A close-up photograph of a person's hands shaping a light-colored clay pot on a pottery wheel. The person is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

the
REFORMATION

Vol. 54, No. 6

herald

Preparing
A PEOPLE

Week of Prayer, December 6–15, 2013



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of Prayer
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Praying for Preparation

When children travel on a long journey, often they ask parents the question, "Are we almost there yet?"

As children of God, we, too, likewise wonder, "Are we almost there yet? Have we almost arrived at the point when our Lord will come to take us to the heavenly Canaan?"

That depends on how much we're depending on Him! How closely are we abiding in our Saviour's love? How dear is our communion with Him? How thoroughly are we applying His grace to our daily life? How closely are we reflecting His image?

Another year has almost passed and another Week of Prayer has come. There is much for which to be thankful to God. Yet does our Lord really want us to come again to Him year after year without truly allowing our character to be changed to the similitude of Christ? Let us pray that this will be a decisive Week of Prayer for each one of us!

Please keep in mind that

On **SABBATH, DECEMBER 14** there will be **PRAYER WITH FASTING**.

On **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15** A **SPECIAL OFFERING** will be gathered for missions.

Let us also remember others who are isolated or homebound and make a special effort to share these readings with them, too.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

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Preparing a People

The symbolic Elijah, the great reformer who would come before the second coming of Christ is to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6). Here we see a work of revival and reformation starting at home.

“Those who bear the last message of mercy to the world should feel it their duty to instruct parents in regard to home religion. The great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God. As the claims of the law are presented, and men and women are convicted of their duty to render obedience, show them the responsibility of their decision, not only for themselves but for their children. Show that obedience to God’s word is our only safeguard against the evils that are sweeping the world to destruction.”¹

In preparation for the first coming of Christ, the prophetic Elijah—whom Jesus identified as John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11–14)—was to “go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).

Likewise, it is the mission of God’s people in these last days to prepare a people before the second coming of Christ in glory. Through the divine grace, these “reformers,” and “restorers” are to bring to the attention of the people the divine institutions established in Eden: Marriage according to God’s principle (Genesis 1:27), the original diet (verse 29), and the seventh-day Sabbath (Genesis 2:1–3) are among those institutions which must be restored in the process of

preparing a peculiar people to receive the Lord in glory.

The apostle Peter, speaking of the work to be done before the “great day of the Lord”—the close of probation—declared: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19–21).

Here we have:

1. Repentance, which is sorrow for sin and turning away from it.
2. Conversion, “the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).
3. “Blotting out of sins” as an essential condition to receive the “refreshing” baptism of the Holy Spirit upon God’s people before the finishing of God’s work on earth.

The apostle explains that Christ must be kept in heaven “until the times of restitution of all things.”

Therefore, “in this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. Just such a work as that which John did, is to be carried on in these last days. The Lord is giving messages to His people, through the instruments He has chosen, and He would have all heed the admonitions and warnings He sends. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and

Sadducees; ‘for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’. Our message is not to be one of peace and safety. As a people who believe in Christ’s soon appearing, we have a definite message to bear—‘Prepare to meet thy God.’

“Our message must be as direct as was that of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding the peril his life was in, he never allowed truth to languish on his lips. Our work in this age must be as faithfully done. . . .

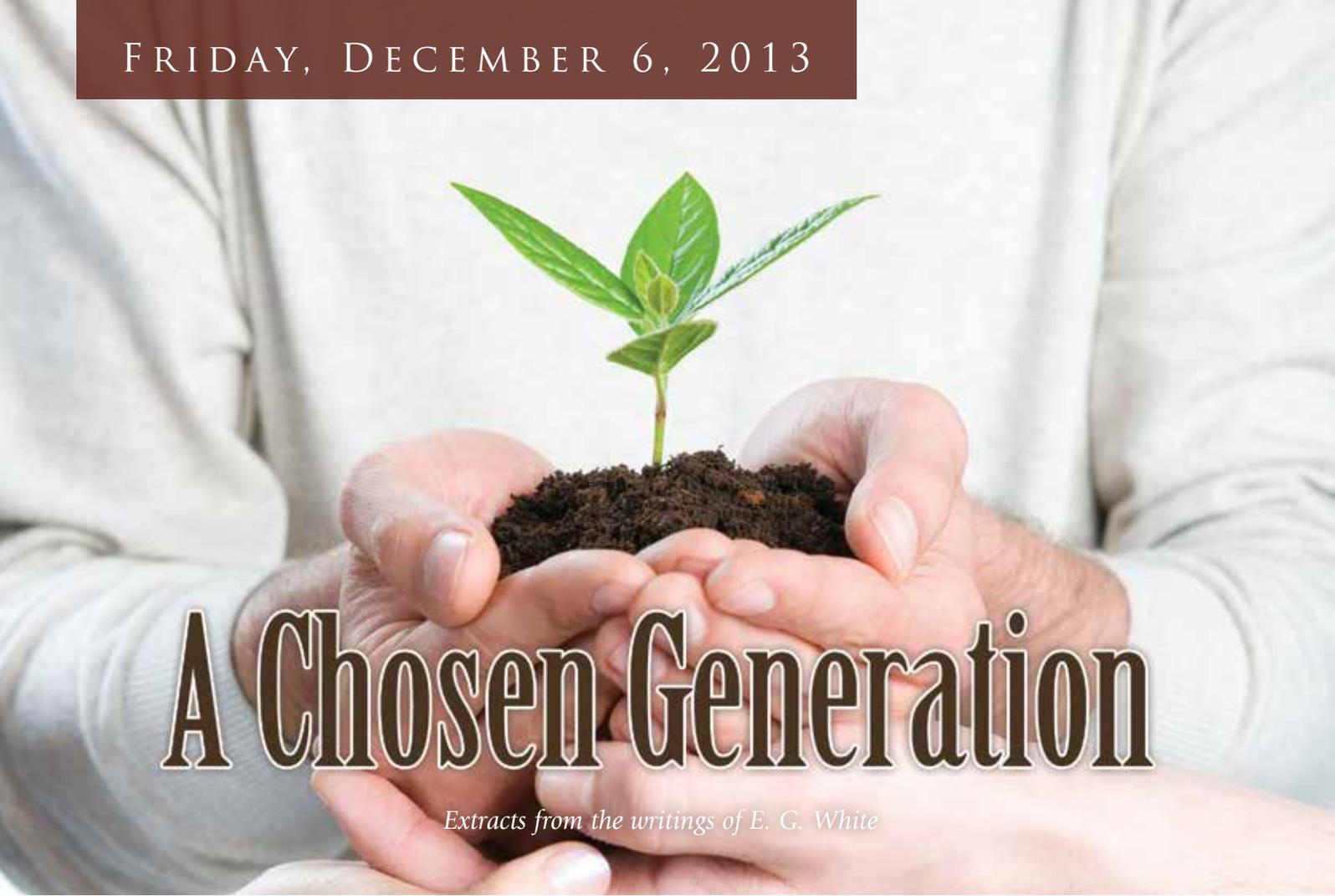
“In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon His messengers to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elias. As John the Baptist, in preparing a people for Christ’s first advent, called their attention to the Ten Commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: ‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come’ (Revelation 14:7). With the earnestness that characterized Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ’s second advent.”²

May the Lord give us His wonderful grace to prepare a people for His imminent coming! *R*

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¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 119.

² *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1184.



A Chosen Generation

Extracts from the writings of E. G. White

We are to be a people distinct from the world. The eyes of the world are upon us, and we are observed by many of whom we have no knowledge. There are those who know something of the doctrines we claim to believe, and they are noting the effect of our faith upon our characters. They are waiting to see what kind of influence we exert, and how we carry ourselves before a faithless world. The angels of heaven are looking upon us. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9).¹

Don't be surprised by what you see

Is there not enough taking place about us to show us the dangers that beset our path? Everywhere are seen

wrecks of humanity, neglected family altars, broken-up families. There is a strange abandonment of principle, a lowering of the standard of morality; the sins are fast increasing which caused the judgments of God to be poured upon the earth in the Flood and in the destruction of Sodom by fire. We are nearing the end. God has borne long with the perversity of mankind, but their punishment is no less certain. Let those who profess to be the light of the world depart from all iniquity. We see the very same spirit manifested against the truth that was seen in Christ's day. For want of Bible arguments, those who are making void the law of God will manufacture falsehoods to stain and blacken the workers. They did this to the world's Redeemer; they will do it to His followers. Reports that have not the least foundation will be asserted as truth.²

Remember: We as Christians are to be Christlike!

The conformity of professed Christians to the world is a disgrace to their profession, a disgrace to the cause of God. They profess to have come out from the world and to be separate yet are so near like them in dress, in conversation, and actions, that there is no distinction. While in the possession of life and health, many devote their God-given time and means to the adorning of the poor mortal bodies, forgetting that these are liable at any moment to be touched by the finger of God and laid upon a bed of death. But as they approach their last change, and mortal anguish racks their frames, the great inquiry is, "Am I prepared to die? prepared to appear before God in judgment, and pass the grand review?" Ask them then how they feel about decorating their persons, and if they have any sense of what it is to be prepared to appear before God, they will tell you

that if they could take back and live over the past, they would correct their lives and shun the folly of the world, its vanity and pride; they would live to the glory of God, and set an example to all around them.

Why are so few interested in their eternal welfare, so few preparing for their last change? Earth attracts them, its treasures seem of worth to them. They find enough to engross the mind and have no time to prepare for Heaven. Satan is ever seeking to plunge them deeper and deeper into difficulty. As soon as one perplexity or trouble is off the mind, he stands ready to involve them in another by begetting within them an unholy desire for more of the things of earth. Thus their time passes, and when it is too late, they see that they have gained nothing substantial. They have grasped at shadows, and lost eternal life.

Many who imitate the customs and fashions of the world claim that they do this in order to have an influence with worldlings. But here they make a sad and fatal mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make wide the distinction between the Christian and the world. Our words, our dress, our actions, should tell for God. Then all will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Unbelievers will see that the truth which we profess has a holy influence, that faith in Christ's coming affects our character. If any wish to have their influence sell in favor of the truth, let them live it out, and thus imitate the humble Pattern.³

Adjusting our attitude

From the light which God has given me, I know that the Lord would do far more for us as a people if we would walk in humility before Him. Every one of God's people will be tested and proved, and we want you to be in a position where you will bear the proving of God and not be found wanting when your moral worth is weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. We want you to be constantly moving onward and upward; but that which hinders your progress in a large degree is your self-esteem, the high opinion that you

The Lord would do far more for us as a people if we would walk in humility before Him. . . . If we have not a meek and teachable spirit, we shall not be where we can learn the lessons He desires to teach us.

entertain of your own ability. If there was ever a place where self needed to die, it is here. Let us see the death struggle. Let us hear the dying groans. Self-exaltation ever separates the soul from God, no matter in whom it is found, whether in those in responsible positions or in those who are in some less important place. Whatever has been done to attract the attention to self has detracted from the glory that should have been rendered to God, and has brought leanness to your souls. It is through this avenue of self-esteem and self-sufficiency that Satan will seek to ensnare the people of God.

The Lord has very important lessons for us to learn; and if we have not a meek and teachable spirit, we shall not be where we can learn the lessons He desires to teach us. We shall think we are wise when we are not. We shall think that we know the whole story, when we have need to study the a-b-c's of the lesson. God will prove us again and again, until we overcome our besetments or are wholly given over to our rebellion and stubbornness. There is danger, when the Lord deals with us thus, that we shall rise up against Him, and set ourselves determinedly not to submit to His will. We are living in solemn times. We are looking forward to the judgment, and onward to eternity, and it is fitting for us to walk in great humiliation of soul before God.

There have been those who have risen up against the testimonies that God has sent them. They have been willing to acknowledge that the testimony given to others was all right, and that the truth was pointed out in the cases of their brethren; but when their own errors were laid bare, and their own faults pointed out, they have declared that it could not be so. They have wrapped the garments of

their self-righteousness around them, and have said, "That does not mean me." A spirit of Phariseeism has been coming in upon the people who claim to believe the truth for these last days. They are self-satisfied.⁴

Guarding our children

As the Israelites kept their children within their houses during the time when the judgments of God were in the land of Egypt, so in this time of peril we are to keep our children separate and distinct from the world. We are to teach them that the commandments of God mean much more than we realize. Those who keep them will not imitate the practices of the transgressors of God's law.

