold Bible readings with them. These Bible readings are just what the people need.”¹⁰

A promise of power such as experienced by the early disciples

“Holy and devout persons, both men and women, are wanted now to go forth as medical missionaries. Let them cultivate their physical and mental powers and their piety to the uttermost. Every effort should be made to send forth intelligent workers. **The same grace that came from Jesus Christ to Paul and Apollos**, which caused them to be distinguished for their spiritual excellences, can be received now, and will bring into working order many devoted missionaries.

“Let not a large number fold their hands, saying, ‘Oh, yes, let such and such ones go into untried fields,’ while they themselves put forth no interested, devoted, self-denying labor, and expect the work the Lord has committed to them to be done by proxy. **There are those who, if they will deny self and lift the cross, will find that God will communicate with them as verily as He did with Paul and Barnabas.** These are representatives of what very many should be.”¹¹

“Medical missionaries are to have as much encouragement as any accredited evangelist. Pray with these workers. Counsel with them if they need counsel. Do not dampen their zeal and energy. Be sure by your own consecration and devotion to keep a high standard before them. Labor-

ers are greatly needed in the Lord's vineyard, and **not a word of discouragement should be spoken to those who consecrate themselves to the work.**"¹²

A third dimension: a startling message

Good, old-fashioned evangelistic crusades bring another dimension to this equation. Just as Elisha's message of peace closely followed Elijah's startling message, we see how a balanced revelation of God's justice and mercy is to shine forth, awakening a world in darkness.

"There is a vast amount of work to be done in proclaiming the truth for this time to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Most startling messages will be borne by men of God's appointment, messages of a character to warn the people, to arouse them. And while some will be provoked by the warning and led to resist light and evidence, we are to see from this that we are giving the testing message for this time.

"Messages will be given out of the usual order. The judgments of God are in the land. While city missions must be established where **colporteurs, Bible workers, and practical medical missionaries** may be trained to reach certain classes, we must also have, in our cities, **consecrated evangelists through whom a message is to be borne so decidedly as to startle the hearers.**"¹³

"Medical missionaries come under the head of evangelists. **The workers should go forth two by two, that they may pray and consult together. Never should they be sent out alone.** The Lord Jesus Christ sent forth His disciples two and two into all the cities of Israel. He gave them the commission, 'Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.'

"We are instructed in the Word of God that **an evangelist is a teacher. He should also be a medical missionary.**"¹⁴

"The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify

the law, and make it honourable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, **Restore.** Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?" (Isaiah 42:21–23).

In summary

"Bible truth must be preached and practiced. Every ray of light given is to shine forth with clear, distinct brightness. The truth is to go forth as a lamp that burneth. **There are hundreds of God's servants who must respond to this call and take the field as earnest, soul-saving workers, coming up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.**

God calls for *live men*, men who are filled with the vivifying influence of His Spirit, men who see God as the Supreme Ruler and receive from Him abundant proof of the fulfillment of His promises, men who are **not lukewarm, but hot and fervent with His love.**

"Should all the labor that has been expended on the churches during the past twenty years be again expended upon them, it would fail, as it has failed in the past, of making the members self-denying, cross-bearing followers of Christ. Many have been overfed with spiritual food, while in the world thousands are perishing for the bread of life. Church members must *work*; they must educate themselves, striving to reach the high standard set before them. This the Lord will help them to reach if they will cooperate with Him. If they keep their own souls in the love of the truth they will not hold the ministers back from presenting the truth in new fields.

"**The large cities should have been worked just as soon as the churches received the light,** but many have carried no burden for souls, and Satan, finding them susceptible to his temptations, has spoiled their experience. **God**

asks His people to repent, to be converted, and to return to their first love, which they have lost by their failure to follow in the footsteps of the self-sacrificing Redeemer."¹⁵

"The Lord has a special work to be done. This work is not to be done in accordance with man's planning. Medical missionary work is to be closely connected with the ministry of the Word, bound up with the third angel's message, the last message of mercy and warning to be given to a guilty world. **The work of health reform is to be bound up with the gospel. These cannot be separated; for God has united them.** When these parts of the work are carried forward on correct lines, the third angel's message will be given in accordance with God's purpose."¹⁶

When God's work is fully carried out through consecrated believers in all its various dimensions, glorious light from heaven will reveal that blend of justice and mercy spiritually illustrated by that beautiful rainbow encircling the throne on high.

