



SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the First Half 2010

First Quarter

PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD

Second Quarter

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING IS VERY NEAR

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INTRODUCTION

"We are living in the time of the end—writes the Spirit of Prophecy. 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 The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth.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.

"The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.

"The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. Men have become infatuated with vice, and every species of evil prevails.

"The enemy has succeeded in perverting justice and in filling men's hearts with the desire for selfish gain.... In the great cities there are multitudes living in poverty and wretchedness, well-nigh destitute of food, shelter, and clothing; while in the same cities are those who have more than heart could wish, who live luxuriously, spending their money on richly furnished houses, on personal adornment, or worse still, upon the gratification of sensual appetites, upon liquor, tobacco, and other things that destroy the powers of the brain, unbalance the mind, and debase the soul. The cries of starving humanity are coming up before God, while by every species of oppression and extortion men are piling up colossal fortunes."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 11.

Considering how serious and short our time is, what should be our greatest and first interest in our life? What should we constantly do? How do we wish to be found when our Redeemer will appear in glory?

Deep spiritual preparation was necessary before the first coming of Jesus as human being, than John the Baptist had exactly this message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." For he is the one about whom Isaiah the prophet had spoken: "The voice of one shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make his paths straight.'" (Matthew 3:1-3).

If this was the case before the first coming, how necessary and urgent is this work today when Jesus is at the moment of His coming in glory? After the ascension of Jesus, the door of grace remained open and the church could continue to preach the gospel for salvation to all nations. But in the last days, when the work of grace will have accomplished his mission, will not be the same. Saved will means saved for ever and lost will means lost for ever. Dear brethren and sisters, now is the time assigned for our preparation and sanctification, let us spend it fruitfully, growing every day in Jesus Christ.

“In consideration of the shortness of time we as a people should watch and pray, and in no case allow ourselves to be diverted from the solemn work of preparation for the great event before us. Because the time is apparently extended, many have become careless and indifferent in regard to their words and actions. They do not realize their danger and do not see and understand the mercy of our God in lengthening their probation, that they may have time to form characters for the future, immortal life. Every moment is of the highest value. Time is granted them, not to be employed in studying their own ease and becoming dwellers on the earth, but to be used in the work of overcoming every defect in their own characters and in helping others, by example and personal effort, to see the beauty of holiness. God has a people upon the earth who in faith and holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast-fulfilling prophecy and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 306, 307.

Dear brethren and sisters from all countries in the world, this is the solemn subject chosen for this quarter. Let us study the lessons and apply to our experience and daily life, than it is the message for our time. They have been prepared with the great wish that when Jesus will come His espouse may be found ready.

May therefore the Lord help us that by studying these messages the requested preparation may be achieved for the full reception of the Lord in our heart. Be assured, if we receive him today, he will receive us in glory when the day of the great feast will come, because the wonderful promise is. “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints). “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” (Revelation 19:6-9).

—*The Brethren of the General Conference*

**The Special Sabbath School Offering
is dedicated to Liberia**

*Remember to give your offering as an expression
of love and gratitude.*

1

Sabbath, January 2, 2010

PREPARE TO MEET THE LORD

“Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” Amos 4:12.

KEEP AWARE OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- 1. What signs did Jesus say would precede His return to earth? How are these signs being fulfilled throughout the world? Matthew 24:6-8.**

“We are standing upon the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange, eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven. Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p.14.

“Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. ...

“Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms,

in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 589, 590.

2. How do the nations and their inhabitants relate to the conditions on earth? Luke 21:25, 26; Isaiah 24:4, 5.

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place, that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

“The Bible and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men’s hearts to fail them for fear.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 537.

“There are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis. If men would give more heed to the teaching of God’s word, they would find a solution of the problems that perplex them.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 13.

“The unhappiness and degradation that follow in the train of licentiousness cannot be estimated. The world is defiled under its inhabitants. They have nearly filled up the measure of their iniquity; but that which will bring the heaviest retribution is the practice of iniquity under the cloak of godliness.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p.144.

3. Does mankind fully grasp the underlying causes of the conditions in society? How did the apostle Paul depict the social situation existing in the last days? What do we see in the world around us? 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

“At this time, before the great final crisis, as before the world’s first destruction, men are absorbed in the pleasures and the pursuits of sense. Engrossed with the seen and transitory, they have lost sight of the unseen and eternal. For the things that perish with the using, they are sacrificing imperishable riches. Their minds need to be uplifted, their views of life to be broadened. They need to be aroused from the lethargy of worldly dreaming.” –*Education*, p. 183.

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

4. What will the people of God do when they are fully aware of the signs of the times? Isaiah 40:3.

“As a people we must prepare the way of the Lord under the overruling guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is to be given in its purity. The stream of living water is to deepen and widen in its course. ...Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 96.

5. What are we urged to do in addition to preparing the way of the Lord? Amos 4:12; Matthew 24:44.

“The coming of Christ is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. The judgments of God are in the land. They speak in solemn warning, saying: ‘Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.’ Matthew 24:44.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 252.

“Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar – self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory. Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where no thief can approach or rust corrupt. Ye must be partakers of Christ’s sufferings here if ye would be partakers with Him of His glory hereafter.” –*Early Writings*, pp. 66, 67.

6. As the period of grace comes to an end, how must we view the talents that God entrusted to us for the salvation of souls? 2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Corinthians 1:5-8.

“I saw that we should not put off the coming of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘Prepare, prepare, for what is coming upon the earth. Let your works correspond with your faith.’ I saw that the mind must be stayed upon God, and that our influence should tell for God and His truth. We cannot honor the Lord when we are careless and indifferent. We cannot glorify Him when we are desponding. We must be in earnest to secure our own soul’s salvation, and to save others. All importance should be attached to this, and everything besides should come in secondary.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 123.

NO SECOND PROBATION

7. What is significant about God’s grace? 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2; Hebrews 9:27.

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

“When probation ends, it will come suddenly, unexpectedly—at a time when we are least expecting it. But we can have a clean record in heaven today, and know that God accepts us; and finally, if faithful, we shall be gathered into the kingdom of heaven (MS 95, 1906).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989.

“The message presented at this time is the last message of mercy for a fallen world. Those who have the privilege of hearing this message, and who persist in refusing to heed the warning, cast away their last hope of salvation. There will be no second probation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 19.

FOR MEDITATION

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold, and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying

the truth,—these are receiving the heavenly mold, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216.

“It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 215, 216.

2

Sabbath, January 9, 2010

REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS NEAR

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” Matthew 3:2.

GOD DOES NOT TARRY

- 1. How is the Day of the Lord described in the prophecies? Psalm 50:3; Zephaniah 1:14, 15.**
- 2. What is God doing at this important hour of history? Habakkuk 2:3; 2 Peter 3:9.**

“When these things are dwelt upon as they should be, scoffers will be developed who walk after their own lusts, saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ But ‘when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.’ ‘But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.’

Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 10.

“God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish; but His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 946.

3. Why are we called to repentance? Acts 17:30; Matthew 4:17; Matthew 3:2.

“It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, ‘What shall we do?’ The first word of Peter’s answer was, ‘Repent.’ Acts 2:37, 38. At another time, shortly after, he said, ‘Repent,... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.’ Acts 3:19.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

TRUE REPENTANCE

4. What is true repentance? 2 Corinthians 7:8, 9; Proverbs 28:13.

“Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

“Who is desirous of becoming truly repentant? What must he do? He must come to Jesus, just as he is, without delay. He must believe that the word of Christ is true, and, believing the promise, ask, that he may receive. When sincere desire prompts men to pray, they will not pray in vain. The Lord will fulfill His word, and will give the Holy Spirit to lead to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He will pray and watch, and put away his sins, making manifest his sincerity by the vigor of his endeavor to obey the commandments of God. With prayer he will mingle faith, and not only believe in but obey the precepts of the law. He will announce himself as on Christ’s side of the question. He will renounce all habits and associations that tend to draw the heart from God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 393.

5. How does repentance come about? Jeremiah 13:23; Romans 2:4; Revelation 3:19.

“We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 189.

“Repentance comes from Christ as truly as does pardon.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

“Because Christ bears this rebuking testimony, shall we suppose that He is destitute of tender love to His people? Oh, no! He who died to redeem man from death, loves with a divine love, and those whom He loves He rebukes. ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.’ But many will not receive the message that Heaven in mercy sends them. They cannot endure to be told of their neglect of duty and of their wrongs, their selfishness, their pride and love of the world.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 257, 258.

NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED

6. As we are seeking sanctification, what promises are especially important to us? 1 John 1:9; 4:14-16.

“If you are condemned, there is but one course for you to pursue: you must repent toward God because of the transgression of His law, and have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ as the one who only can cleanse from sin. If we would obtain heaven, we must be obedient to God’s holy requirements. Those who strive lawfully will not strive in vain. Only believe the truth as it is in Jesus, and you will be strengthened for the battle with the powers of darkness. The wrestlers of old strove to obtain a perishable crown, and should we not strive to win the crown that fadeth not away?” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 317, 318.

WORKS OF REPENTANCE

7. What will repentance produce? Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20.

“At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen.” –*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the

conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 555, 556.

FOR MEDITATION

“If we would be saved at last we must all learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross. Christ suffered humiliation to save us from everlasting disgrace. He consented to have scorn, mockery, and abuse fall upon Him in order to shield us. It was our transgression that gathered the veil of darkness about His divine soul and extorted the cry from Him, as of one smitten and forsaken of God. He bore our sorrows; He was put to grief for our sins. He made Himself an offering for sin, that we might be justified before God through Him. Everything noble and generous in man will respond to the contemplation of Christ upon the cross.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 240.

3

Sabbath, January 16, 2010

THE LORD ASKS TO REFORM OUR LIFE

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

TRUE REFORMATION IS A REFORMATION OF THE HEART

1. Where does reformation begin? Proverbs 23:26.

“Circumstances cannot work reforms. Christianity proposes a reformation in the heart. What Christ works within, will be worked out under the dictation of a converted intellect. The plan of beginning outside and trying to work inward has always failed, and always will fail. God’s plan

with you is to begin at the very seat of all difficulties, the heart, and then from out of the heart will issue the principles of righteousness; the reformation will be outward as well as inward.” *—Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 35.

“It is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this bad habit or that bad habit and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart....” *—God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 223.

2. How does true reformation come about? Jeremiah 2:22; Psalm 139:23, 24.

“A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.” *—Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 128.

“Apart from divine power, no genuine reform can be effected. Human barriers against natural and cultivated tendencies are but as the sand-bank against the torrent. Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without.” *—Ministry of Healing*, p. 130.

3. What areas of life are especially significant? Romans 13:11-14.

“We are living in a solemn time amid the closing scenes of this earth’s history, and God’s people are not awake. They must arouse and make greater progress in reforming their habits of living, in eating, in dressing, in laboring and resting. In all these they should glorify God and be prepared to give battle to our great foe and to enjoy the precious victories which God has in reserve for those who are exercising temperance in all things while striving for an incorruptible crown.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 618.

OUR FOOD

- 4. Why do appetites and passions need to be brought under the control of the higher mental powers? Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31.**

“All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable us to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God’s word. For this reason temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ’s second coming.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 101.

OUR APPEARANCE

- 5. How does one’s outward appearance and manner portray his profession of faith? Exodus 33:5, 6; 1 Peter 3:3, 4; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10.**

“All that we urge is compliance with the injunctions of God’s word. Are we Bible readers and followers of Bible teachings? Will we obey God, or conform to the customs of the world? Will we serve God or mammon? Can we expect to enjoy peace of mind and the approval of God while walking directly contrary to the teachings of His word?” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 644.

“On Sunday the popular churches appear more like a theater than a place for the worship of God. Every style of fashionable dress is displayed there. ...

“How, thought I, can Jesus regard that company, with their display of ornaments and extravagant dress? What dishonor is shown to the house of God! Were Christ upon earth, and should He visit such churches, would He not drive out those desecrators of His Father’s house?” –*Ibid.*, pp. 642, 643.

- 6. What does the apostle Paul beseeches us to do? Romans 12:1, 2.**

“As we see the love of fashion and display among those who profess to believe present truth, we sadly ask, Will the people of God learn nothing from the history of the past? There are few who understand their own hearts. The vain and trifling lovers of fashion may claim to be followers of Christ; but their dress and conversation show what occupies the mind and engages the affections. Their lives betray their friendship for the world, and it claims them as its own.” —*Messages to Young People*, pp. 354, 355.

“Those among Sabbathkeepers who have been unwilling to make any sacrifice, but have yielded to the influence of the world, are to be tested and proved. The perils of the last days are upon us, and a trial is before the young which they have not anticipated. They are to be brought into most distressing perplexity. The genuineness of their faith will be proved. They profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man, yet some of them have been a miserable example to unbelievers. They have not been willing to give up the world, but have united with them, have attended picnics and other gatherings of pleasure, flattering themselves that they were engaging in innocent amusement. Yet I was shown that it is just such indulgences that separate them from God and make them children of the world. God does not own the pleasure seeker as His follower. He has given us no such example. Those only who are self-denying, and who live a life of sobriety, humility, and holiness, are true followers of Jesus; and such cannot engage in and enjoy the frivolous, empty conversation of the lovers of the world.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 269.

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

7. What other area of life needs to be examined and placed under God’s mighty hand? Malachi 3:7-10.

“It will not be long before probation will close. If you do not now serve the Lord with fidelity, how will you meet the record of your unfaithful dealing? Not long hence, a call will be made for a settlement of accounts, and you will be asked, ‘How much owest thou unto my Lord?’ If you have refused to deal honestly with God, I beseech you to think of your deficiency, and if possible to make restitution. If this cannot be done, in humble penitence pray that God for Christ’s sake will pardon your great debt. Begin now to act like Christians. Make no excuse for failing to give the Lord His own. Now, while mercy’s sweet voice is still heard, while it is not yet too late for wrongs to be righted, while it is called today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 99, 100.