Parents must regard God's Word with respect, obeying its teachings. To the parents in this day, as well as to the Israelites, God declares: "These words . . . shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Notwithstanding this plain instruction, some of God's people permit their children to attend the public schools, where they mingle with those who are corrupt in morals. In these schools their children can neither study the Bible nor learn its principles. Christian parents, you must make provision for your children to be educated in Bible principles. And do not rest satisfied merely with having them study the Word in the church school. Teach the

Scriptures to your children yourselves when you sit down, when you go out, when you come in, and when you walk by the way. Walk with your children much oftener than you do. Talk with them. Set their minds running in a right channel. As you do this, you will find that the light and glory of God will come into your homes. But how can you expect His blessing when you do not teach your children aright?⁵

Parents, when you set an example of pride for your children, you are sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit. That which you sow you will reap. The harvest will be plenteous and sure. It is easier to teach a lesson of pride than a lesson of humility. Satan and his angels stand ready to make the act of yours or the word that you may speak effectual to encourage your children to imitate the fashions of the world, and in their pride to mingle with society that is not holy. O parents, you thus plant in your own bosoms a thorn that you will often feel in anguish. When you would counteract the sad lesson you have taught your children, you will find it well-nigh impossible. You may deny them those things that would gratify their pride, yet it still lives in the heart, and nothing can destroy it but the quick and powerful Spirit of God. When this finds its way to the heart, it will work like a refining fire, and pride and love of the world will be consumed.

Unless you awake to the eternal interests of your children, they will surely be lost through your neglect. And the possibility that unfaithful parents will be saved themselves is very small. The lives of parents should be exemplary. They should exert a holy influence in their families. As they value the eternal interests of their children, they should rebuke pride in them, faithfully rebuke it, and encourage it not in word or deed.⁶

Parents, I entreat you, for Christ's sake, for the sake of your dear children, teach them that God has claims upon them, and that they must be fully prepared for whatever work they may find to do. Educate, train them to have the eye single to the glory of God. In order to grow in grace, they must become acquainted for themselves with the

A vital issue is before the world. . . . Let men see that we believe that we are on the borders of the eternal world.

reasons of our faith. Teach them to be learners in the school of Christ, to obtain a knowledge of the Scriptures, to diligently employ every means of grace, that their love may abound more and more, that they may approve things that are excellent.⁷

Jesus, the King of glory, who gave His life to redeem us, wore a crown of thorns. It was thus that our Master's sacred head was adorned. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Yet the very ones that profess to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus, spilled for them, can indulge pride in the adornment of their persons, and still claim to be followers of the holy, humble, self-denying Pattern. Oh that all could see this as God sees it!

Israel have been asleep to the pride, and fashion, and worldliness in the very midst of them. It is these things that separate God from His people, that shut the ark away from them. When the truth affects their hearts, it will cause a death to the world. They will then lay aside the outward adorning, and if they are dead they will not be moved by the laugh, jeer, and scorn of unbelievers. They will feel an anxious desire to be separate from the world, like their Master. They will not imitate its pride, fashions, or customs. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God, and gain the immortal inheritance. This prospect will swallow up all beside of an earthly nature. God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. And as soon as any indulge a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children. They show that they are strangers to grace, strangers to the meek and lowly Jesus. If they had acquainted themselves with Him, they would walk worthy of Him.

A form of godliness will not save any. All must have a deep and living experience. This alone will save them in the time of trouble before us. Then their work will be tried, of what sort it is. If it is gold, silver, and precious stones, they will be hid as in the secret of the Lord's pavilion. But if their work is wood, hay, stubble, nothing can shield them from the fierceness of Jehovah's wrath.

Many measure themselves among themselves and compare their lives with the lives of others. This should not be. No one but Christ is given us as an example, and each should strive to excel in imitating Him. We are coworkers with Christ, or coworkers with the enemy. We either gather with Christ, or scatter abroad. We are decided, whole-hearted Christians, or none at all. None will enter Heaven without making a sacrifice. Those who are willing to make any and every sacrifice for eternal life will have it; and it will be worth suffering for, worth crucifying self for, and sacrificing every idol for. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory outweighs every earthly treasure, and eclipses every earthly attraction.⁸

Focusing the mind and conversation

What is more worthy to engross the mind than the plan of redemption? It is a subject that is exhaustless. The love of Jesus, the salvation offered to fallen man through His infinite love, holiness of heart, the precious, saving truth for these last days, the grace of Christ—these are subjects which may animate the soul and cause the pure in heart to feel that joy which the disciples felt when Jesus came and walked with them as they traveled toward Emmaus. He who has centered his affections upon Christ will relish this kind of hallowed association and will gather divine strength by such intercourse; but he who has no relish for this kind of conversation, and who is best

pleased to talk sentimental nonsense, has wandered far away from God and is becoming dead to holy and noble aspirations. The sensual, the earthly, is interpreted by such to be heavenly. When the conversation is of a frivolous character and savors of a dissatisfied reaching out after human sympathy and appreciation, it springs from lovesick sentimentalism, and neither the youth nor the men with gray hairs are secure. When the truth of God is an abiding principle in the heart, it will be like a living spring. Attempts may be made to repress it, but it will gush forth in another place; it is there and cannot be repressed. The truth in the heart is a wellspring of life. It refreshes the weary and restrains vile thought and utterance. . . .

God has blessed His command-keeping people and all the opposition and falsehoods that may be brought against them will only strengthen those who stand firm in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But if those who profess to be the depositaries of God's law become transgressors of that law, His protecting care will be withdrawn, and many will fall through perverseness and licentiousness. Then we shall indeed be unable to stand before our enemies. But if His people remain separate and distinct from the world, as a nation that do righteousness, God will be their defense, and no weapons formed against them shall prosper.⁹

Appreciating our unique calling

The Lord Himself has established a separating wall between the things of the world and the things which He has chosen out of the world and sanctified to Himself. The world will

not acknowledge this distinction; they claim that it is needless. The servants of mammon make every effort to break down the barriers, and destroy the line of demarcation between the holy and the profane. Many of the professed followers of Christ are determined to break it down, and to maintain concord between Christ and Belial. But God has made this separation, and He will have it exist. In both the Old and the New Testaments the Lord has positively enjoined upon His people to be distinct from the world, in spirit, in pursuits, in practice, to be a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they may show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. The east is not farther from the west than are the children of light, in customs, practices, and spirit, from the children of darkness.

This distinction will be more marked, more decided, as we near the close of time. It is not a profession of faith, or a name registered in the church book, that constitutes us children of God. We must have a vital connection with Christ; we must be one with Him, imbued with His Spirit, partakers of the divine nature, crucified to the world with its affections and lusts, renewed in knowledge and true holiness.¹⁰

It's time to wake up!

Peculiar and rapid changes will soon take place, and God's people are to be endowed with the Holy Spirit, so that with heavenly wisdom they may meet the emergencies of this age, and as far as possible counteract the demoralizing movements of the world. If the church is not asleep, if the followers of Christ watch and pray, they may have light to comprehend and appreciate the movements of the enemy.

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

uphold you in working for the salvation of souls.

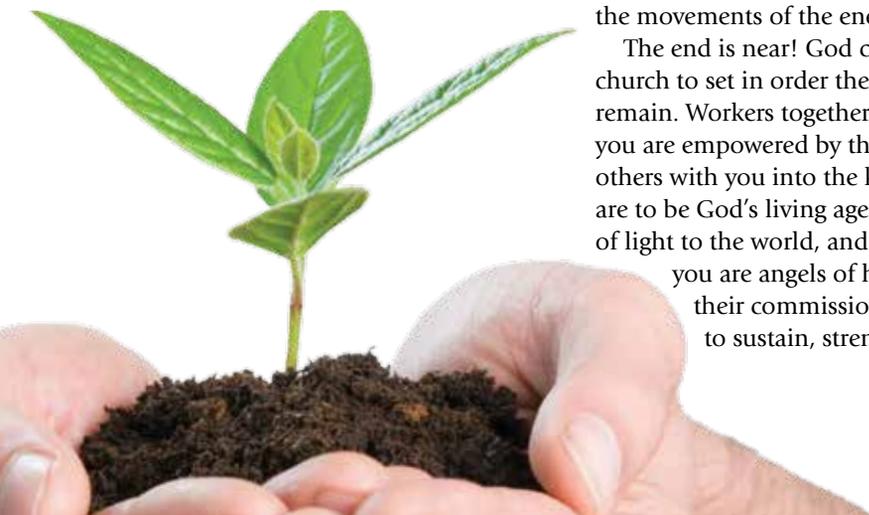
I appeal to the churches in every conference: Stand out separate and distinct from the world—in the world, but not of it, reflecting the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, being pure, holy, and undefiled, and in faith carrying light into all the highways and byways of the earth.

Let the churches awake before it is everlastingly too late. Let every member take up his individual work and vindicate the name of the Lord by which he is called. Let sound faith and earnest piety take the place of slothfulness and unbelief. When faith lays hold upon Christ, the truth will bring delight to the soul, and the services of religion will not be dull and uninteresting. Your social meetings, now tame and spiritless, will be vitalized by the Holy Spirit; daily you will have a rich experience as you practice the Christianity you profess. Sinners will be converted. They will be touched by the word of truth and will say, as did some who listened to Christ's teaching: "We have seen and heard wonderful things today."

In view of what might be done if the church would meet its God-given responsibilities, will its members sleep on, or will they arouse to a sense of the honor conferred upon them through the merciful providence of God? Will they gather up their hereditary trusts, avail themselves of the present light, and feel the necessity of rising to meet the urgent emergency that now presents itself? Oh, that all may arouse and manifest to the world that theirs is a living faith, that a vital issue is before the world, that Jesus will soon come. Let men see that we believe that we are on the borders of the eternal world.¹¹ *R*

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- ¹ *The Review and Herald*, June 18, 1889.
- ² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 601.
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, December 12, 1882.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, June 18, 1889.
- ⁵ *The Spalding Magan Collection*, p. 244.
- ⁶ *The Review and Herald*, December 12, 1882.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, January 8, 1884.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, December 12, 1882.
- ⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 600, 601.
- ¹⁰ *The Review and Herald*, January 8, 1884.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 436, 437.



Standard Bearer

The time has come for us to contemplate the Lord, that He may put in our heart the desire that today—more than ever, together as one—we can lift up the truth God has given us for these last days of human history in which we live. The church has reached a crucial and decisive moment in which we need to clothe ourselves in the armor of God to deal with the powerful work of Satan and his evil forces that flood the world with subtle temptations to ensnare humanity and lead it to perdition.

Let us pray to God that during this Week of Prayer we may have profound and serious reflections, and this occasion may be more than a merely haphazard and insipid reading, finishing off the readings without a real spiritual experience. No! Rather, may these days be full of heart searching with a strong decision to turn over our life, our families, and everything we have to the loving hands of God, so that He can guide us today and forever, Amen.

At the edge of eternity

As we unroll the scroll of prophecy before us, the great I AM clearly shows that we have reached the brink of eternity. We are now in the twilight

of our earthly history. Just a thin line separates us from eternity. We are on the verge of the greatest crisis of all centuries. The pen of Inspiration clearly declares that “we are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude.”¹

The condition of God’s people in the final days

Almost 2,000 years of history have passed since that glorious moment when the Redeemer of the world called twelve men to accompany Him in His earthly ministry. That was the beginning of what would later be called the Christian church. What an awesome scene! What sublime work has begun to develop since then! What throbbing joy the Master must have felt to see His church being born! Surely also, the eyes of Jesus at the time, contemplated the future ahead of the long history of His church, even to the time when He

A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with comments by D. Guzman

shall return, gather His own, and take them to the mansions promised to His children since the ancient times. How does the Lord view His remnant people in these last days? What impression must His tender heart have felt upon beholding our current condition? It is likely that the loving Saviour has felt sadness and anguish in His Being to see our present situation as a people to whom He has entrusted solemn truths for these last days. With this in mind, let us meditate and consider our present condition while honestly asking ourselves: Are we faithfully representing the One who has called us to be His people? Do our actions clearly state that we are living in the light God has bestowed upon us? Is there a clear line of distinction between unbelievers—the worldly—in clear contrast to us who claim to be the remnant people of God? Sadly we can say that the church today, in almost nothing, can be compared to the early Christian church that Jesus founded. The years have passed, and today we have a different church, a church that is gradually allowing itself to be dragged into the world. It is with hesitance and with great concern that we see and hear young leaders with the desire to see the church grow, allowing worldly fashions and habits to be tolerated among God's people who have been called to carry the bloodstained banner of Emmanuel. Let us make a fervent appeal to our young leaders in the heart of the work—even those laboring in small and humble churches all over the world: Let us strive not to lower down the flag but rather to raise it! This flag—this standard—the Lord has placed in our hands, and He commands us to keep it very, very high.