"And 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).

And with this water of life, the assurance follows: "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). R

References

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 228. [Emphasis supplied here and elsewhere.]

² *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 102.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 171, 172.

⁴ *The Adventist Home*, pp. 488, 489.

⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 13.

⁶ *Medical Ministry*, pp. 245, 246.

⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 59.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 211.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 324.

¹¹ *Medical Ministry*, pp. 250, 251.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 240, 241.

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 137.

¹⁴ *Evangelism*, p. 520.

¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 140.

¹⁶ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, pp. 134, 135.

Don't Take It— IT'S MINE

BY KAY CLARK



When we hear the word “inheritance,” we think about money or property which someone will inherit when another person dies. But as we look further into the dictionary meaning of this word we find that it also means “to take possession of.” As we proceed through this study we will better understand about the meaning of this concept. We will also explore the biblical system of tithing.

How Israel was instructed to manage the tithe

“The tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe. . . . Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD’s heave offering to Aaron the priest” (Numbers 18:24–26, 28).

Here we find that the tithe was to be inherited by or to be taken possession of by the Levites who were the religious ministers of that day.

People were not to use their tithe

We find in Deuteronomy 12:11, 17 that the people were to bring their tithes and offerings to a place that the Lord would choose and cause His name to dwell there. They were not to use within their gates the tithes of any of their possessions but were to bring them to the place designated.

The time when this began among the Israelites

“As soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits . . . and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly” (2 Chronicles 31:5).

Reminders

We are reminded that “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.... 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.”¹

What happened to the tithe

As we have read already, the people were instructed to present the tithes to the ministers of the day, the Levites. What purpose were these monies to serve? In Malachi 3:10 are found the words of the Lord stating that the tithes were to be brought into the storehouse that there would be meat in His house. There is a wonderful promise attached to this command, “and prove me now herewith... 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.”

So we see the importance the Lord, who gives us all things, places upon that portion of our means which He claims as His. He has a work to be done in this world and He wants us to have an active part in accomplishing it. A tenth part of what He gives to us, He wants us to return to His storehouse, or treasury, so that means will be available to fund the work of the ministry.

In Deuteronomy 18:5 we find that pertaining to the temple and the priesthood, “The Lord thy God hath chosen him . . . to stand to minister in the name of the Lord.”

In 1 Corinthians 9:14 Paul referred to this same plan when he stated, “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” He

also advises, "The labourer is worthy of his reward" (1 Timothy 5:18).

The 8th commandment

What does the 8th commandment say? As we look closely at it in Exodus 20:15, we find that it commands, "Thou shalt not steal." But is it possible to rob God or steal from Him?

Let's refer again to the 3rd chapter of Malachi, verses 8 and 9: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

This same chapter is the one that contains the promise of a great outpouring of blessings if we will be faithful in bringing the tithes and offerings into the Lord's storehouse. But we see also what the consequences will be if we fail to obey His command.

Covetousness

"It is the spirit of covetousness which leads men to keep for gratification of self means that rightfully belong to God, and this spirit is as abhorrent to Him now as when through His prophet He sternly rebuked His people, saying, 'Will a man rob God?' "

Consider your ways

In Haggai chapter 1, verses 1-9 we read an account of what occurred when God's people were found to be building for themselves

goodly ceiled houses, all the while saying that it was not time that the temple or the Lord's house should be built. They were living in their nice houses while the house of the Lord lay in waste.

He told them that even though they sowed much, they brought in little; even though they ate, they did not have enough; they drank but were not filled; they were clothed but were not warm; they earned wages but it was as though they were put in a bag with holes in the bottom.

Verse 7 gives them His admonition: "CONSIDER YOUR WAYS."

We find throughout the Scriptures that God is very specific in that which He wants us to do; and if we will obey, He is willing to pour out blessings upon us. But if we are desirous of following our own ways He will leave us to our own folly and eventual downfall.

Are all expected to give?

The question arises, "What about the very poor, those who have not sufficient means on which to live comfortably: are they expected to give tithes and offerings also?"

Let's consider the account found in 1 Kings 17:9-13, "Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So [Elijah] arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and

said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going

to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son."