FOR MEDITATION

“Let us not spare ourselves, but carry forward in earnest the work of reform that must be done in our lives. Let us crucify self. Unholy habits will clamor for the mastery, but in the name and through the power of Jesus we may conquer. To him who daily seeks to keep his heart with all diligence, the promise is given, ‘Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 8:38, 39).” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 223.

4

Sabbath, January 23, 2010

CRUCIFY SELF

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

SELF MUST DIE

- 1. What should be our daily prayer? If we crucify self, who will live in us? Psalm 51:10-12; Galatians 2:20.**

“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

“We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view.” —*Early Writings*, p. 67.

“The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means

a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ, revealed in the life, testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 166.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

2. What will we receive when we surrender our natural, wayward heart? Ezekiel 36:25, 26.

“It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. However bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet ‘it is profitable for thee.’” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 62.

SELF MUST BE HIDDEN

3. What principle of Jesus’ forerunner will also be applied in the life and work of every faithful child of God? John 3:30; 1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

“In . . . [our] work for the Master, self is [to be] hid. The language of the heart is, He must increase; I must decrease. . . . The love of self dies, the love of Jesus burns upon the altar of the soul. There is no spirit for low, common, self-seeking, or worldly ambition, because we are living in His presence, doing His work, and are in contact with Jesus Christ and His life. His character and His work are all-absorbing. The life imperceptibly becomes one with Christ as He was one with the Father. The truth and light and life are interwoven with life and character, and the aspirations are elevated, pure, unselfish, after the order of heaven. . . .” –*The Upward Look*, p. 296.

4. How is it possible for us to work as Jesus did? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

“The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. Self is in need of being crucified. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere (Letter 97, 1898).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1100, 1101.

“In order for us to work as Christ worked, self must be crucified. It is a painful death; but it is life, life to the soul.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 125.

AS CHRIST

5. How can we overcome self-righteousness? Matthew 21:44.

“They must fall who would rise again. We must fall upon the Rock and be broken before we can be uplifted in Christ. Self must be dethroned; pride must be humbled, if we would know the glory of the spiritual kingdom.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 56.

“To fall upon the Rock and be broken is to give up our self-righteousness and to go to Christ with the humility of a child, repenting of our transgressions, and believing in His forgiving love. And so also it is by faith and obedience that we build on Christ as our foundation.” —*Ibid.*, p. 599.

“Faith, living faith, we must have, a faith that works by love and purifies the soul. We must learn to take everything to the Lord with simplicity and earnest faith. The greatest burden we have to bear in this life is self. Unless we learn in the school of Christ to be meek and lowly, we shall miss precious opportunities and privileges for becoming acquainted with Jesus. Self is the most difficult thing we have to manage. In laying off burdens, let us not forget to lay self at the feet of Christ.” —*Mind, Character and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 540, 541.

6. If we are clothed with Christ’s righteousness, how will we go forward? 1 John 2:5, 6.

“Our notions, our peculiarities, are wholly human and must not be humored or indulged. Self is to be crucified, not now and then but daily, and the physical, mental, and spiritual must be subordinate to the will of God. The glory of God, the perfection of Christian character, is to be the aim, the purpose, of our life. Christ’s followers must imitate Christ in disposition. . . . Like Christ is the watchword, not like your father or your mother, but like Jesus Christ—hid in Christ, clothed with Christ’s righteousness, imbued with the Spirit of Christ.” *–Ibid.*, p. 644.

BEARING OUR CROSS

7. What must those who want to follow Jesus bear? Mark 8:34, 35.

“Give up your self-confidence and self-sufficiency, brethren, and follow the meek Pattern. Ever keep Jesus in your mind that He is your example and you must tread in His footsteps. Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He for our sins was once the meek, slain lamb, wounded, bruised, smitten, and afflicted.

“Let us, then, cheerfully suffer something for Jesus’ sake, crucify self daily, and be partakers of Christ’s sufferings here, that we may be made partakers with Him of His glory, and be crowned with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.” *–Early Writings*, pp. 113, 114.

SELF MUST BE CRUCIFIED BEFORE CHRIST’S SECOND COMING

8. Why is it so important to give ourselves to God while there is still time? Revelation 22:11.

“You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified. The time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified; and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God’s people in earnest, the everlasting arms are around you. The angels of God make a wall of fire around about and deliver you.

“All your self-crucifixion will not do any good then. It must be [done] before the destiny of souls is decided. It is now that self is to be crucified—when there is work to do; It is now that we are to empty and thoroughly cleanse the vessel of its impurity. It is now that we are to be made

holy unto God. This is our work, this very moment. ...I give myself to God today. . . .

“Are you ready to make the surrender now? You are to put away your sin right now when you see it. . . . Do not make leeway [that] you are going to overcome by degrees; you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation and harden not your hearts.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 283.

FOR MEDITATION

“I saw that some hardly know as yet what self-denial or sacrifice is, or what it is to suffer for the truth’s sake. But none will enter heaven without making a sacrifice. A spirit of self-denial and sacrifice should be cherished. Some have not sacrificed themselves, their own bodies, on the altar of God. They indulge in hasty, fitful temper, gratify their appetites, and attend to their own self-interest, regardless of the cause of God. Those who are willing to make any sacrifice for eternal life, will have it; and it will be worth suffering for, worth crucifying self for, and sacrificing every idol for.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 126.

5

Sabbath, January 30, 2010

WORK OUT OUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12.

“We have each an individual work to do in denying self and in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 49.

PURSUING PEACE

- 1. What peace does Jesus want to give us and how can we obtain it? John 14:27.**

“Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.

2. If we have heavenly peace while united with Christ, what kind of influence will we have? What will characterize those who have Jesus in their hearts? Matthew 5:9; James 3:18; Romans 12:18.

“The path of the upright is the path of peace. It is so plain that the humble, God-fearing man can walk in it without stumbling and without making crooked paths. It is a narrow path; but men of different temperaments can walk side by side if they but follow the Captain of their salvation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 502, 503.

“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ.” —*Mind, Character and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 501.

“The only power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Christ. When this is implanted in the heart, it will cast out the evil passions that cause strife and dissension.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 305.

PURSUING SANCTIFICATION

3. What is sanctification? Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15, 16.

“The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 384.

4. How can we be sanctified? John 17:17.

“True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection. Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 565.

“Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ... Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience.” —*Ibid.*, pp. 560, 561.

PURSUING CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

5. How can we receive the divine nature? 2 Peter 1:5-8.

“The Scriptures plainly show that the work of sanctification is progressive. When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to ‘go on unto perfection;’ to grow up ‘unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’ Says the apostle Paul: ‘This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ Philippians 3:13, 14.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 470.

GROWING WITHOUT CEASING

6. What will make it possible for us to grow in all things in Him who is the head, Christ? Philippians 3:12; Colossians 1:10.

“Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained.

“Philippians 3:12: ‘Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1, p. 340.

“Everyone who has a realizing sense of what it means to be a Christian, will purify himself from everything that weakens and defiles. All the habits of his life will be brought into harmony with the requirements of the Word of truth, and he will not only believe, but will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, while submitting to the molding of the Holy Spirit.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 382.

BEING SANCTIFIED WHILE JESUS STILL INTERCEDES FOR US

7. How will His children be found at the second coming of our Lord? 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

“The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness. He is without a spot of guilt upon the conscience, or a taint of corruption upon the soul. The spirituality of the law of God, with its limiting principles, is brought into his life. The light of truth irradiates his understanding. A glow of perfect love for the Redeemer clears away the miasma which has interposed between his soul and God. The will of God has become his will, pure, elevated, refined, and sanctified. His countenance reveals the light of heaven. His body is a fit temple for the Holy Spirit. Holiness adorns his character. God can commune with him; for soul and body are in harmony with God (Letter 139, 1898).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 909.

8. Waiting the appearing of our Saviour, what should be our constant interest? 2 Peter 3:14.

“We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.

“We embrace the truth of God with our different faculties, and as we come under the influence of that truth, it will accomplish the work for us which is necessary to give us a moral fitness for the kingdom of glory and for the society of the heavenly angels.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 355.

FOR MEDITATION

“The Christian life is constantly an onward march. Jesus sits as a refiner and purifier of His people; and when His image is perfectly reflected in them, they are perfect and holy, and prepared for translation. A great work is required of the Christian. We are exhorted to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Here we see where the great labor rests. There is a constant work for the Christian. Every branch in the parent vine must derive life and strength from that vine, in order to yield fruit.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 340.

6

Sabbath, February 6, 2010

BEARING FRUIT TO THE GLORY OF GOD

“Our words, our actions, are the fruit we bear.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 416.

ABIDING IN CHRIST

- 1. What alone makes it possible for us to bear the heavenly fruit? John 15:4.**

“As the branch must abide in the vine to obtain the vital sap which causes it to flourish, so those who love God and keep all His sayings must

abide in His love. Without Christ we cannot subdue a single sin or overcome the smallest temptation.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 355.

“‘Herein is My Father glorified,’ said Jesus, ‘that ye bear much fruit.’ God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. ...The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

PRODUCING FRUIT

2. What does it mean to produce fruit? Matthew 3:8; Isaiah 1:17.

“What is it to bear fruit? It is not all comprised in coming to meeting once a week, and bearing our testimony in prayer or social meeting. We are to be found day by day abiding in the Vine, and bringing forth fruit, with patience, at our home, in our business; and in every relation in life manifesting the Spirit of Christ. There are many who act as though they thought an occasional connection with Christ was all that was necessary, and that they can be accounted living branches because at times they make confession of Christ. But this is a fallacy. The branch is to be grafted into the Vine, and to abide there, uniting itself to the Vine fiber by fiber, drawing its daily supply of sap and nourishment from the root and fatness of the Vine, until it becomes one with the parent stock. The sap that nourishes the Vine must nourish the branch and this will be evident in the life of him who is abiding in Christ; for the joy of Christ will be fulfilled in him who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1144.

3. What fruit does the Christian tree produce? Galatians 5:22.

“I speak to our people. If you draw close to Jesus and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from straying into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If

you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God; and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. If Christ be within us, we shall crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.” —*The Adventist Home*, pp. 338, 339.

GLORIFYING GOD BY PRODUCING MUCH FRUIT

4. By whom and for whose glory is all fruit produced? John 15:8; Philippians 1:11.

“There is work for you to do in the church and out of the church. ‘Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.’ The fruit we bear is the only test of the character of the tree before the world. This is the proof of our discipleship. If our works are of such a character that as branches of the living Vine we bear rich clusters of precious fruit, then we wear before the world God’s own badge as His sons and daughters. We are living epistles, known and read of all men.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 348.

“All the true followers of Christ bear fruit to His glory. Their lives testify that a good work has been wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and their fruit is unto holiness. Their lives are elevated and pure. Right actions are the unmistakable fruit of true godliness....” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 377.

5. What is necessary so the branch can produce more fruit? John 15:2, second part; Malachi 3:3.

“Jesus with solemn tenderness explained the purpose of the husbandman. The pruning will cause pain, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart. There are branches trailing upon the ground; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which their tendrils are fastening. They are to reach heavenward, and find their support in God. The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The overgrowth must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The husbandman prunes away the harmful growth, that the fruit may be richer and more abundant.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

A TESTIMONY FOR OTHERS

6. What is obvious when one bears heavenly fruit? Matthew 7:16-20.

“There must be no defects in our character, not one. Every spot and wrinkle must be effaced by the blood of the Lamb. Our own peculiar traits of character will disappear when the transforming power of the grace of God is felt upon our hearts. The fruits we bear in patience, kindness, forbearance, and self-denial will testify of us that we have learned of Jesus.

“The fruit of the tree testifies if it is a good or corrupt tree. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruits ye shall know them. Let us so speak and so labor that our fruit may be unto righteousness and we letting our light shine forth in good works. Profession is nothing. A godly life alone will God approve.

...

“The great desire in this age of the world is for more power. I want more grace, more love, [a] more deep and earnest living experience.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 154.

7. What danger is there if we do not hide in Christ? John 15:2, first part; John 15:6.

“While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

“If we do not bear any fruit, the powers of darkness take possession of our minds, our affections, our service, and we are of the world, though we profess to be children of God. This is neither a safe nor a pleasant position, because we lose all the beauty and the glory and the satisfaction that it is our privilege to have.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1143.

FOR MEDITATION

“...but to all who believe, he is as the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God. His branches reach to this world, that the blessings which he has purchased for us may be brought within our reach. ... He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the Tree of Life. From this tree we may pluck and eat, and we may then guide others to it, that they also may eat.” —*The Signs of the Times*, October 22, 1896.

“The man who loves God meditates on the law of God day and night. He is instant in season and out of season. He bears the fruit of a branch vitally connected with the Vine. As he has opportunity, he does good; and everywhere, at all times and in all places, he finds opportunity to work for God. He is one of the Lord’s evergreen-trees; and he carries fragrance with him wherever he goes. A wholesome atmosphere surrounds his soul. The beauty of his well-ordered life and godly conversation inspires faith and hope and courage in others. This is Christianity in practise. Seek to be an ever-green-tree. Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Cherish the grace of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness. This is the fruit of the Christian tree. Planted by the rivers of water, it always brings forth its fruit in due season.” —*The Review and Herald*, August 24, 1897.

7

Sabbath, February 13, 2010

FOLLOW JESUS ON THE NARROW PATH

“The steps to heaven must be taken one at a time; and every advance step gives strength for the next.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 182.

GOING TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

- 1. What is the only path leading to heaven? John 14:6; Isaiah 30:21.**

“There are not many ways to heaven. Each one may not choose his own way. Christ says, ‘I am the way: . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.’ Since the first gospel sermon was preached, when in Eden it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, Christ had been uplifted as the way, the truth, and the life. He was the way when Adam lived, when Abel presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of the Redeemer. Christ was the way by which patriarchs and prophets were saved. He is the way by which alone we can have access to God.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

“But when we accept Christ, good works will appear as fruitful evidence that we are in the way of life, that Christ is our way, and that we are treading the true path that leads to heaven.” –*Faith and Works*, p. 102.