The standard of the remnant

What is the standard of God's remnant people? Certainly, the standard that divine Providence has placed in our hands is the one that declares: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). "The third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels, is the message for this time. We are to raise

aloft the banner on which is inscribed, 'The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'"²

God calls us to fly our flag and work together

"God calls upon all to lift the standard bearing the inscription, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' He calls upon His people to work in perfect harmony. He calls upon those engaged in our medical work to unite with the ministry; He calls upon the ministry to cooperate with the medical missionary workers; and He calls upon the church to take up their appointed duty, holding up the standard of true reform in their own territory, leaving the trained and experienced workers to press on into new fields. No word is to be spoken to discourage any, for this grieves the heart of Christ and greatly pleases the adversary. All need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit; all should refrain from censuring and disparaging remarks and draw near to Christ, that they may appreciate the heavy responsibilities which the coworkers with Him are carrying. 'Press together; press together,' are the words of our divine Instructor. Unity is strength; disunion is weakness and defeat."³

The duty of church members and ministers

"Let faithful house-to-house work be done. Souls are perishing out of the ark of safety. Let the standard of truth be lifted up by the church members in their neighborhoods. Let ministers pitch their tent, and preach the truth to the people with power, and then move to another vicinity and preach the truth there."⁴

A Christlike attitude

The Lord's messenger makes the appeal:

"God is in earnest with us. Those only who are converted will enter into the kingdom of heaven. What would we think of Christ manifesting no warmth of love, no disposition to help those in need? Yet many who profess to be His followers are cold and unsympathetic. They make little effort to help those with whom they come in contact. They are not transformed in character. Their words show that they are not converted. They have none of Christ's tenderness. Their unamiable traits of character, their lack of sympathy, show that they have lost their first love. They need to repent and be converted; for Christ is greatly dishonored by their selfishness. The Saviour does not abide in their hearts, or they would be touched with the feeling of others' infirmities. They are self-centered, harsh, unaccommodating.

"If, when Christ comes the second time, they are as they are now—harsh in words, coarse in spirit, destitute of Christlike love—their candlestick will be removed out of its place. They will not be ready to meet their Lord. O, that they would feel the necessity of putting on the Lord Jesus! O, that they would seek to understand what is due from man to his fellow man!

"I tell you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth that there must be a reformation among us as a people. Unless men reveal Christlikeness in all their dealings with their fellow men, unless they obey the laws of heaven in every particular, they will never enter the city of God. There is no excuse for anyone to fail. Christ's character is before all, for study and imitation.

"If one does a piece of work that is not wholly perfect, shall his brethren

"Let the standard of truth be lifted up by the church members in their neighborhoods. Let ministers pitch their tent, and preach the truth to the people with power, and then move to another vicinity and preach the truth there."

pull it to pieces, speaking of it scathingly and contemptuously? The one who has made mistakes may be doing his very best. Did Christ treat the imperfect work of His disciples thus? If He should treat erring human beings as they too often treat one another, what would become of them? Well may we say, 'Let us fall into the hands of the living God, rather than into the hands of men.' God is too wise to err, and too good to do us harm.

"Those who are connected with God's service should be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit, else they will mar God's work and put Christ to open shame. What does God's Word mean when it declares that Christ will present to Himself a church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing? It means that God's people can and must reach the standard of Christian perfection. But, in order to do this, they must learn of Christ His meekness and lowliness.

"By the sacrifice of Christ, every provision has been made for believers to receive *all things* that pertain to life and godliness. The perfection of His character makes it possible for us to gain perfection."⁵

We need to raise the standard of the Sabbath

"The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part. Men have honored Satan's principles above the principles that rule in the heavens. They have accepted the spurious sabbath, which Satan has exalted as the sign of his authority. But God has set His seal upon His royal requirement. Each sabbath institution bears the name of its author, an ineffaceable mark that shows the authority of each. It is our work to lead the people to understand this. We are to show them that it is of vital consequence whether they bear the mark of God's kingdom or the mark of the kingdom of rebellion, for they acknowledge themselves subjects of the kingdom whose mark they bear. God has called us to uplift the standard of His downtrodden Sabbath. How important, then, that our example in Sabbathkeeping should be right."⁶

"We should pursue such a course toward the unbelieving that our souls will be clear of their blood when we meet them in the great day of final reckoning."

A selfless and humble ministry is needed—free from earthly or ecclesiastical ambition and fully consecrated to the service of God.

"There is an element called love which would teach us to praise and flatter our associates and not to faithfully tell them of their dangers and warn and counsel them for their good. This love is not Heaven-born. Our words and actions should be serious and earnest, especially before those who are neglecting their soul's salvation. If we profess to be sons and daughters of God, we should pursue such a course toward the unbelieving that our souls will be clear of their blood when we meet them in the great day of final reckoning. If we unite with them in lightness, trifling, pleasure seeking, or in any pursuit which will banish seriousness from the mind, we are constantly saying to them by our example, 'Peace, peace; be not disturbed. You have no cause for alarm.' This is saying to the sinner, 'It shall be well with thee.' Oh, how many ease-loving souls there are among us, who virtually unite with sinners, and while in their society say and do nothing to awaken conviction, nothing to disturb their carnal security! Many who profess to be sons and daughters of God, and call themselves the light of the world, reflect no light upon its darkness. If these half-hearted, slothful, pleasure-loving professors of Christ were what they profess to be, how much good they might do! . . .

"The message borne to the people by the faithful servants of God will not be calculated to lull them to carnal security. They will have words to speak to stir them to action. We call upon those who are imitating Meroz to arouse. Go to work; do something for the salvation of souls, something to advance the cause of God; and do it now."⁷

"God requires His servants to stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, striving in His power to keep the principles of truth pure and uncorrupted. They must never step aside from the path of self-denial and humility which every true Christian must travel. As they thus cooperate with God, Christ is formed within, 'the hope of glory' (Colossians 1:27). Clad in His meekness and lowliness they find their highest joy in doing His service. Earthly ambition gives way to a desire to serve the Master."⁸

"God wants men in His service, under His banner, to be strictly honest, unimpeachable in character, that their tongues shall not utter a semblance of untruth. The tongue must be true, the eyes must be true, the actions wholly and entirely such as God can commend."⁹

"We must have a converted ministry. The efficiency and power attending a truly converted minister would make the hypocrites in Zion tremble and sinners afraid."¹⁰

God requires His people to be holy and pure

"It is the purpose of God that His people shall be a sanctified, purified, holy people, communicating light to all around them. But only as they keep the standard uplifted, only as they reveal that the truth they profess to believe is able to influence them for righteousness and to sustain their spiritual life; only as they make the principles of truth a part of their daily lives, can they be a praise and honor to God in the earth."¹¹

"God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. When any cherish a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, He ceases to acknowledge them as His children, and they become the children of the world and

of darkness. Those that had professed Christ, virtually put Him off, and show that they are strangers to grace and to the meek and lowly Jesus. Had they acquainted themselves with Him, they would walk worthy of Him.

"Young and old, God is now testing you. You are deciding your own eternal destiny. Your pride, your vain and empty conversation, your selfishness, are all put in the scale, and in many cases the weight of evil is fearfully against you. While evil is increasing and taking deep root, it is choking the good seed which has been sown in the heart. Many are flattering themselves that they are good Christians who have not a single ray of light from Jesus. They know not what it is to have the heart renewed by grace. They have no living experience for themselves in the things of God.

"God proves His people in this world. This is the fitting up place to appear in His presence. Here persons show what power affects their hearts and controls their actions. If it is the power of divine truth, it will lead to good works. It will elevate the receiver and make him noble-hearted and generous, like his divine Lord. But if evil angels control the heart, it will be seen in various ways. The fruit will be covetousness, selfishness, pride, and evil passions. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Many professors of religion are not willing to examine themselves closely to see whether they are in the faith, and some are leaning of a false hope. They seem to think a profession of the truth will save them. When they subdue those sins which God hates, Jesus will come in and sup with them and they with Him. They will then draw divine strength from Jesus, and will grow up in Him, and be able to say with holy triumph. "Thanks be to

God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:57).

"It is the privilege of every Christian to enjoy the deep movings of the Spirit of God. A sweet, heavenly peace may pervade the mind, and you may meditate with pleasure upon God and heaven. You may feast upon the glorious promises of His word. But know first that you have begun the Christian course. Know that the first steps are taken in the road to everlasting life. Be not deceived here; for eternal interests are at stake."¹²

"When you do not want to be distinct from the world, but desire to mix up with it so that no difference is seen between you and the world, then you may know that you are drunken with the cares of this life. Oh, there are so many selfish interests, so many cords to bind us to this world! But we must keep cutting these cords, and be in a condition of waiting for our Lord.

"The world has forced itself in between our souls and God. But what right have we to allow our hearts to become overcharged with the cares of this life? What right have we, through our devotion to the world, to neglect the affairs of the church and the interests of our fellow men?"¹³

"Instead of becoming like the world, we are to become more and more distinct from the world. Satan has combined and will continue to combine with the churches in making a masterly effort against the truth of God. Everything that is done by God's people to make inroads upon the world will call forth determined opposition from the powers of darkness. The enemy's last great conflict will be a most determined one. It will be the last battle between the powers of darkness and the powers of light. Every true child of God will fight bravely on the

side of Christ. Those who in this great crisis allow themselves to be more on the side of the world than of God will eventually place themselves wholly on the side of the world."¹⁴

Conclusion

We would appeal to our ministers, pastors, Bible workers, leaders, and our people in general, that we work with all the strength that God has given us to maintain our high principles at any cost. By the grace that God has granted us, let us close the door to worldliness. Pastors and ministers, let us clearly and strongly condemn any deviation from the truth, however small it may be—and at whatever cost to ourselves. Let us not permit any worldly practice, first in our families, and then by our testimony, that God may make a reformation in the churches where we labor.

"May the Lord attract souls to Himself and impart to them individually a sense of their sacred responsibility to form such characters that Christ will not be ashamed to call them brethren. Elevate the standard, and then the heavenly benediction will be pronounced upon you in that day when every man will receive according to the deeds done in the body."¹⁵

Let us be watchful and realize the dangers of the present days; that we may accept our solemn duty to uphold until the close of probation the standard of eternal truth which the Lord has given us, that we may allow this eternal truth to shine before the world. May God bless His people today and always. Amen. *R*

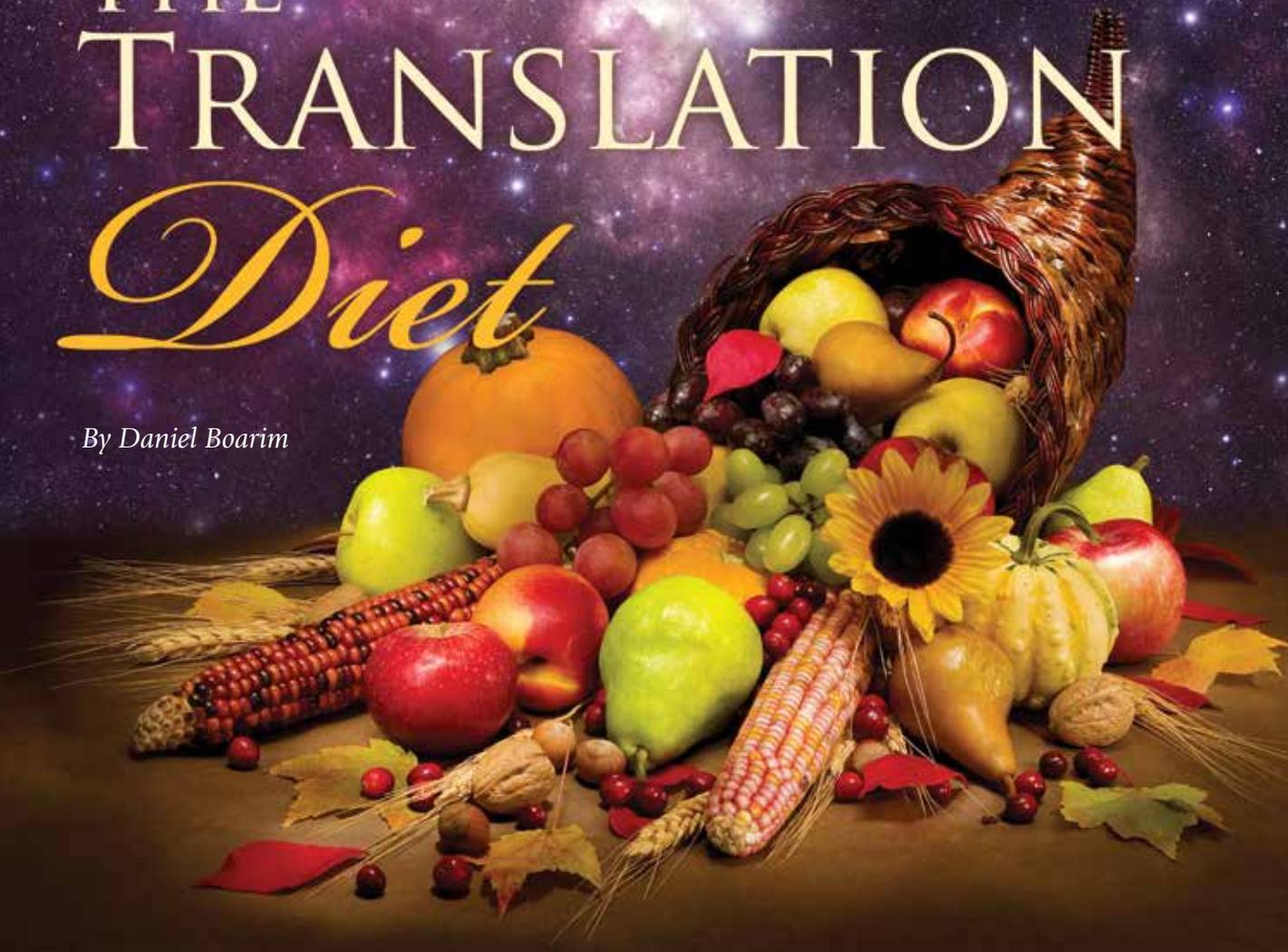
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- ² *Counsels on Health*, p. 357.
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 517, 518.
- ⁴ *Evangelism*, p. 397.
- ⁵ *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 9, 1905.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 352.
- ⁷ *The Review and Herald*, January 8, 1884.
- ⁸ *That I May Know Him*, p. 123.
- ⁹ *Child Guidance*, p. 152.
- ¹⁰ *Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 28.
- ¹¹ *This Day With God*, p. 53.
- ¹² *The Review and Herald*, September 9, 1884.
- ¹³ *The Signs of the Times*, January 7, 1886.
- ¹⁴ *The Kress Collection*, p. 105.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 602.