Here we find the story of a poor widow who had just enough flour and oil to prepare one last meal for herself and her son. Along comes the prophet Elijah who sees her there picking up sticks, preparing to bake the cakes for herself and her son.

He asks her to bake first a cake for him that he might eat. In verses 15 and 16 of the same chapter we read, "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."

Here we find that this poor woman, who did not have sufficient food for herself and her son, was willing to obey the command given to her, not quite understanding what would happen next.

Was this a great test for her? Indeed it was and she passed that test by giving all she had. We know the outcome of that story—from that time on she never ran out of meal or oil for the sustenance of herself and her son.

There is also an account in the New Testament which lets us know that God is pleased when we give our all. We read in Luke 21:1-4 about the poor widow observed by Jesus as she placed into the treasury her two mites, all the living that she had. "And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than



they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.”

The lesson we can learn from these two accounts is that we are to be faithful givers and God will keep His promise to bless us. The poor are not exempt from giving; everything belongs to God.

“As the Giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. This is His provision to sustain the preaching of the gospel. And by making this return to God, we are to show our appreciation for His gifts. But if we withhold from Him that which is His own, how can we claim His blessing? If we are unfaithful stewards of earthly things, how can we expect Him to entrust us with the things of heaven? It may be that here is the secret of unanswered prayer. . . .

“So it is with every other one of God’s requirements. All His gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will cooperate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises.”³

We are to give willingly

“God does not compel men to give. All that they give must be voluntary. He will not have His treasury replenished with unwilling offerings.”⁴

“Of all our income we should make the first appropriation to God. In the system of beneficence enjoined upon the Jews they were required either to bring to the Lord the first fruits of all His gifts, whether in the increase of their flocks or herds, or in the produce of their fields, orchards, or vineyards, or they were to redeem it by substituting an equivalent. How changed the order of things in our day! The Lord’s requirements and claims, if they receive any attention, are left till the last. Yet our work needs tenfold more means now than was needed by the Jews. The great commission given to the apostles was to go throughout the world and

preach the gospel. This shows the extension of the work and the increased responsibility resting upon the followers of Christ in our day. If the law required tithes and offerings thousands of years ago, how much more essential are they now! If the rich and poor were to give a sum proportionate to their property in the Jewish economy, it is doubly essential now.”⁵

“God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will cooperate with Him.”

We should be convicted by these words; we should be determined to be obedient to the commands of God, and He will keep His promise and pour out many blessings upon us continually. Do we need to wait until we hear appeals from the pulpit regarding the need for the means with which to enter new fields of labor? We need to be spiritually awake and listen to the voice of God regarding these matters. His is the voice of authority and with Him all things are possible. He wants us to be faithful in doing His work. We should consider this a real blessing in itself.

New Testament proof that God wants us to tithe

We have been considering instances from the Old Testament regarding the tithing system, but what does the New Testament reveal about this subject?

We know that the tithing system was carried over. If we will consider the text in Luke 18:11–13, we find the proud Pharisee trying to convince God of his worthiness by giving account of the things he did, one of which was paying tithes of all his possessions. We read, “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as

other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

We find in the same book, chapter 11 and verse 42, the Lord’s

reply to him, “But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Although he had tithed on everything, he lacked one important ingredient—the love of God within his heart and life. He further advised him that he should be doing what he was doing but should not leave the other undone. These are important principles for us to remember in our life.

We find in Hebrews the words of the apostle regarding the sons of Levi who had been commanded by God to receive tithes from the people according to the law. One account of this is found in Hebrews 7:5–7, “And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” It is stated here also that Levi received the tithes from the people but also returned tithe to God himself.

The admonition that the ministers who preach the gospel should live of the gospel is brought out again in 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14: “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”

This is the Lord’s plan for the

himself of every extravagant outlay of means. Let not the want of economy in the home life render us unable to act our part in strengthening the work already established, and in entering new territory.”⁶

Here we see that we do have a very great responsibility in keeping a faithful account with our Creator. It is as a covenant relationship with Him. We each one need to search our heart diligently to see how we

“Let not the want of economy in the home life render us unable to act our part in strengthening the work.”

maintenance of those who minister in the holy office—that they be supported by their brethren and sisters to whom they minister.