2. What do we bear while following Jesus? Matthew 16:24.

“The cross lifts you up from the lowlands of earth, and brings you into sweetest communion with God. Through bearing the cross your experience may be such that you can say, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth,’ and because ‘He lives, I shall live also.’ What an assurance is this!” (MS 85, 1901)” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1095.

“Those who would gain the blessing of sanctification must first learn the meaning of self-sacrifice. The cross of Christ is the central pillar on which hangs the ‘far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ ‘If any man will come after Me,’ Christ says, ‘let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’ 2 Corinthians 4:17; Matthew 16:24. It is the fragrance of our love for our fellow men that reveals our love for God. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toil that the welfare of Israel is promoted. God upholds and strengthens the one who is willing to follow in Christ’s way.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 560.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PATH AND FOLLOWING IT

3. Among how many paths may we choose? Matthew 7:13, 14; Jeremiah 21:8; Psalm 139:23, 24.

“The cross stands where two roads diverge. One is the path of obedience leading to heaven. The other leads into the broad road, where man can easily go with his burden of sin and corruption, but it leads to perdition (MS 50, 1898).” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1095, 1096.

4. How did Jesus walk in the path of self-denial, and how is that reflected in the lives of His saints? 2 Corinthians 5:7; Revelation 14:12.

“Those who travel in the narrow way are talking of the joy and happiness they will have at the end of the journey. Their countenances are often sad, yet often beam with holy, sacred joy. They do not dress like the company in the broad road, or talk like them, or act like them. A Pattern has been given them. A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief opened that road for them, and traveled it Himself. His followers see His footsteps and are comforted and cheered. He went through safely; so can they, if they follow His footsteps.”

“The path that leads to eternal day is not the easiest to travel, and at times it will seem dark and thorny. But you have the assurance that God’s everlasting arms encircle you, to protect you from evil. He wants you to exercise earnest faith in Him, and learn to trust Him in the shadow as well as in the sunshine.” *—Messages to Young People*, pp. 126, 102.

THE PATH OF THE JUST

5. What characterizes the path of the just and what is needed to walk in that path? Proverbs 4:18; Psalm 84:11.

“The path of the just is progressive, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. The divine illumination will increase more and more, corresponding with our onward movements, qualifying us to meet the responsibilities and emergencies before us.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 542.

“We may make daily progress in the upward path to holiness and yet we find still greater heights to be reached; but every stretch of the spiritual muscles, every taxation of heart and brain, brings to light the abundance of the supply of grace essential for us as we advance. ...

“We are living in the day of preparation. We must obtain a full supply of grace from the divine storehouse. The Lord has made provision for every day’s demand.” *—God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 181.

LIGHT ON OUR PATH

6. What lights our path so we do not walk in darkness? John 8:12; Psalm 119:105.

“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.” *—Ibid.*, p. 201.

“As we near the end of time, falsehood will be so mingled with truth, that only those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to distinguish truth from error. We need to make every effort to keep the way of the Lord. We must in no case turn from His guidance to put our trust in man. The Lord’s angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness (MS 43, 1907).” *—Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 907.

SPRINGS OF JOY ON OUR PATH

7. Do the tribulations we meet on the road to heaven have to make us unhappy? Psalm 16:11; James 1:2.

“And all the way up the steep road leading to eternal life are well-springs of joy to refresh the weary. Those who walk in wisdom’s ways are, even in tribulation, exceeding joyful; for He whom their soul loveth, walks, invisible, beside them. At each upward step they discern more distinctly the touch of His hand; at every step brighter gleamings of glory from the Unseen fall upon their path; and their songs of praise, reaching ever a higher note, ascend to join the songs of angels before the throne.” *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 140.

FOR MEDITATION

“Christ has placed upon His church a sacred charge, the fulfilling of which calls for self-denial at every step. When those who believe in Him are seen lifting the cross and bearing it after Him in the path of self-denial, willingly doing all in their power to bring blessing to those for whom Christ died, witness will be borne to the power of Christianity, and in the hearts of many now unbelievers will spring up faith in Him who gave His life to save a guilty world from eternal ruin.” (Letter 43, March 6, 1903, to Lucinda Hall, one of Ellen White’s closest friends.) *—The Upward Look*, p. 79.

WATCH, WORK AND PRAY

“There are three watchwords in the Christian life, which must be heeded if we would not have Satan steal a march upon us; namely, Watch, pray, work.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 283.

WATCHING

- 1. What counsel do we find in the Holy Scriptures in regard to being able to stand when the Lord appears? Matthew 24:42; Luke 21:36. Why is it so necessary to be watchful? Matthew 26:41; James 1:12.**

“God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 114.

- 2. What do we risk if we do not watch? 1 Peter 5:8, 9; Revelation 12:17.**

“He who overcomes must watch; for, with worldly entanglements, error, and superstition, Satan strives to win Christ’s followers from Him. It is not enough that we avoid glaring dangers and perilous, inconsistent moves. We are to keep close to the side of Christ, walking in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. We are in an enemy’s country. He who was cast out of heaven has come down with great power. With every conceivable artifice and device he is seeking to take souls captive. Unless we are constantly on guard we shall fall an easy prey to his unnumbered deceptions.” —*Ibid.*, p. 332.

WORKING

3. What commission did Jesus give to his disciples in every age? Can we thus hasten the return of our Lord? Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14.

“Let the warning be given them before it is too late. We should now feel the responsibility of laboring with intense earnestness to impart to others the truths that God has given for this time. We cannot be too much in earnest.

“The heart of God is moved. Souls are very precious in His sight. It was for this world that Christ wept in agony; for this world He was crucified. God gave His only-begotten Son to save sinners, and He desires us to love others as He has loved us. He desires to see those who have a knowledge of the truth imparting this knowledge to their fellow men.

“Now is the time for the last warning to be given. There is a special power in the presentation of the truth at the present time; but how long will it continue? Only a little while. If there was ever a crisis, it is now.

“All are now deciding their eternal destiny. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The third angel is to go forth with great power. Let none ignore this work or treat it as of little importance.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 16.

4. The Lord gives one or more talents to his disciples. Examine your own talents and how you are using them to benefit those for whom the Lord gave His life. 1 Corinthians 15:58.

“We are waiting and watching for the grand and awful scene which will close up this earth’s history. But we are not simply to be waiting; we are to be vigilantly working with reference to this solemn event. The living church of God will be waiting, watching, and working. None are to stand in a neutral position. All are to represent Christ in active, earnest effort to save perishing souls.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 163.

“The work is before us; will we engage in it? We must work fast, we must go steadily forward. We must be preparing for the great day of the Lord. We have no time to lose, no time to be engaged in selfish purposes. The world is to be warned. What are we doing as individuals to bring the

light before others? God has left to every man his work; every one has a part to act, and we cannot neglect this work except at the peril of our souls.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 126.

“Christ calls upon us to labor patiently and perseveringly for the thousands perishing in their sins, scattered in all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore. Those who share in Christ’s glory must share also in His ministry, helping the weak, the wretched, and the despondent.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 31.

5. Is it safe to put off our work until some later time? John 9:4; Matthew 24:46.

“We have no time to lose. The end is near. The passage from place to place to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left. Everything will be placed to obstruct the way of the Lord’s messengers, so that they will not be able to do that which it is possible for them to do now. We must look our work fairly in the face and advance as fast as possible in aggressive warfare. From the light given me of God I know that the powers of darkness are working with intense energy from beneath, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do; but soon it will be more difficult than we can imagine. God help us to keep in the channel of light, to work with our eyes fastened on Jesus our Leader, and patiently, perseveringly press on to gain the victory.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 22.

“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.’” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 167.

“Probationary time will not permit of long-protracted years of drill. God calls; hear His voice as He says, ‘Go work today in My vineyard.’ Matthew 21:28. Now, just now, is the time to work. . . .” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 415.

PRAYING

6. Prayer was a necessity and a privilege for Jesus. If the Saviour of humanity felt the need of prayer, what should we feel about the necessity of steadfast and fervent prayer? Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

"In the work of heart-keeping we must be instant in prayer, unwearied in petitioning the throne of grace for assistance. Those who take the name of Christian should come to God in earnestness and humility, pleading for help. The Saviour has told us to pray without ceasing. The Christian can not always be in the position of prayer, but his thoughts and desires can always be upward. Our self-confidence would vanish, did we talk less and pray more." –*The Youth's Instructor*, March 5, 1903.

"God in his providence does not permit us to know the end from the beginning; but he gives us the light of his word to guide us as we pass along, and bids us to keep our minds stayed upon Jesus. Wherever we are, whatever our employment, our hearts are to be uplifted to God in prayer. This is being instant in prayer. We need not wait until we can bow upon our knees, before we pray." –*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 144.

7. Knowing that the devil is walking about seeking to devour everyone, do we really believe that the prayer of faith is a weapon capable of successfully thwarting every assault of the enemy so we can honor the Son of man? Luke 21:36.

"The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. ...

"He does not leave His people to be overcome by Satan's temptations. ... To those who call upon Him for strength for the development of Christian character, He will give all needed help.

"God's faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with Him. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could the eyes of God's children be opened... they would see angels of God encamped about them, holding in check the hosts of darkness." –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 589, 590.

FOR MEDITATION

"While we must often impress the mind with the fact that the Christian life is a life of warfare, that we must watch and pray and toil, that there is peril to the soul in relaxing the spiritual vigilance for one moment, the completeness of the salvation proffered us from Jesus who loves us and gave Himself that we should not perish but have everlasting life, is to be the theme." –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 182.

PUT ON CHRIST'S ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

“This robe, Christ’s own spotless character, is freely offered to every human being. But all who receive it will receive and wear it here.” —*Education*, p. 249.

THE ROBE OF CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. What does it mean to be clothed with Christ’s righteousness? Revelation 16:15.

“When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312.

2. What does the Faithful and True Witness counsel us to do? Revelation 3:18.

“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. ‘I counsel thee,’ He says, ‘to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.’ Rev. 3:18.

“This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. ‘All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.’ Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God ‘was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.’” —*Ibid.*, p. 311.

“The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 88.

3. When is the time to put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness? Revelation 16:15.

“There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness. This is our only opportunity to form characters for the home which Christ has made ready for those who obey His commandments.

“The days of our probation are fast closing. The end is near. To us the warning is given, ‘Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.’ Luke 21:34. Beware lest it find you unready. Take heed lest you be found at the King’s feast without a wedding garment.

“In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.’ ‘Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.’ Matt. 24:44; Rev. 16:15.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 319.

CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE ROBE OF CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS

4. Why is it so important to abandon sin? Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9, 10.

“When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the sufferings of the Son of God.” –*The Review and Herald*, March 18, 1890.

“But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” –*The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1890.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 555, 556.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT JUSTIFY US IS IMPUTED

AND GIVES US THE RIGHT TO ENTER HEAVEN

5. Who alone can cleanse man of all unrighteousness and give him righteousness? Zachariah 3:1-5.

“As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, ‘Take away the filthy garments,’ and the encouraging words are spoken, ‘Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.’ Zechariah 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb’s book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A ‘fair mitre’ is set upon their heads.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 591.

“Through His sacrifice, human beings may reach the high ideal set before them, and hear at last the words, ‘Ye are complete in him,’ not having your own righteousness, but the righteousness that He wrought out for you. Your imperfection is no longer seen; for you are clothed with the robe of Christ’s perfection (MS 125, 1902).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 907.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

6. Can anyone who wishes to participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb provide his own garment? Matthew 22:11; Revelation 19:8, 9.

“The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny

of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given 'that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,' 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Rev. 19:8; Eph. 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, 'is the righteousness of saints.' Rev. 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour." –*Ibid.*, p. 310.

"It is impossible for man to save himself. He may deceive himself in regard to this matter, but he cannot save himself. Christ's righteousness alone can avail for his salvation, and this is the gift of God. This is the wedding garment in which you may appear as a welcome guest at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let faith take hold of Christ without delay, and you will be a new creature in Jesus, a light to the world." –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 331.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS BY WHICH WE ARE SANCTIFIED

IS IMPARTED AND MAKES US ABLE TO LIVE IN HEAVEN

7. What is the privilege of those whose robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb? Revelation 22:14; Revelation 3:4 (second part); Revelation 3:5, 7:13, 14.

"All who are found worthy to be counted as the members of the family of God in heaven, will recognize one another as sons and daughters of God. They will realize that they all receive their strength and pardon from the same source, even from Jesus Christ who was crucified for their sins. They know that they are to wash their robes of character in His blood, to find acceptance with the Father in His name, if they would be in the bright assembly of the saints, clothed in the white robes of righteousness." –*Ibid.*, p. 259.

"And they were [the 144 000] all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, 'You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in.' We all marched in and felt that we had a perfect right in the city." –*Early Writings*, pp. 16, 17.

FOR MEDITATION

“Every true turning to the Lord brings abiding joy into the life. When a sinner yields to the influence of the Holy Spirit, he sees his own guilt and defilement in contrast with the holiness of the great Searcher of hearts. He sees himself condemned as a transgressor. But he is not, because of this, to give way to despair; for his pardon has already been secured. He may rejoice in the sense of sins forgiven, in the love of a pardoning heavenly Father. It is God’s glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 668.

10

Sabbath, March 6, 2010

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

“We are soldiers of Christ. He is the Captain of our salvation, and we are under His orders and rules. We are to wear His armor; we are to be marshaled only under His banner. . . . We are to keep on the whole armor of God, and work as in view of the universe of heaven.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 37.

LIVING FAITH PROVIDES CONQUERING POWER

- 1. What is needed to endure until the end and to obtain the victory? Hebrews 11:1; Revelation 14:12; Matthew 24:13; 2 Timothy 2:12.**

“It is not enough to believe about Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

“There will be a constant conflict from the time of our determination to serve the God of heaven, until we are delivered out of this present evil world. There is no release from this war. . . .