May these days be full of heart searching with a strong decision to turn over our life, our families, and everything we have to the loving hands of God.

THE TRANSLATION *Diet*

By Daniel Boarim



The biggest dream

If we were to ask people about their future aspirations and what they plan for their lives, we would get a wide variety of responses. Of course, age and social status would help determine the course of those responses. The young would say: To graduate from school, get a job, get married, and prosper. The older and more established would mention retirement and the pursuit

of a better quality of life. One time I heard about an elderly lady who had fulfilled her dream of spending her old age in a small, tranquil town on the coast so she could walk by the sea every day. Between these two extremes we would certainly have a number of “journeys” with emphasis on certain specific goals and aims—and perhaps we would even catch a glimpse into the lack of ambition on the part of some.

What about you? What do you plan for your future? Dreaming is not a sin, as long as your dreams don’t interfere with God’s great plans for you. It’s not difficult to understand: God loves you so much that since He can foresee the future we are unable to see, He sometimes allows your plans to not work out. It can be painful, but it is just as He can guarantee us: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have en-

God wants to restore our happiness, the integrity, and the welfare that we were violently dispossessed of by sin.

tered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Let us pause a moment to try to imagine what the apostle meant. This is one of the most sublime verses of the Bible. The most fertile imagination, even in this era of incredible digital realities, cannot visualize the grandeur and excellence of what God has reserved for His friends. For it was Jesus Himself who said: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

A better place—incomparably better!

Yes, that's right: God has reserved for His friends a marvelous place that exceeds our most formidable dreams. It's not really necessary to ask if you want to be there. Whatever answer other than a sonorous "Yes, of course, I want to be there" would be at least incoherent or a fruit of incredulity. The scriptural book of Revelation—erroneously called the book of "tragedies and terrors"—in its last chapters tells of the happy ending of the friends of God. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). Imagine a reality as stupendous as this in which bad news will simply disappear from the "media." In fact, there won't be "media" as we know it now. The technology and science of God will be sufficient to dazzle the most brilliant minds.

Access

The way to get to Heaven is clear. The door is open. In the Bible there are, undeniably, some things that are difficult to understand, but the science of salvation is so objective that even a child can understand and enjoy it.

"And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). It is necessary to thirst; therefore it is necessary to desire it! Do you desire it? Do you really? But, wait a minute; the "desire" mentioned here isn't a "magic desire" of the "all-you-have-to-do-is-want-it-and-everything-will-happen" scenario. In contrast to this dangerous belief, it is only an active, dynamic, desire that acts. By the power of the Holy Spirit in alliance with total consent and initiative on the part of the individual, a new mental disposition is installed that results in two things: Self-control and willpower. To better explain:

1. **Self-control** to not do what is harmful, and
2. **Willpower** to do what is right.

In other words, determine to:

1. **Abandon** all that is sinful, and
2. **Do** all that is edifying.

Have you noticed the ever present verb "desire" beside the verb "do"? That is the secret to success in this life and, no doubt, to the success in conquering life eternal. But there is another vital aspect involved here: Both our "desire" and our "doing" find themselves weakened by the sinful condition of humankind. We are, of ourselves, helpless. The carnal nature, however much it may want to do good, tends to the opposite direction (Romans 7)! This is why the Bible affirms: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). And in the same context we read: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (verse 12). There is just one way to understand this: God works and man cooperates. It's a harmonious and marvelous work. United with Christ, there will be no insurmountable obstacle. Do you believe in the power that comes from uniting with Christ? It is the power that outbids all evil and guarantees the victory.

"The truth shall make you free"

Along the Christian life, many transforming and revitalizing truths are revealed in how a person relates to Christ and His amazing character. The objective of these truths that Jesus reveals to us bit by bit is to bring us from the extreme degeneration into which sin has thrown us, to the other extreme of perfection and happiness from which the first couple fell. What does this mean in practice? Besides the need for purity and sanctity, it means to go in the direction of peace, happiness, and health. It means to recuperate the good things that sin has deprived us of and to throw away the waste from bad attributes and their resulting evil with which sin has harmed and continues to harm us. Ultimately, it means freedom. To be exact: Sin is an addiction that fascinates, deludes, and enslaves. It is just transient excitement that leads to sadness, sickness, and death. And when we know that, through communion with Jesus the truth sets us free!

The miracle of miracles

Is it clear? God wants to restore our happiness, the integrity, and the welfare that we were violently dispossessed of by sin. That is the essence of the plan of redemption. Many times we abuse the freedom of choice that God has given us, and as stubborn and immature children, we run straight toward the danger. It is through daily communion with Christ that we mature spiritually, eventually looking around us through different eyes, a process that Paul describes very well with the words: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7).

Many things change in our lives. Have you, dear reader, experienced this? It is the biggest of all miracles in which action in our lives is as invisible as the wind, but perceptive in the transformation that happens in the happy, day-to-day walk with Jesus. It happened with

“We should not be prevailed upon to take anything into the mouth that will bring the body into an unhealthy condition, no matter how much we like it.”

the disciples, and it will happen with us too if we open the doors of our hearts in answer to Jesus’ soft knocking!

What changes?

Everything changes for the better. Everything that God asks us to leave behind is what harms us, and everything that He asks us to do is always healthy. In the “no” of Jesus, when He says, “Thou shalt not do this, Thou shalt not do that,” we find an embedded “Yes, I want you to be successful; I want you to be a conqueror.” Read slowly and with close attention the next couple of texts that state clearly the good intention of God toward all humanity: “Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” And next, one of the most beautiful and moving appeals of the Bible: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11, 13).

The grand finale: Translation

All of heaven is employed full-time in preparing us for the last chapter of the story of humanity. God knows that in order for us to be approved in the greatest of all tests, we need to submit ourselves to the transforming and disciplining process previously mentioned and known as the “transferring of the justice of Christ.” Of what are we speaking? We are pointing to a special people living in a special time, with a special mission, and a stupendous message to give to the world: The one hundred and forty-four thousand. And there’s one more thing: This special group of people should take on a special lifestyle as well.

The lifestyle of the candidates for translation

We’ve all heard the cliché: “Modern humans adopt a suicidal lifestyle.” It makes sense! Now I must ask you, does it make sense for the candidate for

translation to adopt the same lifestyle? Does it make sense to harm the precious health that God gives with eating habits, sleeping habits, and admittedly harmful thoughts? I once heard someone say: “The matters concerning eating habits are only ‘counsels’ and not ‘principles.’ Advice that may or may not be followed without bigger implications towards our salvation.” What do you think? Let’s think about this. In Revelation 3:18 we read: “*I counsel thee* (notice: *I counsel thee*) to buy of me gold tried in the fire . . . ; and white raiment . . . ; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve.” (emphasis added). These are also “counsels”! What will happen if we don’t follow these divine “counsels”? Once again it is easy to understand here the embedded concept of *freedom of choice*. But, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7), and “all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Eating habits of the candidates for translation

We’re all acquainted with the story of the prophet Elijah, but we need to

deepen our study a bit more into his lifestyle, for it has very much to do with our own experience. As the moment for his translation approached, Elijah stripped himself of his own nature and incorporated more and more the divine nature of Christ. Even his eating habits suffered essential changes—they became simpler and more healthful. (See 1 Kings 17:6, 14, 15; 19:6.) Why? The answer is readily found: He was preparing himself for the celestial citizenship, both in his relationship with others and in his lifestyle. This is no different from our case! Our eating habits should progressively become more natural, simple, and healthy as the glorious epilogue of our story nears, or, in other words, if we really want to be approved to join the happy group of the translated.

“More than conquerors on their own account”

Pay close attention to the following inspired text: “If Christians will keep the body in subjection, and bring all their appetites and passions under the control of enlightened conscience,



feeling it a duty that they owe to God and to their neighbors to obey the laws which govern health and life, they will have the blessing of physical and mental vigor. They will have moral power to engage in the warfare against Satan, and in the name of Him who conquered appetite in their behalf they may be more than conquerors on their own account. This warfare is open to all who will engage in it."¹

Blessings you cannot miss!

Among all the blessings that God has allocated to His church, one of the most special is the health reform message, because we have much to win when we accept it and much to lose when we reject it. Did you pay attention to the text of Inspiration? The care of our eating habits and health contribute to the clarity of mind and moral strength that prepares and strengthens us in the war against evil in which we are all engaged. The next text is even more specific: "We should not be prevailed upon to take anything into the mouth that will bring the body into an unhealthy condition, no matter how much we like it. Why?—Because we are God's property. You have a crown to win, a heaven to gain, and a hell to shun. Then for Christ's sake I ask you, Will you have the light shine before you in clear and distinct rays, and then turn away from it and say, 'I love this, and I love that'? God calls upon every one of you to begin to plan, to cooperate with God in His great care and love, to elevate, ennoble, and sanctify the whole soul, body, and spirit, that we may be workers together with God."²

They don't like you!

It's worth emphasizing the beginning of the text: "We should not be prevailed upon to take anything into the mouth that will bring the body into an unhealthy condition, no matter how much we like it." The conclusion is clear. Do you like junk foods? Realize, however, that they don't like you! Do you like chocolate, refined, and fried foods? Do you like sodas? All of them hate you! The list is long—you're acquainted with it—and it isn't part of a sensible diet, the diet of the candidates for translation. There are those

who would say that the relationship of many with their traitorous foods is a case of unrequited love. These hypercaloric, unhealthy foods would only serve to leave your body ugly and sick and your conscience as heavy as your body, with negative repercussions in your reasoning power and the "fine tuning" of your spirituality. Besides, all of this is nothing more than "blind passion." You are being betrayed without knowing it. It's time to add a period to this one-sided relationship in which you are the one being harmed.

Two pleasures instead of one

It's time to change your relationship with food. Decide to like only those provisions that really like you—healthful foods freely provided by the Creator that are healthy and tasty! They will grant you two pleasures: The pleasure of good flavor, and the biggest pleasure—do you know which one it is? The pleasure of feeling well! For this is what our loving God has planned for us with the health reform message: Quality of life and good mental disposition to understand and also to share His good news with the world.

Delicious limits

Establish goals for your life, trace out a feasible plan, and follow it with determination—but especially with pleasure. This will be your personal health challenge. You are acquainted with the pitfalls and know how to escape them. Overall, you can count on Him who triumphed over the god of appetite in the desert, starting your victory exactly where our forefathers sealed their defeat. Prove with praise, to yourself and to all who observe you, who really is in control: Christ, with your complete consent and initiative. Only this way can you experience the delicious limits of moderation, always with your eyes on the bigger prize. In other words, don't commit the folly of sacrificing the bigger pleasure for smaller and fleeting pleasures.

Do you feel powerless against your bad habits?

Then read this: "The Saviour overcame to show man how he may over-

come. . . . Bid the tempted one look not to circumstances, to the weakness of self, or to the power of temptation, but to the power of God's word."³

Now it's up to you

"Let none who profess godliness regard with indifference the health of the body, and flatter themselves that intemperance is no sin."⁴

"No man can become a successful workman in spiritual things until he observes strict temperance in his dietetic habits. God cannot let His Holy Spirit rest upon those who, while they know how they should eat for health, persist in a course that will enfeeble mind and body."⁵

"We need to learn that indulged appetite is the greatest hindrance to mental improvement and soul sanctification."⁶

"It is impossible for those who indulge the appetite to attain to Christian perfection."⁷

"Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods, tea and coffee, and rich and unhealthful food preparations, and who are determined to make a covenant with God by sacrifice, will not continue to indulge their appetite for food that they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people."⁸

So, why not begin a revision of our menu and life habits today? One thing is for sure: If you choose the way divinely indicated, in the future you will be able to look back without regret. Truly you will have much to celebrate and thank God for this marvelous light. So marvelous and necessary that we—as we've just finished reading—"can stand before Him a perfected people." *R*

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² *The Review and Herald*, January 7, 1902.

³ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 181.

⁴ *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 62.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

FIG LEAVES *or* LAMB'S WOOL?

By Peter Lausevic

Many years ago as a Bible Worker Trainee with a senior pastor, we were visiting various isolated members and interests. In one place we wanted to see a church member whom neither one of us had ever met, so I wondered how we were going to recognize her. Observing many people coming out of elevators in the lobby where we were to meet, one lady walked out and immediately we knew this was our sister.

Separation

The reason we immediately recognized this woman as a member of our church was because she clearly distinguished herself from all the other women in that establishment. God made it plain that He will have a people that are very distinct and

separate from all other peoples on the face of this earth. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).

When God says that His people are to come out from the world, that His people are to come out of Babylon, He expects us to come all the way out—not just part of the way. It is only when we decide to separate completely from anything that He calls an abomination that we actually become the sons and daughters of the Almighty.

We realize that we are His possession because Jesus came to this world and paid the purchase price for our redemption. However, it is only when we voluntarily accept the sacrifice of Jesus and commit ourselves fully to Him, that we enter into that special

relationship as sons and daughters. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

"Christ's followers are **required to come out from the world**, and be **separate**, and **touch not the unclean**, and they have the promise of being the sons and daughters of the Most High, members of the royal family. But if the conditions are not complied with on their part, they will not, cannot, realize the fulfillment of the promise. A profession of Christianity is nothing in the sight of God; but true, humble, willing obedience to His requirements designates the children of His adoption, the recipients of His grace, the partakers of His great salvation. Such will be peculiar, a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. Their peculiar, holy character will be discernible, and will **distinctly separate them from the world**, from its affections and lust."¹

Experiencing doctrine

God loves His people so much that He wants to spend eternity with them. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:1–3). Can you imagine that the great God of the universe wants to tabernacle with His people and live with them throughout all eternal ages?

This is not only speaking of a future life that we only speak about in theological circles. God wants to begin living with us right here, right now—today. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). And it is through the Holy Spirit that this constant living with us is accomplished. "Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal."²

As we look to the future when the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon God's people in the fullness of the Latter Rain experience, we have many lessons to learn from the early Christian church. What did it make possible for them to receive the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit in their time? Why did this relatively unknown people, who for all intents and purposes could not attract any followers to their new religion, terrify the world? "The early Christians were indeed a **peculiar people**. Their **blameless deportment** and **unswerving faith** were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a **terror to evildoers wherever their character and doctrines were known**."³ It was not just their new teaching that was provoking an in-

terest. It was this lethal combination of doctrine and character that disturbed the entire Roman empire as well as any culture and religion that met with this unique people.

The world could tolerate another idea or teaching. However, it was this doctrine that actually had power to change the character that made it so powerful. "The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life."⁴ It was this truth that the early Christians actually experienced.

We as Adventists often talk about the coming Sunday decree and when it will come upon this world. In reality, it will never come until there is a people that actually experience the truth in their lives to such an extent that they are living the life of Jesus in their daily experiences. That they in reality are Christians—ones who are like Christ. So the real question we need to be asking ourselves is, Are we in reality Christians—or are we such only in profession? It is impossible for us to serve both the world and Jesus. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

When we speak of separation from the world, we have to understand that it primarily includes three specific issues. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (verse 25). It involves what we eat; what we drink; and how we clothe ourselves.

This is why, in speaking of dress reform, the Spirit of the Lord gives us a sobering evaluation. "Let the fashion change, and convenience would no longer be mentioned. It is the duty of

every child of God to inquire: '*Wherein am I separate from the world?*' Let us suffer a little inconvenience, and be on the safe side. What crosses do God's people bear? They mingle with the world, partake of their spirit, dress, talk, and act like them."⁵

Does this mean that they don't care what they eat or how they dress? "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (verse 26). Quite obviously the birds care for the type of food they eat. However, they are not preoccupied with these things. In the same way, the people of God will not be preoccupied with their food and clothing. They will always do these things to God's honor and glory, but never be so occupied with these things that it takes them away from their spiritual experience with the Lord as their primary goal in life.

Original clothing

Whatever subject we consider, we always need to compare present ideas and practices to God's original design for His people. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). Jesus Himself when on earth had to make many corrections based on the original plan. He could say, "but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8).

When God made our first parents, they were different than any other creation. "All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order."⁶ They were actually made in God's image. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

Since humankind was made in the image of God, do we ever consider what type of clothing God wears? Does He wear anything? "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain" (Psalm

104:1, 2). Yes! God wears honor, majesty, and light. So we can expect that our first parents, as they were frolicking around in the garden, were clothed in honor, majesty, and light as they were created in God's very own image. It is a very worldly-minded picture of Adam and Eve naked in the garden of Eden as we understand nakedness today.

It is true that in one sense they were naked without any clothes. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). However, this nakedness must be distinguished from the condition in which they were in after they sinned. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7). As soon as they sinned, they knew they had lost something, and they tried to cover what they had lost by making a garment of fig leaves.

"God instructed our first parents in regard to the tree of knowledge, and they were fully informed relative to the fall of Satan, and the danger of listening to his suggestions. He did not deprive them of the power of eating the forbidden fruit. He left them as free moral agents to believe His word, obey His commandments and live, or believe the tempter, disobey, and perish. They both ate, and the great wisdom they obtained was the knowledge of sin and a sense of guilt. The **covering of light about them soon disappeared**, and under a sense of guilt and **loss of their divine covering**, a shivering seized them, and they **tried to cover their exposed forms.**"⁷

Why was it that they made this garment of fig leaves? They had regular times for meeting with their Creator and because they knew they were coming into His presence, they knew they had to be clothed. They could not be fully clothed as they had been with the garment of light, so they put on what they could find.

It is interesting to note that the more people fall into sin, the more they want to come into the presence of God naked—or at least with less and less clothing. This is why years ago when people entered a church, they would make sure they were clothed sufficiently. Nowa-

days we see tight and/or embarrassingly low-cut tops revealing much of the chest area, short sleeves or no sleeves at all, along with shorts or short dresses in the church, all showing clearly that we are becoming desensitized to sin and are coming in the presence of God with our aprons of fig leaves.

And yet the reverence of holy angels who have never sinned is remarkable as they cover themselves when they approach the great God in His holy temple. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly" (Isaiah 6:1, 2).

Having said all that, it is better that a person comes into the presence of God with his or her scantily clad fig-leaved garments rather than not coming at all. As sinners, God wants us to come to Him just as we are, because He has a remedy for our miserable, rotten condition as sinners.

The plan of redemption

Adam and Eve came before God, not only clothed outwardly in a manner unfit for God's presence, but their inward condition was like that described by Isaiah of the professed people of God in his own time. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isaiah 1:6).

And what did Christ do with such sinners whom He loved so much that He was willing to exchange His life with theirs? After explaining the plan of redemption to Adam and to his wife and the sacrifice that needed to be made to redeem them from such degradation, the Lord God did "make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). God practically illustrates His sacrifice for the sinner, and He then embeds it into their memory by exchanging their fig-leaved garments with coats of skins that fitly represents the plan of redemption, because of the sacrifice made of an animal to benefit them.

Each day as they placed this clothing upon their bodies that God had prepared specifically for them, they would be reminded that they had accepted Christ as their righteousness. In this manner, their change of clothing actually affects their character. "*Perhaps no question has ever come up among us which has caused such development of character as has the dress reform.*"⁸

For this reason, when we see a person dressing in the wrong way, what do we know? "I saw that the **outside appearance is an index to the heart**. . . . Unless such persons are cleansed from their corruption, they can **never see God**, for only the pure in heart will see Him."⁹

Have we accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour? If so, then there will be a corresponding change in our outward appearance. It is true that one can change the outward appearance without the inward change; however, one cannot change the inward without showing it on the outside.

If we look at the various changes with our first parents, it is remarkable to see that each time their spirituality changed, so did their outward appearance. First they were clothed with a full garment of light. As soon as they sinned, there was an automatic change in their outward appearance—the light disappeared. If we are living a Christian life and then lose our connection with the Lord, one of the first signs is the change in the way we dress. For many years I have watched church members as they begin the road to apostasy, the very first change is in the way they dress.

When Adam and Eve remembered that they needed to meet with God for His regular appointments with them, they realize their sense of nakedness and shame and tried to do their best to cover up their exposed forms. It was self-righteousness at best as they tried to appear before God as if nothing had happened. But our God was not deceived. He loved them too much to leave them the way they were then. After they understood the plan that Deity had to save humanity and they personally accepted that plan, immediately there was a change in the way they were dressed. God did **not** leave them with their fig leaves or replicate some kind

of “caveman-style” clothing. He made them coats of skins. He fully clothed them with garments that symbolized the plan of redemption. In the same way, when a person finally accepts Christ as his or her personal Saviour, immediately there is seen a change in the way he or she dresses. Instead of fig leaves, people are fully clothed, as will be discussed in the next article.

In the same manner as Adam and Eve looked upon their new clothing, they would remember that Christ died so that they could live. We also would, when we accept Jesus as our personal Saviour, have a change of clothing. Whenever we look at the principles of dress reform as given to the people of God in the last days and even see a cross attached to it at times, we remember the plan of redemption for sinners and that Christ is our righteousness. “The dress reform is treated by some with great indifference and by others with contempt, because there is a cross attached to it. For this cross I thank God. It is just what we need to distinguish and separate God’s commandment-keeping people from the world.”¹⁰

Identification

“I saw that the ax must be laid at the root of the tree. Such pride **should not be suffered in the church**. It is these things that **separate God from His people**, that *shut the ark* away from them. Israel have been asleep to the pride, and fashion, and conformity to the world, in the very midst of them. They advance every month in pride, covetousness, selfishness, and love of the world. When their hearts are affected by the truth, it will cause a death to the world, and they will lay aside the ribbons, laces, and collars; and, *if they are dead*, the **laugh**, the **jeer**, and **scorn of unbelievers will not move them**. They will feel an **anxious desire to be separate from the world**, like their Master. They will **not imitate its pride, fashions, or customs**. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God and gain the immortal inheritance. This prospect will swallow up all beside of an earthly nature. **God will have a people separate and distinct from the world**. And *as soon as*

any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children.”¹¹

God gave Israel the principles of dress reform not only as a reminder of Christ’s sacrifice for humanity, but also for the purpose of identifying His people. As we read Numbers 15:37–41, God made a simple arrangement of placing a ribbon of blue to identify who are His people. “Here God expressly commanded a very simple arrangement of dress for the children of Israel **for the purpose of distinguishing them from the idolatrous nations around them**. As they looked upon their peculiarity of dress, they were to **remember that they were God’s commandment-keeping people**, and that He had wrought in a miraculous manner to bring them from Egyptian bondage to serve Him, to be a holy people unto Him. They were not to serve their own desires, or to imitate the idolatrous nations around them, but to remain a distinct, separate people, that all who looked upon them might say: These are they whom God brought out of the land of Egypt, who keep the law of Ten Commandments. **An Israelite was known to be such as soon as seen**, for God through simple means distinguished him as His.

“The order given by God to the children of Israel to place a ribbon of blue in their garments was to have **no direct influence on their health**, only as God would bless them by obedience, and the ribbon would keep in their memory the high claims of Jehovah and prevent them from mingling with other nations, uniting in their drunken feasts, and eating swine’s flesh and luxurious food detrimental to health. God would now have His people adopt the reform dress, **not only to distinguish them from the world as His ‘peculiar people’**, but because a reform in dress is essential to **physical and mental health**. God’s people have, to a great extent, lost their peculiarity, and have been gradually patterning after the world, and mingling with them, until they have in many respects become like them. This is displeasing to God. He directs them, as He directed

the children of Israel anciently, to come out from the world and forsake their idolatrous practices, not following their own hearts (for their hearts are unsanctified) or their own eyes, which have led them to depart from God and to unite with the world.”¹²

Conclusion

By looking at all these statements from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, we can see that our God really loves us. “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). He gives us the principles of dress reform from His perspective of love. It is for our benefit to follow these principles for physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being. Not only does it benefit us personally, but it identifies us as His peculiar people in this world.