A spiritual issue

There is a spiritual issue involved in this principle of tithe paying. We read, “In the great work of warning the world, those who have the truth in the heart, and are sanctified through the truth, will act their assigned part. They will be faithful in the payment of tithes and offerings. Every church member is bound by covenant relation with God to deny

stand with God in this matter. He gave His only Son to die for us; we need to give our all to Him.

Results of tithing for the individual

1. A blessing will be received—Malachi 3:10.

2. We receive as we give.

3. It is more blessed to give than to receive. We learn valuable lessons of self-denial, that His requirements come first. When we give to Him His portion first, the remainder will be blessed for our use.

4. The grace of God will work in the heart—humility along with self-denial and benevolence are signs that God’s grace is working within the heart of men and women.

5. We will be honored—God has made us His stewards and when we prove to be faithful stewards He will commit greater trusts to us.

6. Spiritual prosperity—if we will impart to Him faithfully as He asks, He will open ways whereby we will be able to continually bestow because we will be continually receiving.

Results of neglect

1. Will be cursed with a curse—this is the penalty received if we rob God (Malachi 3:8, 9).

2. Temptation for children—we should not leave children out of the question as though they do not matter. They need to be taught the importance of self-denial and be led to have an incentive for a noble achievement in life as they mature.

3. The Lord has not come—when we are faithful with our giving, there will be a way opened up for the world to hear the message of truth; the treasury of the Lord will be filled and there will be means to advance the work fully.

4. To prosper or not—there are some who are faithful and exceed in their duty while others do as little as possible, and that which they give is given grudgingly. How can those who do this receive of His bountiful blessings and receive eternal life?

5. Selfishness—if we practice this it will become a part of our character and we may discover too late that we will not be able to change and rebuild our characters.

6. Good fruit not borne—Jesus said that a good tree cannot bear evil fruit and a corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. The deeds in a person’s life are the fruit that he or she bears. If he is unfaithful and dishonest in temporal matters he or she will not be faithful in spiritual matters.

7. Poverty—God will test and prove each one of us; His curse will follow the selfish, world-loving professor of truth. He surely knows every thought and purpose and will make no mistake. The angels are keeping a record of our works and words.

The second tithe

It would be well to mention the second tithe here. A portion of this was to be used for a religious feast in which the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow should participate. This meeting gave the people involved a chance to mingle together and receive instruction and encour-

“Our work needs tenfold more means now than was needed by the Jews.”



agement. At intervals this tithe was to be used at home, providing a fund for the uses of charity and hospitality.

Further provision was made for the poor. These were to be dealt with tenderly and liberally. Through caring for the poor the professors of truth would learn sympathy, tenderness and benevolence. As long as God's people followed His instruction there were no beggars among them or anyone in need of food. It was through caring for the poor that His people had been reminded of His ownership of everything and the fact that they could be the channel through which His blessings could flow. Once again we find that He wanted His people to learn unselfishness and nobility of character.

What happens to the tithe after it is collected

In 1 Chronicles 27:25–34 we find an account of how monies were used in the caring of the various divisions of King David's realm. He had those appointed over the different areas and each one received a share which would finance the work. Thus it is when the tithe and offerings are received into the church treasury today. All tithes are brought into the storehouse, which is the treasury. This is what Israel was asked to do in Malachi 3:10. From the treasury the tithe was distributed to the Levites or ministers to be used to do God's work. The tithe was to be used for the support of the ministry, not for anything else; thus it is today.

After these monies are received at the local church level, they are sent to the field treasury; from there they are distributed by the treasurer to the ministers and gospel workers for their use. If this were not done

they could not devote full time to the ministry but would need to work at another job to supply their needs.

What about the missionaries who are in other areas of the world? When the field treasurer receives the tithe he will pay a tithe of the tithe to the General Conference and from there the needs of the foreign missionaries will be met. When the churches and fields develop in number and a union conference is formed, the remittances of the tithe of tithe and of the offerings to the General Conference are sent to the treasury of the union. The union then adds its part and sends it (along with the portion from all fields and missions within its jurisdiction) to the General Conference.