Let it be war, war, to the end of earth’s history, rather than peace through apostasy and sin. . . . We must ‘fight the good fight of faith,’ if we would ‘lay hold on eternal life’ (1 Tim. 6:12).” –*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 333.

2. What can we overcome through faith? 1 John 5:4.

“It is faith that enables us to look beyond the present, with its burdens and cares, to the great hereafter, where all that now perplexes us shall be made plain. Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God. Faith beholds the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Faith sees the robe and crown prepared for the overcomer, and hears the song of the redeemed.” –*Gospel Workers*, pp. 259, 260.

FIGHTING TO OVERCOME

3. What did the apostle Paul urge Timothy to do? 1 Timothy 6:12.

“God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a constant battle and a march. There is no rest from the warfare. It is by constant, unceasing effort that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. . . .

“It is not enough to merely profess to believe the truth. All the soldiers of the cross of Christ virtually obligate themselves to enter the crusade against the adversary of souls, to condemn wrong and sustain righteousness. But the message of the True Witness reveals the fact that a terrible deception is upon our people, which makes it necessary to come to them with warnings, to break their spiritual slumber, and arouse them to decided action.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 253, 254.

FIGHTING WITH JESUS AT OUR SIDE

4. Against whom do we have to fight? Ephesians 6:12.

“The Christian life is a warfare. But ‘we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places’ (Eph. 6:12). In this conflict of righteousness against unrighteousness we can be successful only by divine aid. Our finite will must be brought into submission to the will of the Infinite; the human will must be blended with the divine. This will bring the Holy Spirit to our aid. . . .” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 196.

“Battles are to be fought every day. A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life. . . . As God’s agents you are to yield yourselves to Him, that He may plan and direct and fight the battle for you, with your cooperation. The Prince of life is at the head of His work. He is to be with you in your daily battle with self, that you may be true to principle; that passion, when warring for the mastery, may be subdued by the grace of Christ; that you come off more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us. Jesus has been over the ground. He knows the power of every temptation. He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger.” —*Ibid.*, p. 36

WRESTLING WITH CHRIST’S WEAPONS

5. What weapons are necessary for the battle? Ephesians 6:13-17.

“Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle with evil. Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is to be ever on guard, striving in Christ’s strength for victory.”

“God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 477, 502.

STRIVING TO OBTAIN PERFECTION

6. Why do we encounter opposition when we want to become like Christ? Do we have to be discouraged? 1 Peter 5:8-10.

“Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God’s law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use. The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency (MS 89, 1903).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1098.

REMEMBERING THE LOVE AND THE POWER OF GOD

7. Since Christ overcame, what fear should we have of the adversary who was defeated at the cross? Revelation 12:10, 11; John 16:33.

“We must talk of the mightiness of Christ. We are utterly powerless to rescue ourselves from the grasp of Satan; but God has appointed a way of escape. The Son of the Highest has strength to fight the battle for us, and ‘through Him that loved us’ we may come off ‘more than conquerors.’...

“...We are one with Jesus. We walk where Christ leads the way; He has power to dispel the dark shadows which Satan casts across our path; and, in place of darkness and discouragement, the sunlight of His glory shines into our hearts.

“Our hope is to be constantly strengthened by the knowledge that Christ is our righteousness. Let our faith rest upon this foundation, for it will stand fast forever. Instead of dwelling upon the darkness of Satan and fearing his power, we should open our hearts to receive light from Christ and to let it shine forth to the world, declaring that He is above all the power of Satan, that His sustaining arm will support all who trust in Him.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 741, 742.

FOR MEDITATION

“Be patient, Christian soldier. Yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come. The night of weary waiting, and watching, and mourning is nearly over. The reward will soon be given; the eternal day will dawn.

There is no time to sleep now,—no time to indulge in useless regrets. He who ventures to slumber now will miss precious opportunities of doing good. We are granted the blessed privilege of gathering sheaves in the great harvest; and every soul saved will be an additional star in the crown of Jesus, our adorable Redeemer. Who is eager to lay off the armor, when by pushing the battle a little longer, he will achieve new victories and gather new trophies for eternity? (*The Review and Herald*, October 25, 1881).” —*Christian Service*, p. 275.

11

Sabbath, March 13, 2010

PRAY FOR THE LATTER RAIN

“At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.” —*Last Days Events*, p. 186.

ANSWERING GOD’S CALL

1. Is it wise to put off our preparation for Christ’s second coming? Hosea 6:3; Hebrews 3:7, 8.

“The third angel’s message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that he may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for his service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil-surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the bless-

ing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892.

2. According to the apostle Peter, what should we do? Why is it so important? 1 Peter 1:14-16.

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” —*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 214.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

3. Why is it so necessary to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Matthew 3:11, 12.

“I beseech the members of every church to seek now for the greatest blessing Heaven can bestow—the Holy Spirit. If in faith you seek for a greater measure of God’s Spirit, you will be constantly taking it in and breathing it out. Daily you will receive a fresh supply. Your everyday experience will be enriched by the rich current of God’s love. Before you lie vast fields of truth, vast sources of power. Let the daily prayer be, ‘Take from us what Thou dost choose to take, but withhold not Thy Holy Spirit from us.’ We must have the gift of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 143.

“For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

“We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door. . . .” —*Last Day Events*, p. 187.

A GREAT AND FEARFUL DAY

4. Who alone will be able to stand in the day of the Lord? Jeremiah 30:7; Joel 2:11, 23.

“As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble,’ they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of his Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attends the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1862.

“We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled. [Isa. 61:11 quoted.] The whole earth is to be filled with the glory of God (*Letter* 151, 1897).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

PREPARING THE WAY

5. As John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord for His first coming, what are we called to do so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit just before His second coming? Isaiah 40:3; Acts 3:19, 20.

“There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God’s people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth. Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God, or shut out His presence from the assemblies of His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, ‘not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts’ (Zech. 4:6).” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 124.

PRAYING WITH FERVOR

6. Prayer is important to receive the latter rain, but is it enough? Zechariah 10:1; Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 13:1.

“We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today.” –*Last Day Events*, p.188.

“Moral darkness, like a funeral pall, covers the earth. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and satanic deceptions are misleading the minds of men. Without the Spirit and power of God it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth.” –*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 219.

“When the labourers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God’s promise will never fail in one jot or tittle.

“Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” –*Last Day Events*, pp. 190, 195.

THE FOUNT OF STRENGTH

7. What conditions made it possible for the Holy Spirit to descend upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost? How does that relate to those who are yearning for the latter rain? Ephesians 4:1-4; Acts 2:1-4.

“After Christ’s ascension, the disciples were gathered together in one place to make humble supplication to God. And after ten days of heart searching and self-examination, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, as though God desired to show His people that it was His prerogative to bless them with the choicest of heaven’s blessings. (*Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902).” –*Evangelism*, p. 698.

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate them-

selves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

FOR MEDITATION

“The time has come when we must expect the Lord to do great things for us. Our efforts must not flag or weaken. We are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Before the work is closed up and the sealing of God’s people is finished, we shall receive the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Angels from heaven will be in our midst. The present is a fitting-up time for heaven when we must walk in full obedience to all the commands of God. (Letter 30, 1907).” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 111.

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Sabbath, March 20, 2010

PREPARE TO RECEIVE THE SEAL OF GOD

“In a little while every one who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him. O that it may be placed upon our foreheads! Who can endure the thought of being passed by when the angel goes forth to seal the servants of God in their foreheads? (*The Review and Herald*, May 28, 1889)” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 969, 970 (1889).

SIGN OF OBEDIENCE AND SANCTIFICATION

- 1. All of the commandments have their importance; however what is especially significant about the fourth? Exodus 20:10, 11; Ezekiel 20:12.**

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 350.

2. Knowing the will of God concerning the Sabbath, what risk do we take if we are careless in our attitude toward it and its observance? Revelation 3:5; 1 Samuel 2:30.

“Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision now to say, Nay, we will not regard the institution of the beast.” –*Early Writings*, p. 67.

“Some will urge that the Lord is not so particular in his requirements; that it is not their duty to keep the Sabbath strictly at so great loss, or to place themselves where they will be brought in conflict with the laws of the land. But here is just where the test is coming, whether we will honor the law of God above the requirements of men. This is what will distinguish between those who honor God and those who dishonor him. Here is where we are to prove our loyalty. The history of God’s dealings with his people in all ages shows that he demands exact obedience.” –*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, pp. 216, 217.

FEAR GOD AND GIVE HIM GLORY

3. In His great love, the Lord is patient with us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance; therefore, what counsel does He give so we can see what separates us from Him? Revelation 3:18, 19.

“We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before

God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 489, 490.

4. What did the angel of Revelation 14:7 proclaim with a loud voice? What will happen to those who would not have given glory to God and will receive the mark of the beast? Malachi 3:1, 2; 4:1, 2.

“I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. . . . Prepare for the judgment, that when Christ shall come, to be admired in all them that believe, you may be among those who will meet Him in peace.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 355.

“In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 107.

THE SEAL OF GOD

5. Who will receive the seal of God? Revelation 7:2, 3; 14:4, 5.

“The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 21, 1895.

“As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ (*The Signs of the Times*, July 18, 1911).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 214.

6. What is promised to every overcomer who receives the seal of God in his forehead? Revelation 3:12; 22:4.

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” *—Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 216.

7. As the sealing time is very short, what does the apostle Peter urge us to do to be among those who are sealed for the kingdom of God? 2 Peter 1:10.

“If we would have the image and superscription of God upon us, we must separate ourselves from all iniquity. We must forsake every evil way, and then we must trust our cases in the hands of Christ. While we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, God will work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure (*The Review and Herald*, March 19, 1889).” *—Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

“Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God or be cut down by the destroying weapons. Already a few drops of God’s wrath have fallen upon the earth; but when the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 212.

FOR MEDITATION

“None who have had the light of truth will enter the city of God as commandment-breakers. His law lies at the foundation of his government in earth and in heaven. If they have knowingly trampled upon and despised his law on the earth, they will not be taken to heaven to do the same work there; there is no change of character when Christ comes.

“The character building is to go on during the hours of probation. Day by day their actions are registered in the books of heaven, and they will, in the great day of God, be rewarded as their works have been. It will then be seen who receives the blessing. ‘Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city’ (Revelation 22:14).” —*Faith and Works*, p. 43.

**Please,
read the Report
from the General Conference
Multi-Media Center on page 59.**

MEET THE LORD

“Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor, and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The provisions of redemption are free to all; the results of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 350.

THE PROMISE OF JESUS’ SECOND COMING

1. What promise of Jesus will soon be reality? John 14:3.

“The object of Christ’s departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. He was going to prepare a place for them, that He might come again, and receive them unto Himself. While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

2. What will we take with us to the celestial mansions? 1Timothy 6:7; Luke 12:20, 21.

“A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve. How important, then, is the development of character in this life.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 332.

“The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300.

SEEING THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

3. What will God's children do when they see the signs of the times happening around them? Luke 21:28.

"The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai...

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious...." *—The Great Controversy*, pp. 640, 641.

4. "Who will ascend to the mountain of the Lord?" Who will abide in His holy place? Psalms 15.

"Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, 'Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?' Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: 'Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.' At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth." *—Early Writings*, p. 16.

TRANSLATION TO HEAVEN

5. What inexpressible joy will the redeemed experience in the solemn moment when they meet their Lord in the air? Isaiah 25:9; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

"Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints...

"The living righteous are changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye.’ At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels ‘gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers’ arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 644, 645.

TO THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

- 6. After ascending seven days to the see of glass, with what words will the Saviour welcome the redeemed to their heavenly home ? What emblems of victory will have they received? Matthew 25:34; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 7:9; Revelation 15:2.**

“Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in. Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere. Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, ‘I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.’ I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb.” –*Early Writings*, pp. 288, 289.

“Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own ‘new name’ (Revelation 2:17), and the inscription, ‘Holiness to the Lord.’ In every hand are placed the victor’s palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 646.

PRESENTED TO THE FATHER

- 7. What treasure will Jesus present to His Father? Hebrews 2:11-13.**

“Now is fulfilled the Saviour’s prayer for His disciples: ‘I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.’ ‘Faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ (Jude 24), Christ presents to the Father the purchase of His blood, declaring: ‘Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given Me.’ ‘Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept.’ Oh, the wonders of redeeming love! the rapture of that hour when the infinite Father, looking upon the ransomed, shall behold His image, sin’ discord banished, its blight removed, and the human once more in harmony with the divine!” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 646.

FOR MEDITATION

“The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. Oh, how glorious it will be to see Him and be welcomed as His redeemed ones! Long have we waited, but our hope is not to grow dim. If we can but see the King in His beauty we shall be forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud: ‘Homeward bound!’ We are nearing the time when Christ will come in power and great glory to take His ransomed ones to their eternal home.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 253.

Special Sabbath School Offering for the General Conference Multi-Media Center

To be read on Sabbath, March 27, 2010

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, April 3, 2010*

The word of the Lord says: “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.” Isaiah 30:8. This Bible verse, together with Habakkuk 2:2—“And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it”—inspired the Adventist pioneers to create the famous chart of the year 1843, with illustrations and graphics that made it easier to preach the message about the soon coming of Christ.

In our time, modern technology has advanced. Computers and Internet connections have become part of life not only in countries with a high living standard but also in Africa and Asia. Audiovisual information is the most powerful source of influence. Multi-media materials have been used by the enemy to influence the human mind in the direction of sin and transgression. But the same means could be successfully used for powerful preaching of the gospel, and to direct the mind to the eternal salvation and the sacrifice of Christ. With this purpose, the General Conference Committee, in their session in 2007, decided that a multi-media center should be created at the General Conference. This center should help all the departments of the General Conference to create audio, video, and other multi-media presentations, which should be available to all our unions, fields, and every single member of the church. Educational programs should be recorded in audio and video format and distributed to our fields and unions, so that every member of the church may obtain courses, education, and Bible instruction for free or at affordable prices.