Every time we feel it is a cross to dress in the prescribed manner that God gives us through the inspired writings, we are to remember that this manner of dressing symbolizes the sacrifice of Jesus for a lost world. The most important question for you today is, Have you seen yourself as a sinner in need of a Saviour? Have you seen Jesus as the sacrifice for your sins? Have you accepted Him as your personal Redeemer? If you have not, then now is the time to make this decision to accept Him wholeheartedly and gladly accept the coats of skins (principles of dress reform) as a symbol of that acceptance. *R*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 441. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 388.
- ³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 46. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 309.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 278. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁶ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1081.
- ⁷ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 40. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 636.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 136. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 171.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 136, 137. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 524, 525. [Emphasis supplied.]

The Ribbon of Blue:

Dressing for the Master's Arrival



By David Zic

The issue of dress reform is both simple and complicated. Simple, because Scripture and Inspiration so clearly outline its importance and give clear instruction on the issue. Complicated, because for too long we have not taken the issue seriously. While a few have sighed and cried about the increasing influence of worldly fashion among our own people, the majority of us were inclined to set this aside as a fringe issue. Now the results of years of neglect on this issue are being felt in the overall condition found among the professed people of God. We must now confront this issue as never before, or face a consequence that will lead us to destruction.

As a man I must admit that the issue in the past did not seem to be so important to me. Clearly the fashion industry is targeted more at women than men. But the trends are changing and

men are now as likely as women to be targets of Satan's devices in this respect. The moral depravity so rampant in society must be addressed, or we will be swallowed up as a people by a wave that will take us far out to sea and away from the Rock of our Salvation.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14).

The call to be separate

God's people are a separate people. That is why we are clearly bidden: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 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. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:14–18).

The fashion industry

Clothing is not sinful. In fact, clothing is used in Scripture to symbolize the covering righteousness of Christ. But the enemy of souls has taken clothing and made it an idol that separates humanity from their Creator. The fashion industry is exploiting human weakness to pride and vanity and thus tying its victims to the things of this world.

In contrast, the sons and daughters of God take the position to separate from the things of this world.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

"Christ's followers are required to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and they have the promise of being the sons and daughters of the Most High, members of the royal family. But if the conditions are not complied with on their part, they will not, cannot, realize the fulfillment of the promise. A profession of Christianity is nothing in the sight of God; but true, humble, willing obedience to His requirements designates the children of His adoption, the recipients of His grace, the partakers of His great salvation. Such will be peculiar, a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. Their peculiar, holy character will be discernible, and will distinctly separate them from the world, from its affections and lust."¹

Distinguished by the ribbon of blue

When God wanted His people to be different from the world, He wanted their dress to reflect this separation.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God" (Numbers 15:37–41).

The ribbon of blue was a mark of identification, not for them, but for the world. Likewise, in the new dispensation our clothing is an identifying mark to the world. As they see our outward appearance they are looking at our inward hearts.

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2).

"Let the fashion change, and convenience would no longer be mentioned. It is the duty of every child of God to inquire: 'Wherein am I separate from the world?' Let us suffer a little inconvenience, and be on the safe side. What crosses do God's people bear? They mingle with the world, partake of their spirit, dress, talk, and act like them."²

You cannot serve two masters. When you become a slave to worldly fashion, you cannot at the same time claim to be a follower of Christ.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot

serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matthew 6:24, 25).

Does this mean diet and dress are not important? No. It's simply that wholehearted Christians are not preoccupied with these things because they have submitted their lives to Christ and obediently do what Christ would do in regard to diet and dress.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (verse 26).

In the same manner we should be separate from the world in eating and dressing. We will not be preoccupied with these things.

Christ is ready to lead you to Him from wherever you are at this moment. Do not worry where you have been till now. Do not worry about those around you who will see the change in your life. If we have not properly reflected Christ to the world till now, we can begin today. What a wonderful living testimony you can become of the power of Christ in conversion. A slave of fashion can be freed from this snare. Your connection with Christ will thus be evident to all the world.

For myself it was difficult to realize the importance of the issue of dress reform until I realized this hard fact: There are only two things that you can reflect to this world. While the world tries to tell you to be an "individual," the reality is that you will reflect only one of two things to others. When someone looks at you, you will either

"True, humble, willing obedience to [God's] requirements designates the children of His adoption." . . . Our clothing is an identifying mark to the world. As they see our outward appearance they are looking at our inward hearts.

be a reflection of the meek and lowly Jesus, or you will be a reflection of the enemy of souls. Your dress is the outward index of your heart.

"The very ones that profess to be washed by the blood of Jesus, spilled for them, can dress up and decorate their poor, mortal bodies, and dare profess to be followers of the holy, self-denying, humble Pattern. Oh, that all could see this as God sees it and showed it to me! It seemed too much for me to bear, to feel the anguish of soul that I felt as I beheld it. Said the angel: 'God's people are *peculiar*; such He is purifying unto Himself.' I saw that the outside appearance is an index to the heart. When the exterior is hung with ribbons, collars, and needless things, it plainly shows that the love for all this is in the heart; unless such persons are cleansed from their corruption, they can never see God, for only the pure in heart will see Him."³

"A person's character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils."⁴

The "rules" of dress

With so much tied up in the issue of dress, what guidelines does Inspiration give us? We want in this reading not only to tell you the issue of dress is important but also give you practical advice to help solve the difficulty. Below is a collection of guidelines that should guide your selection of what to wear each and every day. If the issue of dress has been a burden for you, go through this checklist every morning when deciding what to wear.

1. Is it modest?

Clothing is a "covering," so when it is "revealing," suddenly it is contrary to its very purpose. Your clothing should be a modest covering, neither too short nor too tight.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9, 10).



2. Does it draw attention to me?

Since clothing reflects your heart, you should ask yourself if the clothing you are wearing is designed to attract attention to you. Any clothing worn for the purposes of pride and vanity, even if it is modest, is an abomination to God. Your clothing should not draw attention but reflect an inward relationship with God. Consider the purpose for which you are choosing these clothes as well as color, cut, tightness, and so forth.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

3. Is it clean, neat, and healthful?

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

"[Our Creator] desires our clothing to be not only neat and healthful, but appropriate and becoming."⁵

4. Is it appropriate for the weather?

You should consider if your clothes are appropriate for the temperature to promote health. There is a close link between dress and health reform.

The virtuous woman "is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet [*i.e.*, double layers, margin]" (Proverbs 31:21).

5. Is it appropriate for my age and the work I'm doing?

Too often people forget their age when they look at which clothes to wear. "It is always right to be neat and to be clad appropriately in a manner becoming to your age and station in life."⁶

6. Does it avoid resembling the clothing of the opposite sex?

There is an increasing tendency in modern fashion to either produce immoral clothing or else try to have women appear as much as men as possible.

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomina-

The real issue is not What you are wearing, but Why you are wearing it. If you are drawing attention to yourself, you cannot at the same time be reflecting Christ to the world.

tion unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5).

"There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination."⁷

7. Hair is part of your covering

Remember that your hair is also part of how you dress (or cover) yourself. The style in which you keep your hair also reflects your relationship with God to the world. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Corinthians 11:14, 15).

8. Does what I am wearing glorify God?

The real issue is not WHAT you are wearing, but WHY you are wearing it. If you are drawing attention to yourself, you cannot at the same time be reflecting Christ to the world. Even if you are completely covered, but in a manner, style, or color, which will draw attention to your body instead of your face, then you cannot be glorifying God at the same time. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Church action

Can the church discipline members who violate the above rules of Christian dress? Can the church deny baptism to someone who does not wish to live up to these principles?

The Lord's messenger writes: "I saw that the ax must be laid at the root of the tree. Such pride should not be suffered in the church. It is these things that separate God from His people, that shut the ark away from them. Israel have been asleep to the pride,

and fashion, and conformity to the world, in the very midst of them. They advance every month in pride, covetousness, selfishness, and love of the world. When their hearts are affected by the truth, it will cause a death to the world, and they will lay aside the ribbons, laces, and collars; and, if they are dead, the laugh, the jeer, and scorn of unbelievers will not move them. They will feel an anxious desire to be separate from the world, like their Master. They will not imitate its pride, fashions, or customs. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God and gain the immortal inheritance. This prospect will swallow up all beside of an earthly nature. God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. And as soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children. They are the children of the world and of darkness. They lust for the leeks and onions of Egypt, that is, desire to be as much like the world as possible; by so doing, those that profess to have put on Christ virtually put Him off, and show that they are strangers to grace and strangers to the meek and lowly Jesus. If they had acquainted themselves with Him, they would walk worthy of Him."⁸

"Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God. I have been shown that our church rules are very deficient. All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline. If there is a continuance, in face of warnings and appeals and entreaties, to still follow the perverse will, it may

be regarded as proof that the heart is in no way assimilated to Christ. Self, and only self, is the object of adoration, and one such professed Christian will lead many away from God.

"There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized."⁹

Fulfillment of prophecy

We are eagerly waiting for the Latter Rain. But we must prepare for this event. In the early church, it was their doctrine plus character that made them a terror to the world.

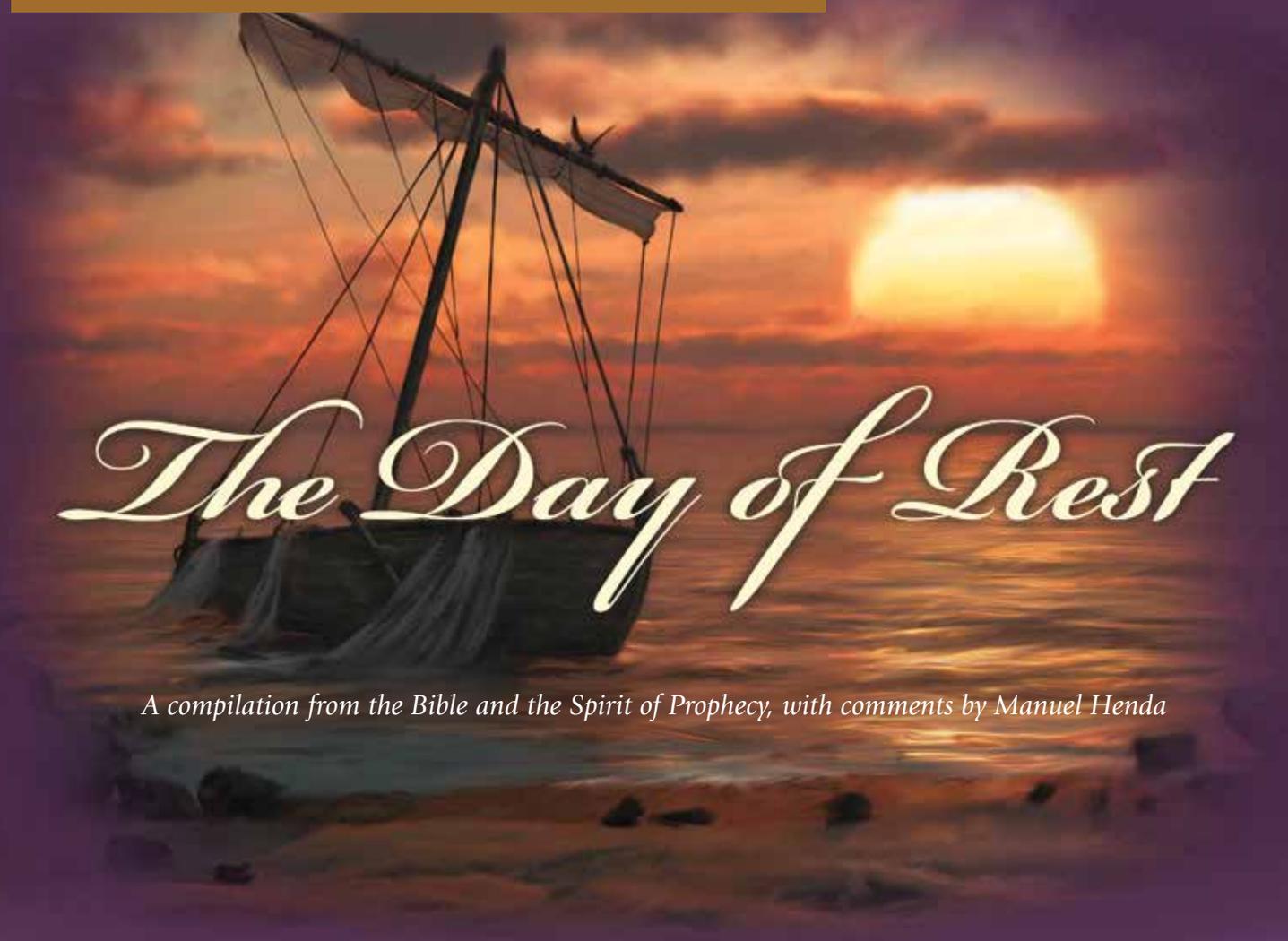
"The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and doctrines were known."¹⁰

In the period of Laodicea we are also called upon to lay aside our garments and take up the garments offered to us by the Lord. Now is the time to buy the white raiment.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:18–20). *R*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 441.
- ² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 278.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- ⁴ *Education*, p. 248.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 142.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 421.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 137.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 647, 648.
- ¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 46.