We find in Nehemiah 10:38, 39 that a tithe of the tithe was brought so that the house of God would not be forsaken. It is within the plan of God that the missionaries in various places be supported in fulfillment of Mark 16:15, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Conclusion

1. God owns everything, including our time and money.
2. He has given us His law, by which we will be judged; this includes the 8th commandment.
3. He has given us the commission to carry the gospel into all the world. For this purpose we are to be faithful in returning a tithe of our increase to support the ministry.
4. We should not be weary in giving to Him; He gives all to us.
5. If we honor God, He will honor us.
6. He blesses us that we may bless others.

7. If we are faithful in giving unselfishly, He will pour us out a blessing.

Appeal

The following words are taken from Ellen White's closing address and are appropriate to be used here following this study on the principle of tithing: “Where is your faith, my brethren? Where are the workmen? In many of our large cities the first and second angels' messages were proclaimed during the 1844 movement. To you, as God's servants, has been entrusted the third angel's message, the binding-off message, that is to prepare a people for the coming of our King.”⁷

She urged that “Time is short.” The means coming into the treasury should be used wisely in supporting the workers. Nothing is to hinder the advancement of the message.

May God help us to heed His words of instruction in these last days of earth's history that we will be faithful stewards of the means He has given us and go forward in His name to be used of Him to finish the work. R

References

- ¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 75.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 339.
- ³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 144, 145.
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 393.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 474.
- ⁶ *The Review and Herald*, January 17, 1907.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1909.



God Gave Me a Second Chance

BY HEATHER CLEMENTS

This story is dedicated to anyone who may be sitting on the fence as I did for so long. Some of you know me. I was raised in the SDA Reform Movement and I had a great childhood. But, as I grew up, I thought my parents were too strict with me, so I drifted away from God. Then, when I was married to Ken, who was not an Adventist, I asked that my name be taken off the church books. I was sad, but the established rules had to be complied with. That happened in 1986.

I had everything I ever wanted (so I thought) and, in my imagination, I was having a great time and, seeking to enjoy life, I tried many things in the world. I loved to shop, so I shopped, and shopped, and shopped. But that didn't make me happy. It was nice being around our friends; but, when they left, I felt empty again. We bought our first house in Redlands (California), and it was a great house. I thought this would be a blast—decorating, shopping for the house, and so on. We finished everything that was to be done on it, and it looked beautiful. I thought we could look at it and pat ourselves on the back. What a great job we had done! But I felt that something more important was missing. There was nothing in the world that I wanted more than a child (so I thought). A year later we had our first little girl (Ashley). We were both working and taking care of her. She was incredible, and we loved her to death. I forgot all about my emptiness for a long time.

We moved to Modesto in 1993. Then everything seemed to fall apart on us, and I felt miserable. Why? I had a husband whom I loved and who loved me. We had a wonderful daughter. What else could I desire? We started going to church where we met a lot of people who are still our friends. I got very busy with my design business. Things seemed to be improving and I started feeling better as I had a sense of belonging. Then we had our second little girl (Kristi), who was the apple of my eye. Our family seemed complete and perfect. I thought life couldn't be better. When you have children, life doesn't seem dull. I went shopping more often than before—especially for the kids. They had everything and anything a child could ever need or want. And I spent lots of money on clothes, jewelry, and other stuff, hoping that these things would make me happy or at least fill the void that existed in my life. When I was down or depressed, I'd go shopping; it would give me a "fix." But I was under a terrible illusion. The next day came and went, and I felt dejected again. We had friends over all the time, and we had parties quite a bit. There was a lot of fun. But I felt emptier and emptier every day.

In 1998 my conscience bothered me so much that I thought I was losing my mind. I could not sleep at night thinking that there had to be something more important to life than money or shopping or fun. In my heart I knew what it was, but I was too stubborn to admit it and too lazy to do anything about it. The actual problem was that I needed to restore my broken relationship with the Lord. In the past I had tried many times to get off the fence and do what I thought was right. I actually tried to get rid of jewelry, stop wearing pants, put away makeup. But, after a few months had gone by, these things would come back into my life with pangs of self-rebuke. I can't even describe the emptiness I felt in my heart in the second half of 1998. I had never felt so empty in my whole life. Before, every time I

renounced something, I felt better for about a month. But this time I had an overwhelming feeling of self-reproach that wouldn't go away.