At the new website of the General Conference, a major portion will contain audio and video recordings of worships, sermons, and educational courses. In this way, not only our members but anybody who might be interested to know our message can easily obtain the necessary information. The final vision of the multi-media center is not only to provide audiovisual mate-

rials for the General Conference departments, but also to develop a permanent broadcasting service on our website, so that the latest news and sermons from the General Conference headquarters and from around the world may be broadcasted. In this way, isolated members and everybody else who so desires can easily be part of our services.

At the same time, well-prepared broadcasting programs can be offered to public radio and television stations, whose owners are willing to contribute to the spreading of the gospel. Radio programs of our own have already been prepared and used in several countries of South America. Television channels in Germany have published programs created by our members and workers. Some radio and TV stations in the United States have expressed their willingness to publish our materials for free.

In order to develop our own multi-media center, we need equipment, which is no longer as expensive today as it used to be in past years. With your donations, small or large, you may contribute to this important branch of God's work and help create new materials to spread the message of Christ and His high moral standard to our members and to the world. Think about the future and the thousands of young people who will enjoy spiritual, uplifting multi-media programs because of your donations.

May God bless every cheerful giver.

-Tzvetan Petkov,
Director of the Multi-Media Center

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the First Half 2010

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING IS VERY NEAR

Second Quarter

INTRODUCTION

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:8.

“Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

“When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live...” Ezekiel 33:1-11.

Regarding the watchmen, the Spirit of prophecy writes, “It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be so susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell sinners of their peril, and point them to the place of safety. Chosen of God, sealed with the blood of consecration, they are to rescue men and women from impending destruction. Faithfully are they to warn their fellowmen of the sure result of transgression, and faithfully are they to safeguard the interest of the church. At no time may they relax their vigilance. Theirs is a work requiring the exercise of every faculty of the being. In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never should they sound one wavering, uncertain note. Not for wages are they to labor, but because they cannot do otherwise, because they realize that there is a woe upon them if they fail to preach the gospel.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 15.

These lessons entail subjects related to the drugs of the enemy of souls through which he has made fall all those who are indifferent and lukewarm regarding the message of the True and Faithful Messenger.

Our wish is that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, these lessons may cause an awakening among sincere and humble souls so that through the blood of our dear Saviour they may make the necessary preparation for the soon second coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven.

—The brothers and sisters of the General Conference

Sabbath, April 3, 2010

THE FOCUS OF OUR FAITH

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:13, 14.

WAITING FOR THE GLORIOUS EVENT

- 1. What great hope should feed the fire of our faith? Has this faith increased or decreased among the Adventist people? How is it in your case? Revelation 22:20; Luke 18:8.**

“The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour’s parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the ‘appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ’ was the ‘blessed hope.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

“Faith in the soon coming of Christ is waning. ‘My Lord delayeth His coming’ is not only said in the heart, but expressed in words and most decidedly in works. Stupidity in this watching time is sealing the senses of God’s people as to the signs of the times. The terrible iniquity which abounds calls for the greatest diligence and for the living testimony, to keep sin out of the church. Faith has been decreasing to a fearful degree, and it is only by exercise that it can increase.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 255, 256.

LUKEWARMNESS AND SENSE OF WEALTH

- 2. What sentence was pronounced upon the once faithful church due to its lukewarmness? Revelation 3:15-16.**

“Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God and a turning to men, putting human in place of divine wisdom.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, 707.

“Their departure from the cause of right is so gradual and imperceptible that it is frequently difficult to tell the time when the change in them took place.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 626.

“I have almost despaired as I have seen, year after year, a greater departure from that simplicity which God has shown me should characterize the life of His followers. There has been less and less interest in, and devotion to, the cause of God. I ask: Wherein have those who profess confidence in the Testimonies sought to live according to the light given in them? Wherein have they regarded the warnings given? Wherein have they heeded the instructions they have received? —*Ibid.*, p. 484.

3. What caused this decrease? What will also happen to him who loses his faith and considers himself wise in his own opinion? Revelation 3:17; Proverbs 26:12; 28:11; Isaiah 5:21.

“What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

“You have repeatedly fallen back again into the same state of indifference and selfishness.... Through the greater part of your professed Christian life you have walked in darkness because you have failed to connect with heaven and receive the pure light of God’s Spirit.

“...You have not been diligent, seeking to gain an advanced experience every day. You should be at this time a trusty man in any position of responsibility, but selfishness has marked the performance of everything you have set your hand to do. You have been wise in your own conceit, but have failed to gain wisdom from the experience of many years.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 189, 190.

**4. Whom alone can the Lord help to grow in every sense?
Psalm 10:17; 147:6; 37:11.**

“The meek ‘shall inherit the earth’. It was through the desire of self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion of this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He deed. Revelation 3:21. Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him when ‘the meek shall inherit the earth.’ Psalm 37:11” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 17.

5. What do fervent and true believers think about themselves, unlike the description in Revelation 3:17? 1 Corinthians 2:1-4; Romans 8:26, 27.

“Heaven is open to our petitions, and we are invited to come ‘boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need’. We are to come in faith, believing that we shall obtain the very things we ask of Him. (ST April 18, 1892)” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1078.

GRIEVED FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR OTHERS

6. Why do they feel, think and act in this way? Luke 18:13; Romans 7:24.

“God imparts His blessing to us, that we may give to others. And so long as we yield ourselves as the channels through which His love can flow, He will keep the channels supplied. When you ask God for your daily bread, He looks right into your heart to see if you will impart the same to others, more needy than yourself. When you pray, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ He watches to see if you will manifest compassion to those with whom you associate. This is the evidence of our connection with God, —that we are merciful even as our Father who is in heaven is merciful.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 164.

7. What are they also greatly interested in? Therefore, what do they do? Ezekiel 9:4.

“The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God...

“It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence from those who have been blessed with great light and who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 211, 212.

2

Sabbath, April 10, 2010

RESISTING THE COMING OF JESUS

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7.

THE ENEMY’S OPPOSITION

- 1. What was already the enemy’s plan when our Savior was born? Whom did he use and how far did this instrument of the enemy go? Revelation 12:4, (second part); Matthew 2:1-18.**

“When Jesus came into the world, Satan’s power was turned against Him. From the time when He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem, the usurper worked to bring about His destruction. In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 759.

“Satan was bent on shutting out the divine light from the world, and he used his utmost cunning to destroy the Saviour.... Craft had failed, but there was left the resort to force. He would make an example of this child-king....

“Soldiers were at once sent to Bethlehem, with orders to put to death all the children of two years and under. The quiet homes of the city of David witnessed those scenes of horror that, six hundred years before, had been opened to the prophet....

“This act of cruelty was one of the last that darkened the reign of Herod. Soon after the slaughter of the innocents, he was himself compelled to yield to that doom which none can turn aside. He died a fearful death.” –*Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66.

SATANIC ATTEMPTS IN THE WILDERNESS

2. Later on, what snares did he use in order to defeat the Saviour in the wilderness? How could the Saviour flee from these satanic snares? Matthew 4:1-10. Who served Him then? Matthew 4:11.

“He knew that everything which concerned his prosperity was depending upon his success or failure in overcoming Christ with his temptations; and he brought to bear on the Saviour every artifice at his command to allure Him from His integrity.

“The fiercest and most inveterate enmity was put between the seed of the woman and the serpent. The serpent himself made Christ the mark of every weapon of hell. . . .

“The life of Christ was a perpetual warfare against satanic agencies. Satan rallied the whole energies of apostasy against the Son of God. The conflict increased in fierceness and malignity, as again and again the prey was taken out of his hands. Satan assailed Christ through every conceivable form of temptation. (*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 29, 1895).” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1079, 1080.

“Jesus met Satan with the words of Scripture. ‘It is written,’ He said. In every temptation the weapon of His warfare was the word of God. Satan demanded of Christ a miracle as a sign of His divinity. But that which is greater than all miracles, a firm reliance upon a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ was a sign that could not be controverted. So long as Christ held to this position, the tempter could gain no advantage.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 120.

“Satan had asked Christ to give him evidence that He was the Son of God, and he had in this instance the proof he had asked. At the divine command of Christ he was compelled to obey. He was repulsed and silenced.

He had no power to enable him to withstand the peremptory dismissal. He was compelled without another word to instantly desist and to leave the world's Redeemer (*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 1, 1874).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1083.

HOW TO FACE ATTACKS

- 3. Are the same conditions valid also for us who are waiting for Jesus' second coming? What do we all need as a church in order to escape his snares that constantly tend to hinder our preparation? 1 Peter 5:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 14:8.**

“Would that every minister might realize the sacredness of his office and the holiness of his work, and show the courage that Elijah showed! As divinely appointed messengers, ministers are in a position of awful responsibility. They are to ‘reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering,’ 2 Timothy 4:2. In Christ’s stead they are to labor as stewards of the mysteries of heaven, encouraging the obedient and warning the disobedient. With them worldly policy is to have no weight. Never are they to swerve from the path in which Jesus has bidden them walk. They are to go forward in faith, remembering that they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. They are not to speak their own words, but words which One greater than the potentates of earth has bidden them speak. Their message is to be, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 142.

- 4. Where should we receive Jesus before we can see Him face to face? Revelation 3:20; Proverbs 23:26.**

“Keep cheerful. Do not forget that you have a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which Christ has appointed. You are never alone. If you will listen to the voice that now speaks to you, if you will respond without delay to the knocking at the door of your heart, ‘Come in, Lord Jesus, that I may sup with Thee, and Thee with me,’ the heavenly Guest will enter. When this element, which is all divine, abides with you, there is peace and rest.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 350.

WALKING FAITHFULLY IN THE LIGHT

- 5. What should our position always be so that the light may shine in us? Isaiah 8:20.**

“When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No aftersuppositions, contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained. Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. The truth for this time, God has given us as a foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth. One will arise, and still another, with new light which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit...

“We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God’s word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God (*Preach the Word*, p. 5. 1905).” –*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 31, 32.

6. What two things should be always closely related and go hand in hand? Romans 3:31; Psalm 119:29.

“As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God. We must not trust in our own merits at all, but in the merits of Jesus of Nazareth. Our eyes must be anointed with eye-salve. We must draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to us, if we come in his own appointed way. O that you may go forth as the disciples did after the day of Pentecost, and then your testimony will have a living ring, and souls will be converted to God.” –*The Review and Herald*, March 11, 1890.

7. What term is used in the Bible to show the result of the union of both elements? Romans 1:17; 3:22; Philippians 3:9, (last part).

“Paul feared lest, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. He realized that if he did not carry out in his life the principles he believed and preached, his labors in behalf of others would avail him nothing. His conversation, his influence, his refusal to yield to self-grat-

ification, must show that his religion was not a profession merely, but a daily, living connection with God. One goal he kept ever before him, and strove earnestly to reach—"the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philippians 3:9." *—The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 314.

3

SABBATH, APRIL 17, 2010

THE DANGER OF DARKNESS

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Isaiah 60:2.

DAY AND NIGHT

1. **What separation was already established from the beginning of the world? How long will it be that way? Genesis 1:5; 8:22; Revelation 10:1-6.**

"Concerning the condition of the earth 'in the beginning,' the Bible record says that it 'was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.'" *—The Great Controversy*, p. 658.

"Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed." *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 112.

"It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night follow each other in their regular succession." *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 75.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

2. **To what does the Bible compare day and night? 2 Corinthians 6:14.**

“God calls for separation from the world. Will you obey? Will you come out from among them, and remain separate and distinct from them? ‘For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?’ You cannot mingle with worldlings, and partake of their spirit, and follow their example, and be at the same time a child of God. The Creator of the universe addresses you as an affectionate Father. If you separate from the world in your affections, and remain free from its contamination, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, God will be your Father, He will adopt you into His family, and you will be His heir. In place of the world, He will give you, for a life of obedience, the kingdom under the whole heavens. He will give you an eternal weight of glory and a life that is as enduring as eternity.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 44.

3. What circumstances prevailed when Jesus came into the world? Matthew 4:16, (first part).

“When Christ came into the world, darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. The living oracles of God were fast becoming a dead letter. The still, small voice of God was heard only at times by the most devout worshiper; for it had become overpowered and silenced by the dogmas, maxims, and traditions of men. The long, intricate explanations of the priests made that which was the plainest and most simple, mysterious, indistinct, and uncertain. The clamors of rival sects confused the understanding, and their doctrines were widely apart from the correct theory of truth....

“Truth looked down from heaven upon the children of men, but found no reflection of itself; for darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. If the darkness of error that hid the glory of God from the view of men was to be dispelled, the light of truth must shine amid the moral darkness of the world. (*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 6, 1895).” *—Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1153.

CONDITIONS IN THE TIME OF THE END

4. What circumstances are also prophesied for the time of the second coming? What effect does the night have upon people? Isaiah 60:2; Luke 18:8, (last part); 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:7; Acts 20:9.

“We are near the close of time. I have been shown that the retributive judgments of God are already in the land. The Lord has given us warn-

ing of the events about to take place. Light is shining from His word; yet darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.... It is our duty to inquire the cause of this terrible darkness, that we may shun the course by which men have brought upon themselves so great delusion.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 99.

“While men sleep, the enemy sows tares in the church. While men are spiritually sleeping, the enemy accomplishes his work of iniquity. It is when his subject ‘understandeth it not’ (Matt. 13:19) that he catcheth away the good seed sown in the heart. When men and women are in this condition, when their spiritual life is not being constantly fed by the Spirit of God, Satan can imbue them with his spirit, and lead them to work his works.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 353.