The Day of Rest

A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with comments by Manuel Henda

Seventh Day Plus

As a people, we are well aware of the wonderful truth of the seventh-day Sabbath given to us in Scripture, and the desire of the Lord to lift up His downtrodden law in this dark world. We are often content in this knowledge, going to church week by week, paying our tithe, and believing the truth. As we study the subject of the Sabbath in its framework of truth, we will find more—much more—that God desires to teach us and help us to live.

Sabbath is more than going to church on the 7th day

“God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it” (Genesis 2:3).

“The Sabbath is a golden clasp that unites God and His people.”¹

To keep the Sabbath holy, we must be a holy people. This cannot be if we

are not united with Christ, who is our Righteousness. It also cannot be kept holy if we do not do the will of God the other six days of the week. It is a deeper study, but let us endeavor to pray and dig deeper into the Word of God to understand our privilege and our responsibility before God. 1 Peter 2:9 gives us that special calling, that wonderful mandate as believers and followers of Christ.

“Far more sacredness is attached to the Sabbath than is given it by many professed Sabbathkeepers. The Lord has been greatly dishonored by those who have not kept the Sabbath according to the commandment, either in the letter or in the spirit. **He calls for a reform in the observance of the Sabbath.**”²

“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many gen-

erations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” (Isaiah 58:12–14).

“In establishing new churches, ministers should give careful instruction as to the proper observance of the Sabbath. We must be guarded, lest the lax practices that prevail among Sundaykeepers shall be followed by those who profess to observe God’s holy rest day. The line of demarcation is to be made clear and distinct between those who bear the mark of God’s kingdom

and those who bear the sign of the kingdom of rebellion."³

What are the lines of demarcation?

Be prepared daily

"All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. **Every day they will have the companionship of Christ and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.**

"In all that pertains to the success of God's work, the very first victories are to be won in the home life. Here the preparation for the Sabbath must begin. Throughout the week let parents remember that their home is to be a school in which their children shall be prepared for the courts above. Let their words be right words. No words which their children should not hear are to escape their lips. Let the spirit be kept free from irritation. Parents, **during the week live as in the sight of a holy God**, who has given you children to train for Him. Train for Him the little church in your home, that on the Sabbath all may be prepared to worship in the Lord's sanctuary."⁴

Be prepared in rest

"When the Sabbath is ... remembered, the temporal will not be allowed to encroach upon the spiritual. No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. During the week our energies will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed we shall be too weary to engage in His service."⁵

Be prepared on Preparation Day. It is not difficult, with proper planning,

to have our duties finished with extra time to relax, pray, and sing before the Sabbath draws on. The Preparation Day is exactly that, the day to make sure that our Sabbath clothing, our Sabbath food, and our personal cleanliness of home and body are taken care of before the Sabbath begins.

"While preparation for the Sabbath is to be made all through the week, Friday is to be the special preparation day. Through Moses the Lord said to the children of Israel: 'Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning' (Exodus 16:23). . . . There was something to be done in preparing the heaven-sent bread for the children of Israel. The Lord told them that this work must be done on Friday, the preparation day. This was a test to them. God desired to see whether or not they would keep the Sabbath holy."⁶

"While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather **let the food prepared the day before** be heated. And let the meals, though simple, be palatable and attractive. Provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day."⁷

"On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. **See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken.** It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it. **The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.** Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment."⁸

Be prepared in heart

The Sabbath is the day to draw even closer to the Lord, our families, and our

brethren and sisters. How important then to have the right heart preparation so that we can be in a frame of mind to seek and receive blessings from our Lord.

Be prepared early. We don't need to be rushing about and late to receive the Sabbath blessings. If we are habitually late to prepare on a weekly basis, what will happen as we prepare to meet Jesus at His return?

"We should jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time. Whenever it is possible, employers should give their workers the hours from Friday noon until the beginning of the Sabbath. Give them time for preparation, that they may welcome the Lord's day with quietness of mind. By such a course you will suffer no loss even in temporal things."⁹

Be prepared in your relationships. It is not true worship if we meet with others and have wrong feelings in our heart. We must put forth efforts to be truly united in spirit with our brethren and sisters and our families or we will not receive the blessings of God. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

"There is another work that should receive attention on the preparation day. On this day all differences between brethren, whether in the family or in the church, should be put away. Let all bitterness and wrath and malice be expelled from the soul. In a humble spirit, 'confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed' (James 5:16).

"Before the setting of the sun let the members of the family assemble to read God's word, to sing and pray. There is need of reform here, for many have been remiss. We need to confess to God and to one another."¹⁰

Be prepared in worshipful attitude. Whether or not you have children, each should be in an attitude of worship, seeking the Lord, praising His goodness, listening for His still, small voice. It is appropriate to have a special set of clothing appropriate for this reverent worship. Remember, church is not a fashion show; it is the seeking place of God.

"At family worship let the children take a part. Let all bring their Bibles

and each read a verse or two. Then let some familiar hymn be sung, followed by prayer. For this, Christ has given a model. The Lord's Prayer was not intended to be repeated merely as a form, but it is an illustration of what our prayers should be—simple, earnest, and comprehensive. In a simple petition tell the Lord your needs and express gratitude for His mercies. Thus you invite Jesus as a welcome guest into your home and heart."¹¹

"Many need instruction as to how they should appear in the assembly for worship on the Sabbath. They are not to enter the presence of God in the common clothing worn during the week. All should have a special Sabbath suit, to be worn when attending service in God's house. While we should not conform to worldly fashions, we are not to be indifferent in regard to our outward appearance. We are to be neat and trim, though without adornment. The children of God should be pure within and without."¹²

Be early to rise and cheerful at home. This is part of having the right attitude to worship the Lord. If all rise early, well-rested, there will be a holy calm and expectancy to meet with the Lord and others.

"Let not the precious hours of the Sabbath be wasted in bed. On Sabbath morning the family should be astir early. If they rise late, there is confusion and bustle in preparing for breakfast and Sabbath school. There is hurrying, jostling, and impatience. Thus unholy feelings come into the home. The Sabbath, thus desecrated, becomes a weariness, and its coming is dreaded rather than loved."¹³

Eat lighter for clearer minds. So much is lost when we are overly tired or overfed. Our mind becomes dull, and we do not discern all the Lord wants to teach us.

"We should not provide for the Sabbath a more liberal supply or a greater variety of food than for other days. Instead of this the food should be more simple, and less should be eaten, in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things. Overeating befogs the brain. The most precious words may be heard and not

appreciated, because the mind is confused by an improper diet. By overeating on the Sabbath, many have done more than they think to dishonor God."¹⁴

Sabbath worship

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." "Holy and reverend is his name" (Psalms 100:2-4; 111:9).

"As you enter the place of worship, ask the Lord to remove all evil from your heart. Bring to His house only that which He can bless. Kneel before God in His temple, and consecrate to Him His own, which He has purchased with the blood of Christ. Pray for the speaker or the leader of the meeting. Pray that great blessing may come through the one who is to hold forth the word of life. Strive earnestly to lay hold of a blessing for yourself."¹⁵

It is important to remember that we are called to represent Christ in all that we say and do. Neatness and order and cleanliness should characterize the appearance and dwellings of Sabbathkeepers and also the whole place of worship and its service. It is important to teach the children this by precept and example and to keep them from causing confusion and noise in the church.

Yet we are commanded: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

"The house of God is often desecrated by Sabbathkeepers' children. Their parents allow them to run about the house, play, talk, take the attention of the people, and manifest their evil tempers in the very meetings where they have assembled to worship God. I have seen that in the assembly of the saints a holy stillness should reign. But the house where God's people assemble is often made a perfect Babylon, a place of confusion and disorder. This is displeasing to God."¹⁶

"If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in

mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence. The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find no sanction in the house where God is worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the word of God, that it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart. . . .

"When the meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in the presence of the Holy One, and every heart should ascend to God in silent devotion. . . . All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies."¹⁷

This same principle applies after the service, that our hearts can absorb the solemn message we have been given.

"When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most—the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths. Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralyzed condition of the senses so that cautions, warnings, and reproofs shall not be heard; or if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life. Sometimes a little child may so attract the attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground and bring forth fruit. Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence for the house and worship of God that they keep up a continual communication with each other during the sermon. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves. God wants attentive hearers. It was while men slept that Satan sowed his tares.

"When the benediction is pronounced, all should still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is

resting upon them, and that they must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus blocking them up so that others cannot pass out. The precincts of the church should be invested with a sacred reverence. It should not be made a place to meet old friends and visit and introduce common thoughts and worldly business transactions. These should be left outside the church. God and angels have been dishonored by the careless, noisy laughing and shuffling of feet heard in some places."¹⁸

Enjoy fellowship

Part of the purpose of gathering together is to meet with each other to fellowship, to encourage, and to strengthen in the most holy faith. It is not to be a common gathering but a holy one. Conversations should be uplifting, edifying.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

"We do not obtain a hundredth part of the blessing we should obtain from assembling together to worship God. Our perceptive faculties need sharpening."¹⁹

The Sabbath is the time to get the double portion of manna. That does not mean that we need hours of sermons. If we have the proper attitude and heart, and the preacher has the same, God can speak without our becoming weary. The service time is also the opportunity to share His goodness shown in our life, a chance to praise Him.

"The preaching at our Sabbath meetings should generally be short. Opportunity should be given for those who love God to express their gratitude and adoration."²⁰

"[Daniel Webster aptly declared:] Many of the ministers of the present day take their text from St. Paul and preach from the newspapers. When they do so, I prefer to enjoy my own thoughts, rather than listen. I want my pastor to come to me in the Spirit of the gospel, saying, 'You are mortal. Your probation is brief, your work must be done speedily. . . . You are

hastening to the bar of God. The Judge standeth before the door.'"²¹

"Let none come to the place of worship to take a nap. **There should be no sleeping in the house of God.** You do not fall asleep when engaged in your temporal business, because you have an interest in your work. Shall we allow the service which involves eternal interests to be placed on a lower level than the temporal affairs of life?"²²

Sabbath afternoon

The afternoon and evening of the Sabbath is also a special time. It is not for us to use it for our own pleasure or to talk about our own things. It is dedicated time to learn more of our Creator through His creation. Especially for those with families, this is the ideal time to draw closer. It will then be the best day of the week.

"The Sabbath school and the meeting for worship occupy only a part of the Sabbath. **The portion remaining to the family may be made the most sacred and precious season of all the Sabbath hours.** Much of this time parents should spend with their children."²³

"Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee" (Job 12:7, 8).

"In pleasant weather let parents walk with their children in the fields and groves. Amid the beautiful things of nature tell them the reason for the institution of the Sabbath."²⁴

Traveling on the Sabbath

"If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided. In harmony with the light which the Lord has given in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, we should be more careful about traveling on the boats or cars on this day. In these matters we should set a right example before our children and youth. In order to reach the churches that need our help, and to give them the message that God desires them

to hear, it may be necessary for us to travel on the Sabbath; but so far as possible we should secure our tickets and make all necessary arrangements on some other day. When starting on a journey we should make every possible effort to plan so as to avoid reaching our destination on the Sabbath."²⁵

(It is important to understand the above in the context of the days when this text was written. The boats and cars referred to paid transportation needed when traveling a great distance. The believers at that time travelled by horse and carriage which took considerable time. Increased technology may have facilitated our transportation options today, but the principles involved are timeless.)

Summary

"Great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath, and God desires that the Sabbath day shall be to us a day of joy."²⁶

Let us remember that the Sabbath is a time to commune with our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. May we each receive His blessing is my prayer.

"For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day" (Matthew 12:8). *R*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 351.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 353. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 353, 354. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 354.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 354, 355.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 357. [Emphasis supplied.]
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- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 356.
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- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 357.
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- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 357.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 362, 363.
- ¹⁶ *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 288, 289. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 492, 493.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 493, 494.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 362.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 361.
- ²¹ *The Review and Herald*, June 23, 1891.
- ²² *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 361. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 358. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 359, 360.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

Work, for the Night Is Coming

A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with comments by F. Matyas

One of the characteristics of our modern world is that we have lost the original purpose of day and night. But “God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:4).

When I was a little boy there were some quiet villages where people disapproved of night shifts at workplaces. “Daytime is for work, nighttime is for rest,” they said. The old enemy of good things has been crafty: As the concept of daytime shifts is ceasing, nightspots are multiplying, destroying the love of daytime work in people. Different modern gadgets have crept into our homes and unfortunately have destroyed the good daily routine of many households. People are unable to work simply because they are exhausted by late nights. During the times of the patriarchs, people understood the meaning of day and night. They knew how to use their time well. The nighttime

was devoted for rest and sleeping and the daytime for work and other activities. Jacob complained to Laban for the hardness of the nights of work that kept him without rest. “Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes” (Genesis 31:40).