One day while I was working on the Children's Sabbath School Lessons, making the design and the layout, my attention was attracted to the main subject presented in the quarterly—the life and crucifixion of Christ. I read the whole lesson, word by word, and every page made me cry. The Holy Spirit was touching my heart. I knew the story, because I had learned it as a child, but this time there was a difference. All I could think of was Jesus on the cross dying for my sins. And in my mind I could see the fate reserved for the people who rejected Him.

While that picture was still in my subconscious, one Sabbath we (the whole family) went to our Sacramento church. After the service, while we were outside talking, my Dad said: "Sometimes I feel that all my life's work has been in vain." I objected: "No! That's not true," without knowing what I was going to do within the next few days.

The following week, my mom handed Ken a pile of literature from which I snatched the little book *Finding Peace Within (Steps to Christ)*. After having read a few chapters, one day, August 17, 1998, I had an overpowering feeling (I can hardly describe it) that the Holy Spirit was appealing to me to surrender my heart to Jesus. As I kept on reading, I understood that procrastination is dangerous (Hebrews 3:15). I didn't know what to do with myself, so I went into my room and spent a long time on my knees, crying out my soul to God. I said: "Lord, if You give me another chance, I'll give my heart and soul to You." My husband was already at work and our children were still in bed. Although I did not know whether the crisis I was going through on that day was for real or not, I now understand that I was in the valley of decision. I prayed hard to obtain from the Lord the assurance that He had forgiven me and accepted me. I read in the book:

“Believe that the Lord forgives you and He will.” That’s all I needed.

As I continued reading the book morning and evening, I was giving up things left and right. One night it occurred to me that I had to put away also my miniskirts, which I loved to wear. What a horrible thought! I read that, when we give our will to God, He will make all the changes with our consent and cooperation. So I asked God to make me willing to get rid of any of my clothes that were not proper for a Christian. The next morning I felt relieved when I got rid of piles of clothes. But what was I going to wear from now on? I kept reading. The third night I called my mom and told her about my decision. She said: “You made my day and my life.” Needless to say, she was very happy and probably a little shocked.

I told my oldest daughter, Ashley, that I had given my heart to Jesus and that, consequently, there were going to be some changes. I said to her that we were going to keep the Sabbath holy and, therefore, we weren’t going to do the things we shouldn’t do on the Lord’s day. She said: “Wow, Mom, you really have changed already.” That night she told me she had also given her heart to Jesus, because she wanted to go to heaven with me. She asked me: “Did you tell Dad yet?” I said: “No.” She asked: “Do you think he will be mad at us?” I told her not to worry but to pray to the Lord that everything would work out to His honor and glory.

Ashley’s question began bothering me. How was I going to tell Ken? A few days elapsed before I decided to talk to him and said: “Please forgive me for having been such a bad wife and mom.” He had no idea what I was talking about. He said I was a great wife and mom. Then I explained to him: “I’ve felt empty for so many years, and now I decided to make room for that which has been missing in my life.” He was shocked to see that I had concealed my unhappy feelings for years. I made it plain to him that I wanted to walk with the Lord and quit being a religious hypocrite. He knew that I believed in Jesus and in the need to keep all the

commandments of God, including the fourth, which tells us to sanctify the Lord’s Sabbath. In this area we had been inconsistent. We went to church every Sabbath, but came home and did our own things. He said: “Whatever you do, I’ll support you.” I guess he didn’t realize at that time what was implied in my decision.

I was very quiet about telling anyone that I had accepted Jesus in my heart. I asked my mom if I should get up in front of the church and make a public declaration. She said I didn’t have to do that because my decision was a thing between God and me. Through my mom, another friend soon heard about my conversion; so she called me on the phone as she wanted to know more about it. At first I was very cautious and didn’t say much, because I still had doubts as to whether all this was real. I mentioned to her that particular children’s lesson which had helped me make my decision.

As I kept reading the little book *Finding Peace Within*, I found an answer to every question which popped up in my mind. I read that when you accept Jesus, you won’t be able to keep it to yourself. This statement made me feel guilty because, up to that date, I had not been missionary-minded. But now I got a box of paperbacks, the same little book that I was reading, and made a goal for myself to give at least one copy to someone every day.

A few weeks later I took the next step forward and upward: I told Ken that I wouldn’t be drinking wine and coffee anymore. All he did was shake his head, as if he wanted to say: “Girl, you have lost your mind. We have known each other for fourteen years, and in a couple of weeks you have changed so much. I hope you won’t change to the point of my not knowing who you are anymore. You’re turning into a fanatic.” I told him I would never push anything on him as I never did before, but that I had to obey the word of God.