CONSEQUENCES OF *BLINDNESS AND DARKNESS*

5. What are the consequences of blindness and spiritual sleep? Luke 6:39; 2 Kings 6:18-23.

“If you are devoting all your strength and talent to the things of this world, your lifework is represented by wood, hay, and stubble, to be consumed by the fires of the last day. But unselfish labor for Christ and the future life will be as gold, silver, and precious stones; it is imperishable.

“My brethren and sisters, awake, I beseech you, from the sleep of death. It is too late to devote the strength of brain, bone, and muscle to self-serving. Let not the last day find you destitute of heavenly treasure. Seek to push the triumphs of the cross, seek to enlighten souls, labor for the salvation of your fellow beings, and your work will abide the trying test of fire.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 466, 467.

6. Who failed right before the great triumph of the cross and why? What were the consequences? Matthew 26:36-46, 69-75.

“Just before He bent His footsteps to the garden, Jesus had said to the disciples, ‘All ye shall be offended because of Me this night.’ They had given Him the strongest assurance that they would go with Him to prison and to death. And poor, self-sufficient Peter had added, ‘Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.’ Mark 14:27, 29. But the disciples trusted to themselves. They did not look to the mighty Helper as Christ had counseled them to do. Thus when the Saviour was most in need of their sympathy and prayers, they were found asleep. Even Peter was sleeping.

“The weakness of His disciples awakened the sympathy of Jesus. He feared that they would not be able to endure the test which would come

upon them in His betrayal and death. He did not reprove them, but said, 'Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' Even in His great agony, He was seeking to excuse their weakness. 'The spirit truly is ready,' He said, 'but the flesh is weak.'" –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 688, 689.

AVOIDING DANGER

7. Considering this serious danger, what kind of advice did Jesus repeatedly give? Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:37; Luke 21:36.

"It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him watch and pray that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin. All the disciples, by sleeping in that critical hour, sustained a great loss. Christ knew the fiery ordeal through which they were to pass... Therefore it was that He gave them warning. Had those hours in the garden been spent in watching and prayer, Peter would not have been left to depend upon his own feeble strength. He would not have denied his Lord. Had the disciples watched with Christ in His agony, they would have been prepared to behold His suffering upon the cross." –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 713, 714.

"How cruel for the disciples to permit sleep to close their eyes, and slumber to chain their senses, while their divine Lord was enduring such inexpressible mental anguish! If they had remained watching they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 205, 206.

8. What will the Lord send to every sincere soul and why? 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8.

"Where is the faith of God's people? Why are they so unbelieving and distrustful of Him who provides for their wants and upholds them by His strength? The Lord will test the faith of His people; He will send rebukes, which will be followed by afflictions if these warnings are not heeded. He will break the fatal lethargy of sin at any cost to those who have departed from their allegiance to Him, and awaken them to their sense of duty." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 254.

WAKE UP, IT'S ALREADY LATE!

"We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The hours of probation are fast passing. We have no time-

-not a moment—to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works: ‘My Lord delayeth His coming.’ Let the message of Christ’s soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate preparation, for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields to tell the unconcerned and indifferent to seek the Lord while He may be found. The workers will find their harvest wherever they proclaim the forgotten truths of the Bible. They will find those who will accept the truth and will devote their lives to winning souls to Christ.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 252, 253.

4

Sabbath, April 24, 2010

THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR OUR TIME

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Ephesians 5:14.

CALLS TO REMAIN AWAKE

- 1. What serious counsel did the Savior give His disciples in the midst of the dense darkness, a little before He was lifted up on the cross? What is also the message for those who expect the final victory? Mark 14:38; Matthew 24:42; Luke 21:36; Revelation 16:15.**

“But He ‘findeth them asleep.’ Had He found them praying, He would have been relieved. Had they been seeking refuge in God, that satanic agencies might not prevail over them, He would have been comforted by their steadfast faith. But they had not heeded the repeated warning, ‘Watch and pray.’ ... They did not realize the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 688.

“Through being overcome with sleep, the disciples heard little of what passed between Christ and the heavenly messengers. Failing to watch and pray, they had not received that which God desired to give them,—a knowledge of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They lost the blessing that might have been theirs through sharing His self-sacrifice. Slow of heart to believe were these disciples, little appreciative of the treasure with which Heaven sought to enrich them.” —*Ibid.*, p. 425.

“Often when Satan has failed of exciting distrust, he succeeds in leading us to presumption. If he can cause us to place ourselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation, he knows that the victory is his. God will preserve all who walk in the path of obedience; but to depart from it is to venture on Satan’s ground. There we are sure to fall. The Saviour has bidden us, ‘Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.’ Mark 14:38. Meditation and prayer would keep us from rushing unbidden into the way of danger, and thus we should be saved from many a defeat.” —*Ibid.*, p. 126.

THE WATCHMEN AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

2. How did the Spirit of Prophecy describe the condition of the work already in Sister White’s days?

“The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep. We are years behind. Let the chief watchmen feel the urgent necessity of taking heed to themselves, lest they lose the opportunities given them to see the dangers.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 715.

“I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.” —*Ibid.*, p. 217.

3. What solemn duty do the spiritual watchmen of God’s people have? Why did the work of old fall into apostasy? Ezekiel 33:6-8.

“These watchmen represent the ministry, upon whose fidelity depends the salvation of souls. The stewards of the mysteries of God should stand as watchmen upon the walls of Zion; and if they see the sword coming,

they should sound the note of warning. If they are sleepy sentinels, and their spiritual senses are so benumbed that they see and realize no danger, and the people perish, God will require their blood at the watchmen's hands.

"... The watchmen will need to live very near to God, to hear His word and be impressed with His Spirit, that the people may not look to them in vain... Ambassadors of Christ should take heed that they do not, through their unfaithfulness, lose their own souls and the souls of those who hear them." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 402, 403.

FOR THE WATCHMEN AND THE PEOPLE

4. How was the call to "watch and pray," on which our salvation depends, made ineffective? Ezekiel 13:10.

"These reproofs and warnings disturb the quiet of these sleepy, ease-loving sentinels, and they are not pleased. They say in heart, if not in words: 'This is all uncalled for. It is too severe, too harsh.... Why don't they prophesy smooth things, and cry: Peace, peace? Then everything would move on smoothly.'

"These are the true feelings of many of our people. And Satan exults at his success in controlling the minds of so many who profess to be Christians. He has deceived them, benumbed their sensibilities, and planted his hellish banner right in their midst, and they are so completely deceived that they know not that it is he." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 440.

5. To whom is this call to watch given, and how long are they to watch and pray? Mark 13:37; Luke 21:35-36.

"In consideration of the shortness of time we as a people should watch and pray, and in no case allow ourselves to be diverted from the solemn work of preparation for the great event before us. Because the time is apparently extended, many have become careless and indifferent in regard to their words and actions. They do not realize their danger and do not see and understand the mercy of our God in lengthening their probation, that they may have time to form characters for the future, immortal life. Every moment is of the highest value. Time is granted them, not to be employed in studying their own ease and becoming dwellers on the earth, but to be used in the work of overcoming every defect in their own characters and in helping others, by example and personal effort, to see the beauty of holiness. God has a people upon the earth who in faith and

holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast-fulfilling prophecy and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 306, 307.

BEWARE THE CONFUSING AND FALSE MESSAGES

6. What hinders and paralyzes him who is not constantly watchful? Matthew 25:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

“My brethren, you are disregarding the most sacred claims of God by your neglect to consecrate yourselves and your children to Him. Many of you are reposing in false security, absorbed in selfish interests, and attracted by earthly treasures. You fear no evil. Danger seems a great way off. You will be deceived, deluded, to your eternal ruin unless you arouse and with penitence and deep humiliation return unto the Lord.

“Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

“The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. ‘Escape for thy life’ is the warning from the angels of God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 233.

7. What false impression did certain unfaithful men give in the time of Jeremiah? Will there be opposing messages also in our days? Jeremiah 6:13, 14; 8:10, (last part), 11.

“Other voices are heard saying: ‘Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.’ Those who are at ease in Zion cry ‘Peace and safety,’ while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor....

“Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls.

“My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 233, 234.

GUIDED BY GOD’S SPIRIT

8. Do the powers of darkness succeed in putting all to sleep? What is the Lord’s goal when He calls us to be watchful? 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 16:13.

“Not all, however, would be ensnared by the enemy’s devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 535, 536.

“We are living at a time when Satan is at work on the right hand and on the left, before and behind us; and yet as a people we are asleep. God wills that a voice shall be heard arousing His people to action.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 709.

5

Sabbath, May 1, 2010

WHAT SHOULD REVIVE?

“If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” Isaiah 7:9 (last part).

PROFESSION OF FAITH AND WORKS

1. What can be said about the confessions done in this last time? What do believers lack especially in the Laodicean period? Matthew 15:8; Revelation 3:17, 15 (first part).

“It would be more pleasing to the Lord if lukewarm professors of religion had never named His name. They are a continual weight to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are a stumbling block to

unbelievers, and evil angels exult over them, and taunt the angels of God with their crooked course. Such are a curse to the cause at home or abroad. They draw nigh to God with their lips, while their heart is far from Him.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 188.

“The True Witness declares, ‘I know thy works.’ The selfish, covetous heart will be tested. Some are not willing to devote to God a very small portion of the increase of their earthly treasure. They would start back with horror if you should speak of the principal. What have they sacrificed for God? Nothing. They profess to believe that Jesus is coming; but their works deny their faith. Every individual will live out all the faith he has. False-hearted professor, Jesus knows thy works. He hates your stinted offerings and lame sacrifices.” —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 237, 238.

TESTIMONY AND FAITH

- 2. What should revive in our midst so that the latter rain may fall? What is the first step that should be taken so that heaven may revive the true testimony? Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8; Romans 8:14, 4; Hebrews 11:1, 2, 6; Revelation 22:20.**

“The searching testimony of the Spirit of God ‘will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God’s people should come nearer to Him. . . . Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God.’ ‘The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 676.

“When difficulties arise or when they are brought into strait places—when their faith and their love to God are tested—they shrink from the trial and murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Their love does not prove pure and perfect, to bear all things.

“The faith of the people of the God of heaven should be strong, active, and enduring—the substance of things hoped for. Then the language of such will be, ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name,’ for He hath dealt bountifully with me.” —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 128, 129.

THE FRUIT OF TRUE FAITH

- 3. According to the Scriptures, what will true faith bear? James 2:17, 22; Matthew 7:21.**

“In the parable, Christ exalts the Samaritan above the priest and the Levite, who were great sticklers for the letter of the law of Ten Commandments. The one obeyed the spirit of these commandments, while the others were content to profess an exalted faith in them; but what is faith without works? When the advocates of the law of God plant their feet firmly upon its principles, showing that they are not merely loyal in name but loyal at heart, carrying out in their daily lives the spirit of God’s commandments, and exercising true benevolence to man, then will they have moral power to move the world. It is impossible for those who profess allegiance to the law of God to correctly represent the principles of that sacred Decalogue while slighting its holy injunctions to love their neighbor as themselves.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 58.

4. What other great divine gift is closely related to true faith? Romans 1:17.

“When you turn away from the broken cisterns that can hold no water, and in the name of Jesus your Advocate come directly to God, asking for the things you need, the righteousness of Christ will be revealed as your righteousness, the virtue of Christ as your virtue. You will then understand that justification will come alone through faith in Christ; for in Jesus is revealed the perfection of the character of God; in His life is manifested the outworking of the principles of holiness. Through the atoning blood of Christ the sinner is set free from bondage and condemnation; through the perfection of the sinless Substitute and Surety, he may run in the race of humble obedience to all God’s commandments. Without Christ he is under the condemnation of the law, always a sinner, but through faith in Christ he is made just before God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 330.

COMMUNION AND REPENTANCE

5. What transpires between the believer and the Lord? Revelation 3:20; Romans 8:14.

“Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are burdened with doubts and fears. He waits for us to open the door of the heart to Him, and say, Abide with us.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 804.

“I know that in many hearts the inquiry arises, ‘Where shall I find Jesus?’ There are many who want His presence, want His love and His light; but they know not where to look for Him for whom their hearts yearn. And yet Jesus does not hide Himself away; no one need search for

Him in vain.... Jesus invites us to accept His presence; we are to open the door of the heart, and let Him in. But He will not share a divided heart. If it be given to the service of mammon, if selfishness and pride fill its chambers, there will be no room for the heavenly Guest; He will not take up His abode with us until the soul-temple has been emptied and cleansed. Yet there is no need of making a failure in the Christian life. Jesus is waiting to do a great work for us, and all heaven is interested in our salvation.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 55.

6. What needs to happen so that this relationship remains vital and unbroken? Revelation 3:19; 2:5; Matthew 4:17.

“The Lord has shown me in vision some things concerning the church in its present lukewarm state, which I will relate to you. The church was presented before me in vision. Said the angel to the church: ‘Jesus speaks to thee, ‘Be zealous and repent.’ This work, I saw, should be taken hold of in earnest. There is something to repent of. Worldly-mindedness, selfishness, and covetousness have been eating out the spirituality and life of God’s people.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 141.

A FERVENT DESIRE TO BE JUST

7. What destroys the living testimony of the church? Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9.

“God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins. But to deal with minds is the nicest work in which men ever engaged. All are not fitted to correct the erring. They have not wisdom to deal justly, while loving mercy. They are not inclined to see the necessity of mingling love and tender compassion with faithful reproofs. Some are ever needlessly severe, and do not feel the necessity of the injunction of the apostle: ‘And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.’

“There are many who do not have the discretion of Joshua and who have no special duty to search out wrongs and to deal promptly with the sins existing among them. Let not such hinder those who have the burden of this work upon them; let them not stand in the way of those who have this duty to do.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 269, 270.

- 8. What is mainly lacking in us? Matthew 5:6, (first part). Where should a change first take place? Jeremiah 5:24, 25. What will the Lord then do with pleasure? Luke 21:15.**

“Let us realize the weakness of humanity, and see where man fails in his self-sufficiency. We shall then be filled with a desire to be just what God desires us to be,— pure, noble, sanctified. We shall hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ. To be like God will be the one desire of the soul.