David praised the Lord early in the morning: “Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early” (Psalm 108:2).

Jesus Himself made good use of the the light of the daytime: “In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35). He also pointed out who likes to work in the dark of night: “While men slept, [the] enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way” (Matthew 13:25).

God's purpose for His chosen people

“Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee,

and his glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:2).

“God had designed that His people should be the light of the world. From them was to shine forth the glory of His law as revealed in the life practice. For the carrying out of this design, He had caused the chosen nation to occupy a strategic position among the nations of earth.”¹

Through the prophets He warned them for not being faithful in this matter; “Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land” (Hosea 4:1).

“For centuries preceding Christ's first advent, darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Satan was throwing his hellish shadow athwart the pathway of men, that he might prevent them from gaining a knowledge of God and of the future world. Multitudes were sitting in the shadow of death.

Their only hope was for this gloom to be lifted, that God might be revealed."²

The working Jesus

David, the anointed of God, with prophetic eyes foresaw that the second coming of Christ would be "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Samuel 23:4). This was Hosea's testimony: "His going forth is prepared as the morning" (6:3).

"Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness and waking the earth to life. So was the Sun of Righteousness to arise, 'with healing in His wings' (Malachi 3:20). "The multitudes dwelling 'in the land of the shadow of death' were to see 'a great light' (Isaiah 9:2)."³

How was this promise fulfilled? Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5).

"And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22).

"But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men" (Matthew 9:8).

"And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there" (Matthew 19:2).

"But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God" (Mark 3:7-11).

"Jesus watched with deep earnestness the changing countenances of His hearers. The faces that expressed interest and pleasure gave Him great satisfaction. As the arrows of truth pierced to the soul, breaking through the barriers of selfishness, and working contrition, and finally gratitude, the Saviour was made glad. When His eye swept over the throng of listeners, and He recognized among them the faces He had before seen, His countenance lighted up with joy. He saw in them hopeful subjects for His kingdom."⁴

Jesus calls to work

"When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:36-38).

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Was this call made only for the disciples?

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). What did this call involve? A mission. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14).

Those who understand their mission need to possess this power, that through praise, gratitude, and happy service they will reflect the character of the great Giver and the law of that country where none "seeketh . . . her own."

"The gems of truth that fell from Christ's lips on that eventful day were treasured in many hearts. For

them new thoughts started into life, new aspirations were awakened, and a new history began. After the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, these persons came to the front, and fulfilled their divine commission with a wisdom and zeal corresponding to the greatness of the work. They bore a message that appealed to the hearts of men, weakening the old superstitions that had long dwarfed the lives of thousands. Before their testimony human theories and philosophies became as idle fables. Mighty were the results flowing from the words of the Saviour to that wondering, awestruck crowd in the temple at Jerusalem."⁵

Jesus said about Himself: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:4, 5).

"'If any man walk in the day,' He continued, 'he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world' (John 11:9). He who does the will of God, who walks in the path that God has marked out, cannot stumble and fall. The light of God's guiding Spirit gives him a clear perception of his duty, and leads him aright till the close of his work. 'But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him' (verse 10). He who walks in a path of his own choosing, where God has not called him, will stumble. For him day is turned into night, and wherever he may be, he is not secure."⁶

The Danger

"It suits the policy of Satan that men should retain the forms of religion if but the spirit of vital godliness is lacking."⁷

"The spiritual darkness which falls upon nations, upon churches and individuals, is due, not to an arbitrary withdrawal of the succors of divine grace on the part of God, but to neglect or rejection of divine light on the part of men. A striking illustration of this truth is presented in the history of the Jewish people in the time of Christ. By their devotion to the world and forgetfulness of God and his Word, their understanding had become darkened, their hearts earthly and

sensual. Thus they were in ignorance concerning Messiah's advent, and in their pride and unbelief they rejected the Redeemer."⁸

In the time of the disciples

After the ascension of Jesus and the fulfillment of the promised Holy Spirit, the disciples were able to testify about Christ with great power.

"Christ filled [the disciples] thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men 'took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus' (Acts 4:13). . . . They could speak the name of Jesus with assurance; for was He not their Friend and Elder Brother? Brought into close communion with Christ, they sat with Him in heavenly places. With what burning language they clothed their ideas as they bore witness for Him! Their hearts were surcharged with a benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying to the power of Christ. They were filled with an intense longing to carry forward the work He had begun. They realized the greatness of their debt to heaven and the responsibility of their work. Strengthened by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, they went forth filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross. The Spirit animated them and spoke through them. The peace of Christ shone from their faces. They had consecrated their lives to Him for service, and their very features bore evidence to the surrender they had made."⁹

"In the days of the apostles the Christian believers were filled with earnestness and enthusiasm. So untiringly did they labor for their Master that in a comparatively short time, notwithstanding fierce opposition, the gospel of the kingdom was sounded to all the inhabited parts of the earth. The zeal manifested at this time by the followers of Jesus has been recorded by the pen of inspiration for the encouragement of believers in every age."¹⁰

God can only bless the soul who cooperates with Him

"Like Christ, the messengers of the Most High today should take their

"Children and youth should be missionaries at home . . . You can prove by faithful performance of the little things that seem to you unimportant that you have a true missionary spirit."

position in these great thoroughfares, where they can meet the passing multitudes from all parts of the world. Like Him, hiding self in God, they are to sow the gospel seed, presenting before others the precious truths of Holy Scripture that will take deep root in mind and heart, and spring up unto life eternal."¹¹

The Lord's messenger warns us: "I was shown that if God's people make no efforts on their part, but wait for the refreshing to come upon them and remove their wrongs and correct their errors; if they depend upon that to cleanse them from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, they will be found wanting."¹²

"We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain."¹³

Who is to work? Everyone.

"While all heaven is astir, dispatching messengers to all parts of the earth to carry forward the work of redemption, the church of the living God are also to be colaborers with Jesus Christ. We are members of His mystical body. He is the Head, controlling all the members of the body. Jesus Himself, in His infinite mercy, is working on human hearts, effecting spiritual transformations so amazing that angels look on with astonishment and joy."¹⁴

"If ever the Lord has spoken by me, He speaks when I say that the workers engaged in educational lines, in ministerial lines, and in medical missionary lines must stand as a unit, all laboring under the supervision of God, one helping the other, each blessing each. Those connected with our schools and

sanitariums are to labor with earnest alacrity. The work that is done under the ministration of the Holy Spirit, out of love for God and for humanity, will bear the divine signature and will make its impression on human minds. The Lord calls upon our young people to enter our schools and quickly fit themselves for service. In various places outside of cities, schools are to be established where our youth can receive an education that will prepare them to go forth to do evangelical work and medical missionary work."¹⁵

"These women who are doing with ready willingness what their hands find to do, with cheerfulness of spirit aiding their husbands to bear their burdens and training their children for God, are missionaries in the highest sense."¹⁶

"Children and youth should be missionaries at home by doing those things that need to be done and that someone must do. . . . You can prove by faithful performance of the little things that seem to you unimportant that you have a true missionary spirit."¹⁷

"When the Spirit of the Lord works upon the hearts of the parents, their prayers and tears will come up before God, and they will earnestly entreat, and will receive grace and wisdom from heaven, and will be able to work for their unconverted children. As this Spirit is manifested in the home, it will be brought into the church, and those who are home missionaries will also become agents for God in the church and in the world. The institutions which God has planted will bear an entirely different mold."¹⁸

Christ is waiting for you

"The Lord calls for every talent

and ability to be put to use. When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested; divine power will combine with human effort, the church will see the providential interpositions of the Lord God of hosts, the light of truth will be diffused, the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. As in the apostles' time, many souls will turn unto the Lord. The earth will be lighted with the glory of the angel from heaven. . . .

"If the wilderness of the church is to become as a fruitful field, and the fruitful field to be as a forest, it is through the Holy Spirit of God poured out upon His people. The heavenly agencies have long been waiting for the human agents, the members of the church, to cooperate with them in the great work to be done. **They are waiting for you. So vast is the field, so comprehensive the design, that every sanctified heart will be pressed into service as an agent of divine power.** . . . Let all who believe the truth for this time put away their differences; put away envy and evil speaking and evil thinking. Press together, press together. 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently' (1 Peter 1:22)."¹⁹

"Those who make no decided effort, but simply wait for the Holy Spirit to compel them to action, will perish in darkness. You are not to sit still and do nothing in the work of God."²⁰

This is the prophecy for our time: "When divine power is combined with human effort, the work will spread like fire in the stubble. God will employ agencies whose origin man will be unable to discern. Angels will do a work which men might have had the blessing of accomplishing had they not neglected to answer the claims of God."²¹

"The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of worldwide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. . . . Servants of God, with

their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven."²²

Dear brethren and sisters, let us work while there is daylight. It is not enough to accept the truth and to be part of God's remnant church. Let us work while our Light "Jesus" is in the most holy place. Let us work while the Holy Spirit is working for us!

If we do not work . . .

"The period of great spiritual light, if that light is not sacredly cherished and acted upon, will be turned into a time of corresponding spiritual darkness. The impression made by the Spirit of God, if men do not cherish the sacred impression, and occupy holy ground, will fade from the mind. Those who would advance in spiritual knowledge must stand by the very fount of God, and drink again and again from the wells of salvation so graciously opened unto them. They must never leave the source of refreshment; but with hearts swelling with gratitude and love at the display of the goodness and compassion of God, they must be continually partakers of the living water."²³

"Self-righteousness is not true righteousness, and those who cling to it will be left to take the consequences of holding a fatal deception. Many today claim to obey the commandments of God, but they have not the love of God in their hearts to flow forth to others. Christ calls them to unite with Him in His work for the saving of the world, but they content themselves with saying, 'I go, sir.' They do not go. They do not cooperate with those who are doing God's service. They are idlers. Like the unfaithful son, they make false promises to God. In taking upon themselves the solemn covenant of the church they have pledged themselves to receive and obey the word of God, to give themselves to God's service, but they do not do this. In profession they claim to be sons of God, but in life and character they deny the relationship. They do not surrender the will to God. They are living a lie."²⁴

"How many will mourn for lost opportunities when it is eternally too

late! Today we have talent and opportunity, but we know not how long these may be ours. Then let us work while it is day; for the night cometh, in which no man can work. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing" (Luke 12:43)."²⁵

"If you cultivate faithfully the vineyard of your soul, God is making you a laborer together with Himself. And you will have a work to do not only for yourself, but for others. In representing the church as the vineyard, Christ does not teach that we are to restrict our sympathies and labors to our own numbers. The Lord's vineyard is to be enlarged. In all parts of the earth He desires it to be extended. As we receive the instruction and grace of God, we should impart to others a knowledge of how to care for the precious plants. Thus we may extend the vineyard of the Lord. God is watching for evidence of our faith, love, and patience. He looks to see if we are using every spiritual advantage to become skillful workers in His vineyard on earth, that we may enter the Paradise of God, that Eden home from which Adam and Eve were excluded by transgression."²⁶ *R*

References

- ¹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 70.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 687, 688.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 688. [Emphasis added.]
- ⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 255.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 620.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 527.
- ⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 378.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 378.
- ⁹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 45, 46.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 578.
- ¹¹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 74.
- ¹² *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 619.
- ¹³ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 399.
- ¹⁴ *The Review and Herald*, December 24, 1908.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 169, 170.
- ¹⁶ *The Adventist Home*, p. 245.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 300.
- ¹⁸ *The Review and Herald*, March 14, 1893.
- ¹⁹ *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 28, 1893. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ²⁰ *Christian Service*, p. 228.
- ²¹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 118.
- ²² *The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.
- ²³ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 135.
- ²⁴ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 279.
- ²⁵ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 167.
- ²⁶ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 282.

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Return Service Requested

MOVING? Please let us know.

The Purifying Process

*The church is not a temple grand
On which is topped a steeple.
It's formed of many different folks—
A struggling, erring people.*

*The rending of the heart and mind
Is needed till we're ready:
Settled in the present truth,
Firm, watchful, grounded, steady.*

*The Lord will work in human hearts
Until He sees that number.
Now's the time to look to Heav'n;
It's not the time for slumber!*

*The testing time is very brief.
Let He not find us sleeping.
It's time to mourn for all our sins:
Repent in faith with weeping!*



*Let's live like Christ in daily life:
Pure, innocent, efficient.
'Tis only through redeeming blood—
His grace—it is sufficient!*

*Unitedly we must press on
To seek to work as brothers.
And not just that—we also aim
To find and help still others.*

*So soon will come our blessed Lord—
We'll see for whom we're yearning:
The One whose blood was shed for thee,
Let's watch for His returning!*

*With Christ as King we cannot fail,
While meekly on probation.
So, selflessly we'll walk with Him,
Till vict'ry's jubilation!*

—B. Montrose