One day my conscience told me that I shouldn’t wear eye makeup. I got up in the morning and took a look at myself in the mirror. I was

shocked. Without thinking I said to myself. “No way! I can’t go out looking like this. I might scare someone.” The next morning, the same thing happened again. I felt like saying to God: “Lord, how can You ask me to go out in public looking like this? I know You don’t want me to be ugly, do You?” I felt that this was a huge thing I had to give up, and I hesitated for a while, trying to deceive myself with the thought: “Surely, this won’t keep me out of heaven.” But I was conscious of the will of God on this point also. So, distressed as I was in that crisis, I told Satan to leave me alone, because I now belonged to Jesus. Then I said to our daughters: “Look at my face, Do you like me better with or without makeup?” Both answered: “We love you without makeup; you look sooo much younger.” Ken said to me: “I noticed you’re not wearing any makeup. Is there a reason?” I said to him: “I’m getting fat, old, and ugly; and someone told me that I looked younger without makeup.” He hugged me and said he did not think I was getting fat and old, and that I was beautiful with or without makeup. Nevertheless, when I looked in the mirror, I thought that, without makeup, I was horrible. So I prayed to God day and night, asking Him to take that impression away from me. After three days, the Lord gave me the victory. That miserable feeling went away.

I am thankful to God for giving me a second chance. The emptiness that I felt before, when I was alienated from the Lord, is gone forever. No more illusions. Now I enjoy genuine happiness. I know that my conversion was nothing short of a miracle. No one influenced me directly—not my parents, not my friends, not the church. God Himself did it. Now, when I read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books, I feel very close to God. I thank Him every day that He brought me back to the fountain of living waters. I also thank the Lord every day for my parents, who were praying for me continually that I might find the way back to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. **R**

Papua New Guinea Report

The Youth Messenger magazine recently reported on the work in Papua New Guinea (see “Bringing Good Tidings,” Youth Messenger, January-March, 2005 issue). Over the past three years, some offerings collected in Sabbath schools around the world have been directed toward building a chapel and headquarters there. This report brings the latest news on the progress of that project.



BY NATHAN TYLER

(Sunday, July 31, 2005). I’m sitting in a little room in a small cottage near the town of Minj, Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea. A generator hums outside, providing electricity to my computer so I can type this report.

Today an enthusiastic crew of local and Australian workers has been laying blocks, constructing a building on newly-donated land here. Work is progressing slowly, as materials and tools such as cement mixers and scaffolding are hard to procure. Still, there is progress, and everyone is encouraged at our success so far.

There is something interesting about the chapel that we are building. It is right in the middle of the tribal fighting ground. Only a few years ago, there was a big war between the tribes here. Homes were burned to the ground. People died.

A couple of weeks ago a police sergeant lady, named Maria, came by to view our progress. She said that all the people around are happy that we are building this church in the middle of the traditional fighting place. They are calling it a sign of peace. I’m starting to think of it as the “Peace Chapel.”

I would like to be back for the dedication—it would be significant to everyone: For the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement, a lighthouse in the highlands, and a headquarters for the Papua New Guinea Mission. For the neighborhood, an ensign of peace on a historically violent ground.





Last Thursday a number of us spent all day in town, waiting for a truck to come and pick up the last delivery of blocks. We were to load them at the site where they are being made. The truck never came. So Bro. Ciric and I traveled back to Minj from Mt. Hagen on a bus, while the rest stayed behind. Then Friday I returned alone on a bus. When I stopped at the transport company at 8:30 a.m., they had a truck ready for us, and I helped the driver get tie straps and boards ready. Then we were off to the block place, where the other brethren were waiting to load up.

As we were loading, I was thinking about what to do. I had been asked by the brethren at the construction site to order some more materials—rebar and cement. I had been planning to go to the hardware store after the block loading was done, and then catch a bus back to Minj. But then the idea came to my mind that we could save a sizeable delivery fee if we were able to get the material brought over and put on the truck that we were loading, which was already arranged and paid for.

After pondering the possibility for a few minutes and discussing it with the brethren, I decided to go. But I would have to hurry, as the loading was over half finished. I dashed off across town on foot. I arrived out of breath at Mitre Hardware in Mt. Hagen, which is on the opposite side of town from the block maker.