“This is the desire that filled Enoch’s heart. And we read that he walked with God. He studied the character of God to a purpose. He did not mark out his own course, or set up his own will, as if he thought himself fully qualified to manage matters. He strove to conform himself to the divine likeness (Letter 169, 1903).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1087.

6

Sabbath, May 8, 2010

TOO LATE

“Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.” Proverbs 1:28.

LACK OF PREPARATION AND A SURPRISE

- 1. How will Jesus come for some among God’s people? Matthew 24:43, 40, 41.**

“Many who hear the message—by far the greatest number—ill not credit the solemn warning. Many will be found disloyal to the commandments of God, which are a test of character. The Lord’s servants will be called enthusiasts. Ministers will warn the people not to listen to them. Noah received the same treatment while the Spirit of God was urging him to give the message, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear.

“Come when it may, the advent of Christ will surprise the false teachers who are saying, ‘Peace and safety;’ ‘all things continue as they were from the beginning.’ Thus saith the word of Inspiration, ‘Sudden destruction cometh upon them.’ The day of God shall come as a snare upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. It comes to them as a prowling thief. ‘If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.’ Habitual watching is our only safety. We must be ever ready, that that day may not overtake us as a thief.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 233.

2. What did those who were not prepared not wish fervently? Revelation 16:15. What will they receive instead? Revelation 13:16-18.

“The evil servant says in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming.’ He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord’s coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. Earthly passions, corrupt thoughts, take possession of the mind. The evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, unites with the world in pleasure seeking. He smites his fellow servants, accusing and condemning those who are faithful to their Master. He mingles with the world. Like grows with like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare. ‘The lord of that servant shall come . . . in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.’” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

THE WHITE RAIMENT

3. How do we get the white raiment of righteousness? What do we need daily so that we can keep it clean? Isaiah 1:18; Revelation 7:14; 1 John 1:9.

“The examples in God’s word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification....

“The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1:9.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 41.

NOW IS THE MOMENT

- 4. What will happen with the heart of him who neglects the necessary daily cleansing work? Hebrews 3:7-8; Ezekiel 24:13; 1 John 1:6.**

“I was shown that the manner of Achan’s confession was similar to the confessions that some among us have made and will make. They hide their wrongs and refuse to make a voluntary confession until God searches them out, and then they acknowledge their sins. A few persons pass on in a course of wrong until they become hardened.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 270.

- 5. Can confessions made too late be useful so that we may keep the white raiment? Ezekiel 33:18.**

“When a crisis finally comes, as it surely will, and God speaks in behalf of His people, those who have sinned, those who have been a cloud of darkness and who have stood directly in the way of God’s working for His people, may become alarmed at the length they have gone in murmuring and in bringing discouragement upon the cause; and, like Achan, becoming terrified, they may acknowledge that they have sinned. But their confessions are too late and are not of the right kind to benefit themselves, although they may relieve the cause of God. Such do not make their confessions because of a conviction of their true state and a sense of how displeasing their course has been to God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 271.

“Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 486.

- 6. Who and what still holds back the living testimony that needs to revive? Will the indecisive reach their goal and receive the white raiments? 2 Timothy 3:5; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Matthew 10:37-39; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.**

“Shirkers can never wear the laurels of victory. Those who are true and loyal will not conceal the fact, but will put heart and might into the work, and venture their all in the struggle, let the battle turn as it will. God is a sin-hating God. And those who encourage the sinner, saying, It is well with thee, God will curse... They are not in harmony with right. They despise the straight testimony that reaches the heart, and would rejoice to see everyone silenced who gives reproof.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 272.

WHO WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST

- 7. Can God be deceived by a late acknowledgment and confession? Galatians 5:7-9; 6:7; Hebrews 12:16, 17.**

“God is not to be trifled with and His warnings disregarded with impunity by a perverse people.... God’s displeasure is upon His people, and He will not manifest His power in the midst of them while sins exist among them and are fostered by those in responsible positions.

“Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated. Zephaniah thus describes the true state of this class and the terrible judgments that will come upon them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 270, 271.

- 8. Will those who in their struggle with sin have not acted decisively in defense of the truth be able to stand in the final conflict? Revelation 3:16; Matthew 25:10-12.**

“Those who have been nearly all their lives controlled by a spirit as foreign to the Spirit of God as was Achan’s will be very passive when the time comes for decided action on the part of all. They will not claim to be

on either side. The power of Satan has so long held them that they seem blinded and have no inclination to stand in defense of right. If they do not take a determined course on the wrong side, it is not because they have a clear sense of the right, but because they dare not.

“God will not be trifled with. It is in the time of conflict that the true colors should be flung to the breeze. It is then that the standard-bearers need to be firm and let their true position be known. It is then that the skill of every true soldier for the right is tested.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 272.

7

Sabbath, May 15, 2010

DIVERSIONARY TACTICS

“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.” Proverbs 17:14.

THE SOUND OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

- 1. What happened in heaven when the seventh trumpet sounded? When did the sounding of the seventh trumpet begin? Revelation 11:15-17; Daniel 8:14.**

“The kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Do not deceive yourselves; be wide awake and move rapidly, for the night cometh in which no man can work.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 414.

“From the fifteenth verse to the end of the chapter, we seem to be carried over the ground three distinct times from the sounding of the seventh angel to the end. In the verses here quoted, the prophet glances forward to the full establishment of the kingdom of God. Although the seventh trumpet has begun to sound, it may not yet be a fact that the great voices in heaven have proclaimed that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our

Lord and of His Christ, unless it be in anticipation of the speedy accomplishment of this event. But the seventh trumpet, like the preceding six, covers a period of time, and the transfer of the kingdoms from earthly powers to Him whose right it is to reign, is the principal event to occur in the early years of its sounding. Hence this event, to the exclusion of all else, here engages the mind of the prophet.” –Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 543, 542.

According to Uriah Smith, “...The third woe occurs under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which began in 1844.” –*Ibid.*, pp. 543, 542.

PREACHING THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

2. What message has since then specially been proclaimed in the whole world by the Advent Movement? Matthew 24:14.

“As the disciples went out preaching, ‘The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand,’ so Miller and his associates proclaimed that the longest and last prophetic period brought to view in the Bible was about to expire, that the judgment was at hand, and the everlasting kingdom was to be ushered in.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 351.

“The commission given to the disciples is given also to us. Today, as then, a crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before those who are without God and without hope in the world. The Lord calls for pastors, teachers, and evangelists. From door to door His servants are to proclaim the message of salvation.... Not with tame, lifeless utterances is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances. Hundreds are waiting for the warning to escape for their lives. The world needs to see in Christians an evidence of the power of Christianity.” –*The Gospel Workers*, p. 29.

3. According to the inspired word, who is proclaimed as King? Revelation 17:14; 22:20.

“Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated. And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to Jesus and the heirs of salvation, and Jesus was to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.” –*Early Writings*, p. 280.

- 4. According to the words of the King Himself, where is this kingdom? By means of what three messages have people been called since 1844 to be subjects of the heavenly kingdom? John 18:36; Revelation 14:6-12.**

“The kingdom of God’s grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. ‘The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,’ is to be given to ‘the people of the saints of the Most High.’ Daniel 7:27. They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them ‘from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34. And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 108.

“This warning is brought to view in Revelation 14. Here is a three-fold message represented as proclaimed by heavenly beings and immediately followed by the coming of the Son of man to reap ‘the harvest of the earth.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 311.

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world (Letter 79, 1900).” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 978, 979.

- 5. How only can it be seen whether they are true subjects? Revelation 14:12. Whom alone do they follow in thoughts, words and acts to show that they are real disciples? Revelation 14:4.**

“I was shown that the third angel proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, represents the people who receive this message, and raise the voice of warning to the world to keep the commandments of God and His law as the apple of the eye; and that in response to this warning, many would embrace the Sabbath of the Lord” —*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 87.

“Who are the subjects of the kingdom of God?—all those who do His will. They have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The members of Christ’s kingdom are the sons of God, partners in His great firm. The elect of God are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a holy nation, to

show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. They are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. They are living stones, a royal priesthood. They are in copartnership with Jesus Christ. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. . . .” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Bible Workers*, p. 422

ANGER AND THE WORK OF THE ENEMY

6. Who is terribly angry because of the transference of the kingdoms of the world to the Savior? What does he know? Revelation 12:12; 10:6.

“Every manifestation of God’s power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p.168.

“Fearful are the scenes which call forth this exclamation from the heavenly voice. The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction reaches its culmination in the time of trouble.” –*Maranatha*, p. 275.

7. Since then, whom has he made angry with the intention of drawing their attention away from Christ’s coming? Revelation 11:18, (first part). When was this wrath seen for the first time during the seventh trumpet?

“Beginning with the spontaneous outburst of revolutions in Europe in 1848, the anger of nations toward one another has been constantly increasing. Jealousy and hatred among nations has been the rule rather than the exception. Particularly has this been manifested in the two world wars of the twentieth century, when it seemed that men would be willing to annihilate whole nations in the heat of their anger.” –*Uriah Smith, The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 543, 545.

“The wrath of the nations is mentioned as a first act of all what was due to happen when Christ would take possession of the dominium over the world, Who cannot see that this wrath of the nations is increasing? Since 1848, the so-called stormy year, everything is boiling and fermenting more and more among the nations and awakening the fiercest feelings.” –*L. R. Conradi, Seers and the Future*, p. 525.

8. **What does Satan try to achieve through the wars that have broken out and will break out during the period of the seventh trumpet? Faith in what event does he want to undermine? Revelation 22:12, (first part); 22:20.**

“Satan delights in war; for it excites the worst passions of the soul, and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another; for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.”
—*The Great Controversy*, p. 589.

8

Sabbath, May 22, 2010

SATAN’S MOST POWERFUL DRUG

“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.”
Joel 3:9, 10.

MARCHING TOWARDS WAR

1. **What last mighty struggle will be led by Satan during the period of the seventh trumpet? Revelation 20:7, 9.**

“At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on,—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision, the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the city of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city, and make ready for the onset.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 664.

2. What do the powers of darkness try to achieve with the wars that take place during the seventh trumpet, even if not always visible? Revelation 17:13.

“There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the Judgment,—those who violate God’s law, and those who keep His law. Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on His side bear His signet. They are obedient to His commands. On the other side stands the Prince of darkness, with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion” —*The Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

3. Against whom are actually these wars fought? When will they reach their climax? Revelation 17:14; 16:12-16.

“The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 406.

“We need to study the pouring out of the seventh vial. The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle. But Providence has a part to act in the battle of Armageddon. When the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel of Revelation eighteen, the religious elements, good and evil, will awake from slumber, and the armies of the living God will take the field.

“Every form of evil is to spring into intense activity. Evil angels unite their powers with evil men, and as they have been in constant conflict and attained an experience in the best modes of deception and battle, and have been strengthening for centuries, they will not yield the last great final contest without a desperate struggle. All the world will be on one side or the other of the question. The battle of Armageddon will be fought, and that day must find none of us sleeping. Wide awake we must be, as wise virgins having oil in our vessels with our lamps. . . .” —*Maranatha*, p. 257.

- 4. From the beginning of the seventh trumpet, upon whom does Satan pour his terrible wrath? How is this wrath shown? Revelation 12:12. Are the people taking part in these wars called Christians or Gentiles in the Bible? Revelation 11:8, first part.**

“Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged. Events are changing to bring about the day of God, which hasteth greatly. Only a moment of time, as it were, yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 14.

“I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other; also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out.” —*Life Sketches*, p. 117.

- 5. What was thus buried and how was Christianity unmasked ever more? Revelation 18:10.**

“‘Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. . . In the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, . . . saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.’ Revelation 18:5-10.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 653.

- 6. How does heaven see those who during the seventh trumpet have defiled the earth with terrible wars and false doctrines? What will everyone reap? Isaiah 24:4-6; Revelation 18:10; Galatians 6:7.**

“These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. ‘The earth mourneth and fadeth away,’ ‘the haughty people . . . do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.’ Isaiah 24:4, 5.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 590.

“‘The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’ Isaiah 26:21... In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God’s unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth—priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low.” –*Ibid.*, pp. 656, 657.

“I entreat you to be wise, and consider what will be the result of leading a wild life, uncontrolled by the Spirit of God. ‘Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.’ For your soul’s sake, for Christ’s sake, who gave Himself to save you from ruin, pause on the threshold of your life, and weigh well your responsibilities, your opportunities, your possibilities. God has given you an opportunity to fill a high destiny. Your influence may tell for the truth of God; you may be a co-laborer with God in the great work of human redemption.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 21.

CONSPIRACY AND ITS RESULT

- 7. What will happen to those who have conspired to participate in the destruction of the earth through warfare, no matter what their profession or church allegiance? Revelation 11:18, (last part).**

“Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and

anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.” –*Maranatha*, p. 257.

8. Will they have one last chance to repent and be converted during the final great battle of Armageddon? Revelation 22:11; 16:12-16.

“When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man’s behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin.... Then the restraining Spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth. As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. And as the patriarch wrestled all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau, so the righteous will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the enemies that surround them.” –*Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 201.

9

Sabbath, May 29, 2010

TREASON AND APOSTASY

“The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!”
Lamentations 5:16

CRISIS AND THE FALL

- 1. Whom did Satan also cause to fall by means of his powerful drug? How did a large part of the Adventist people show themselves in times of crisis? Jeremiah 6:16-19; Matthew 24:48, 49.**

“After the war broke out there was a division among the Adventists. The majority wanted to invalidate the principles during the war while others insisted on the sacredness of the Sabbath even in time of war. This dispute led to the disfellowshipment of those who proclaimed the validity of the old beliefs.” –*Koelnische Zeitung*, 21 September 1915.