Mitre Hardware was able to deliver the goods, although I had to make a trip to the bank to get more money (on foot again). I rode the hardware delivery truck over to the block yard, where we transferred the rebar

and 35 bags of cement over onto the bigger truck. Then it was a long ride back to Minj, bouncing over bumps and crawling around potholes. But we were very glad that we were able to save both on bus fares and that delivery fee by putting in some extra effort.

This is an example of the earnest work that some of us in the Australasian Union are doing to finish the building for which you have given so generously. However, despite our hard work and economizing, the project is still in need of funds.

Today was the last full day of work on the first fly-and-build trip for the project here in the highlands of PNG. The first construction crew has been here one month and is now leaving, but in the coming months new groups will be traveling here in order to complete the building.

If the Lord should move on your heart, please give through your local church or the General Conference toward helping the PNG Building Project. If you would like to join a construction crew in the near future, please contact the Australasian Union immediately. Above all, please pray for the “Peace Chapel,” and for the success of the work in the Pacific islands. **R**





Worldwide union presidents' meeting in Germany, September, 2004



Conference in East-Central U.S. Field, June, 2005



Twin Lakes Missionary Institute students training in literature evangelism



Italian Field conference, July, 2005



Workers of the Australasian Union, January, 2005



Southeast U.S.
Field delegation,
Roanoke, Virginia,
March, 2005



Some workers and youth in South Korea



Group in London, England



Colporteur seminar in Mexico



Our brethren and sisters in the Republic of Cameroon

MOVING? Please let us know.



Where is the *Vulture's* Value?

*"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,
but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).*

There is nothing like watching a bird soar through the air! It seems to glide across the sky without even trying.

Our wonderful Creator has taught many species of birds how to catch onto wind currents in such a way that they smoothly ride upon them, rarely even flapping their wings. And we from below are so inspired by viewing their distinct dark shapes in sharp contrast to the clear blue sky.

Often when we see a huge bird soaring, we imagine it must be a grand falcon, or perhaps a majestic eagle. Sometimes that is the case, or it may simply be what is known as a "vulture."

The turkey vulture, for example, often flies in huge circles, going around and around so it can stir up a pocket of air that can give it a keener scent of what is below. This ability, together with sharp vision, helps the vulture locate by scent creatures that have died down on the ground. Then the bird can quickly swoop down for its next meal. By giving vultures this ability, what an **efficient "clean-up crew"** our God has provided to help keep a nicer environment for us all! But it is also why, in Leviticus 11:14 and Deuteronomy 14:13, the Lord declares these creatures to be "unclean." People were never, ever, to eat their flesh. This makes sense, because all the dead and decaying flesh of animals—carrion—that these scavengers eat has already been dead for awhile and normally is already full of rot and decay. While God protects the



vulture itself from harm in order that it may do its job, a person would easily get sick from all the poisons flowing through the bird's bloodstream.

But did you know that there are **people who sometimes act like vultures**? This may happen when we dwell on the faults of others and pick on them.

"Let an evil report be started, and how rapidly it will be exaggerated and passed from lip to lip! How many will feast upon it, **like vultures** upon a heap of garbage."¹

On the other hand, true Christians "will talk of Jesus, of heaven, of the Christian's duties, the Christian's warfare and how to successfully resist the powers of Satan. They will not be **like vultures** preying upon that which they suppose to be the defects of others."²

It's very easy to complain about other people when we see all the

ways in which they are not perfect. But some wise advice is:

"Do not pick flaws any more. If I see a lot of buzzards, and I see a lot of **vultures that are watching and waiting** for dead bodies—and we don't want anything of that. We want no picking of flaws in others. Attend to No. 1, and you got all that you can do. If you attend to No. 1, and if you purify your souls by obeying the truth, you will have something to impart. You will have a power to **give** to others."³ What a greater goal. Let's pursue this goal instead and leave the vultures God has created to do the work He has assigned to them, but not to us! **R**

¹ *The Signs of the Times*, March 9, 1882 (emphasis supplied).

² *This Day With God*, p. 141 (emphasis supplied).

³ *The Spalding & Magan Collection*, pp. 173, 174 (emphasis supplied).