“God is weighing our characters, our conduct, and our motives in the balances of the sanctuary. It will be a fearful thing to be pronounced wanting in love and obedience by our Redeemer, who died upon the cross to draw our hearts unto Him. God has bestowed upon us great and precious gifts. He has given us light and a knowledge of His will, so that we need not err or walk in darkness. To be weighed in the balance and found wanting in the day of final settlement and rewards will be a fearful thing, a terrible mistake which can never be corrected.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 370.

THE BRIDE BECAME UNFAITHFUL

2. What will be the fate of the evil servant? What happened to the church that had received the light of God’s truth? Matthew 24:50, 51; Isaiah 1:21.

“Let there be an earnest consideration of these words. Let none say, ‘That does not mean me; I am a Christian.’ Who says this, yourself or He who reads the heart? The unfaithful steward had solemn responsibilities entrusted to him; before the world he appeared as a servant of Christ; but, oh, how deplorable for himself, and for all connected with him; he is an evil servant! He is imperiling his Lord’s goods. He is teaching souls to trample upon the holy law of God. He calls Christ, ‘My Lord.’ But he says, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming.’” –*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 237.

“I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: ‘Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? ‘How is the faithful city become an harlot!’ My Father’s house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking.’” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 250.

POSITION REGARDING WAR

3. What does an apostate church always do? Who did the same in a special way? Matthew 10:33; James 4:1-4. What did the heart lose? Revelation 3:20.

“A Christian cannot at the same time hold the sword of the state in one hand and the sword of the Spirit in the other one. Only an apostate congregation could do such a thing or someone who has separated from the principles of Christ’s kingdom and surrendered to the power of the State. But a Christian who is faithful to his principles struggles for the faith given to the saints. He keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus and cannot, according to the sixth commandment, kill his fellowmen. He obeys Jesus’ command to put the sword away, saying, ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’ (Acts 5:29). A firm Christian prefers to die for the gospel and obtain eternal salvation than to act against God’s holy will and lose eternal salvation.” —*Christliche Hausfreund*, September, 1915.

4. Who introduced “liberty of conscience”—that each member could decide according to his own personal conviction? Who allowed the leaders of the different countries involved in the conflict to take part in the war? Revelation 3:14.

“As soon as the war began in Europe, this subject was thoroughly studied in America... We decided that everyone should act according to his own conscience in this matter... We should allow each citizen to take a position before the government according to his own conscience.... While we do not have certain limitations and guidelines regarding our position before the government, we should let each one act according to his own conscience. The brethren from America have taken the same moderate and tolerant stand as our brethren from Europe. We have followed the same way as our brethren in England, France and other countries.” (The president of the General Conference, A. G. Daniells, in Friedensau, July 1920, in the *Protokoll der Verhandlung mit der Gegenbewegung* [Minutes of the Negotiations with the Opposition Movement], pp. 33-38).

“The delegates of the Southern German Conference declare that they agree with the point of view of the leadership of the work regarding military service in time of war. They consider it the duty of the citizens to obey the government because, according to the authorities established by God referred to in 1 Peter 2:13, 14 and Romans 13:4, 5, they have the right to demand compliance. The General Conference Commission considered also this point of view and in its session of November 1915, as an answer to the question of the brethren in charge of the leadership in Europe, expressed its position in the following way: The brethren in the different countries of the world are totally free, in the future, as they have been until now, to comply with the respective legal determinations.” (German Adventist magazine “*Zionswache*”, Hamburg, March 6, 1916; see also “*Curierul Misionar Bucuresti*” No. 3, 1916. Romania. This resolution was approved and published in all the conferences in Germany).

- 5. What have the souls that made such mistakes lost, and what do they still lose? See the note to question 5, (last part); Lamentations 4:1; Jeremiah 6:29, 30.**

“The church is not now the separate and peculiar people she was when the fires of persecution were kindled against her. How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!” –*Early Writings*, p. 227.

“But what is the state of the Lord’s professed people as compared with the early church? Where is the Spirit and power of God which then attended the preaching of the gospel? Alas, ‘how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!’” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 240.

- 6. What exalted position has the church that had been called by God thus lost? Revelation 12:1. In what condition has she been since then?**

“And thou, Capernaum [Seventh-day Adventists, who have had great light], which art exalted unto heaven [in point of privilege], shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.” –*The Review and Herald*, August 1, 1893. [THE BRACKETED COMMENTS ARE BY ELLEN WHITE.]

“The facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God, speak more loudly than their profession, and make it evident that some power has cut the cable that anchored them to the Eternal Rock, and that they are drifting away to sea, without chart or compass.” –*The Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

MEASURED BY GOD

- 7. What way did they abandon? How was this manifested? Matthew 7:14, 19-22.**

“The good tree will produce good fruit. If the fruit is unpalatable and worthless, the tree is evil. So the fruit borne in the life testifies as to the condition of the heart and the excellence of the character. Good works

can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, yet it will be in proportion to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

8. What happens when someone is weighed and found wanting? Daniel 5:27.

“In this balance of the sanctuary, the individual members of the Christian church will be weighed; and if her moral character and spiritual state do not correspond to the benefits and blessings conferred upon her, she will be found wanting.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 450.

“If her talents are unimproved, if her fruit is not perfect before God, if her light has become darkness, she is indeed found wanting.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 84.

10

Sabbath, June 5, 2010

THE CHURCH AND THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

“For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” Isaiah 66:2.

GOD'S KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

- 1. What should God's church represent in a sinful world? In what time is that even more necessary? What do the three angels' messages entail forever for the church of God? Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6-12; John 18:36.**

“The third angel is flying in the midst of heaven, heralding the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This represents the work which is to be done in these last days. The message loses none of its power in its onward flight. John sees the work increasing in power till the whole earth is filled with the glory of God. The message, ‘Fear God and keep his commandments; for the hour of his judgment is come,’ is to go with a loud voice. With intensified zeal and energy human beings are to carry forward the work of the Lord. In the home, in the school, and in the church men, women, and youth are to be prepared to give the message to the world... We need strong, devoted, self-sacrificing young men and young women, who will press to the front.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 207.

“Again and again Christ had been asked to decide legal and political questions; but He refused to interfere in temporal matters. . . . He stood in our world as the Head of the great spiritual kingdom that He came to our world to establish,—the kingdom of righteousness. His teaching made plain the ennobling, sanctifying principles that govern this kingdom.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 396.

No INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

2. Considering that we are not of the world, what should our position be regarding politics? What does politics destroy? John 17:14, 16; Matthew 23:8 last part; 24:14.

“A child of God, a true Christian does not get involved in politics. Human minds get involved with national and international matters, but a Christian does not take a position for the one or the other party. Even though he is still in this world and respects and obeys the corresponding worldly authorities as long as they do not go against his conscience in matters relating to faith, he does not belong to the world and the great political interests have no value for him. He belongs to heaven.... Even if nations fight against one another and even if one or the other nation is more or less guilty of this disgrace, for a Christian they are all the same. He does not get involved in political activities but tries to save those who are lost within them. This is the commission that his Savior gave him and that is his only concern... A Christian cannot at the same time carry the sword of the state in one hand and the sword of the Spirit in the other. Only an apostate congregation can do that...” —*Christliche Hausfreund*, September 1915.

“Those teachers in the church or in the school who distinguish themselves by their zeal in politics, should be relieved of their work and responsibilities without delay; for the Lord will not co-operate with them. The tithe should not be used to pay any one for speechifying on political

questions. Every teacher, minister, or leader in our ranks who is stirred with a desire to ventilate his opinions on political questions, should be converted by a belief in the truth, or give up his work. His influence must tell as a laborer together with God in winning souls to Christ, or his credentials must be taken from him. If he does not change, he will do harm, and only harm....”
—*Gospel Workers*, p. 393.

3. Why was the Reform Movement outlawed in 1936, three years before the Second World War broke out? 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.

Since our origin in 1914 we never got involved in politics or took part in wars or revolutions because we knew that those activities are the main foundation of apostasy. When we compare our high vocation to serve the Lord with political plans, we realize they do not harmonize. The following quotation is enough to prove it:

“The Seventh Day Adventists Reform Movement, under the disguise of a religious activity, pursue goals that are contrary to the universal institution of National Socialism. The followers of this sect refuse to use the German greeting (Save Hitler). They openly declare that they are international and consider all men as their brothers.” (This governmental resolution was published in all the newspapers in Germany).

PARTICIPATION IN WAR

4. Notwithstanding, what did the mother church do, in spite of the light it had received? Isaiah 8:9-13.

On the one hand she rejoiced because of our sad situation and hard persecution by the powers of darkness, and on the other hand she declared everywhere that she was well accepted by the authorities, had no difficulties and enjoyed perfect freedom. Was not all this a clear sign that heaven had withdrawn from the church its heavenly credentials as the church of God? In 1940, referring to Hitler, it was written: “We thank God for the wise and powerful head of state He gave to the German people. The Lord of history did not want us to slide more into the abyss, as it happened after the world war we lost. That is the reason why He sent us a savior who was chosen to lead our people through the hardest trials with such successful efforts that have cost but a few blood sacrifices, contrary to every historical experience. Last year, the life of the ‘Führer’ was blessed with great success. And now we want to gather together to ask God to give him His blessing also in this new year.

... Oh Lord, we are ready to pray and work..." (German Adventist Magazine *Adventbote*, April 15, 1940).

"Considering the statement of the fifth congress of the Seventh Day Adventists in which our relation to the Russian government was clearly stated, the sixth federal congress of the Seventh Day Adventists decides that Seventh Day Adventists have the duty to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what is God's. This means they should comply with the civil and military service in all their forms, according to the constitution that is valid for each citizen. Whoever teaches something different and does not require the fulfillment of his duty before the government, will be considered by this congress as a heretic who does not acknowledge the teachings of the Scriptures and the unity of the church of God and places himself outside the organization of the Seventh Day Adventists." (Alf Lohne, *Adventists in Russia*, p. 118).

It is well known that the leadership of the Adventist Church is on good terms with Protestants and the Catholic Church since it allows their pastors and clerics in her meetings. We have clear proofs of this. There is not enough space here for more details. There is great apostasy!

THE TRUMPET GIVES A CLEAR SOUND

- 5. Since the church has failed in its duty as a watchman to sound the alarm and has instead participated in many wars—World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and others—whom has she rejected in reality? Psalms 50:17; Jeremiah 32:33; Nehemiah 9:26, (first part).**

- 6. Against whom has she taken a position even though she claims it in theory? Matthew 24:14. What kind of faithful witnesses does the Lord require? Acts 5:32. What way did the apostate church abandon? John 14:6.**

"The church is God's fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Him-

self, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

7. To whom can this kingdom only be given? Daniel 7:27.

“God calls for separation from the world. Will you obey? Will you come out from among them, and remain separate and distinct from them? ‘For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?’ You cannot mingle with worldlings, and partake of their spirit, and follow their example, and be at the same time a child of God. The Creator of the universe addresses you as an affectionate Father. If you separate from the world in your affections, and remain free from its contamination, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, God will be your Father, He will adopt you into His family, and you will be His heir. In place of the world, He will give you, for a life of obedience, the kingdom under the whole heavens. He will give you an eternal weight of glory and a life that is as enduring as eternity.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 44.

8. Therefore, what should we represent at all times and what should we be obedient to and separated from so that Jesus may enter into our hearts? Matthew 5:16; John 14:6; 17:16; Revelation 3:20.

“Christ tears away the wall of partition, the self-love, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle that their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our neighbor and the world as our field.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 42.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE FIRST CHURCH

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9.

THE SOURCE OF COURAGE

1. **What gave power and steadfastness to the early Christian church and its members to remain firm and faithful? 2 Corinthians 2:14.**

“When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. . . . Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ.

“A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth. The earth is to be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 238.

2. **What was the focus of their faith? Matthew 3:17; Acts 1:9-11.**

“It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. The name was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, their teaching, and their conversation. Continually they were recounting the incidents that had occurred during the days of His earthly ministry, when His disciples were blessed with His personal presence. Untiringly they dwelt upon His teachings and His miracles of healing. With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of His agony in

the garden, His betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which He had endured the contumely and torture imposed upon Him by His enemies, and the Godlike pity with which He had prayed for those who persecuted Him. His resurrection and ascension, and His work in heaven as the Mediator for fallen man, were topics on which they rejoiced to dwell. Well might the heathen call them Christians, since they preached Christ and addressed their prayers to God through Him.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 157.

LIVING IN GOD’S KINGDOM

3. What have they donated and to whom? What were their thoughts fixed on although they were still in this world? Proverbs 23:26; Matthew 6:33; 4:17.

“The blessing of God will rest upon every soul that makes a full consecration to Him. When we seek for God with all the heart, we shall find Him. God is in earnest with us, and He wants us to make thorough work for eternity. He has poured out all heaven in one gift, and there is no reason why we should doubt His love. Look to Calvary. . . .

“God asks you to give Him your heart. Your powers, your talents, your affections, should all be surrendered to Him, that He may work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure, and fit you for eternal life.

“When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action.” —*My Life Today*, p. 7.

“Jesus does not release us from the necessity of effort, but He teaches that we are to make Him first and last and best in everything. We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure, that would hinder the outworking of His righteousness in our character and life. Whatever we do is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord.” —*Thoughts of the Mount of Blessings*, p. 99.

“He whose heart is fixed to serve God will find opportunity to witness for Him. Difficulties will be powerless to hinder him who is determined to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In the strength gained by prayer and a study of the word, he will seek virtue and forsake vice.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 467.

LOVE EVEN FOR THE ENEMIES

4. What apparently new commandment did Jesus teach in a special way to the first Christians? John 13:34, 35.

“Jesus says, ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ Love is not simply an impulse, a transitory emotion, dependent upon circumstances; it is a living principle, a permanent power. The soul is fed by the streams of pure love that flow from the heart of Christ, as a well-spring that never fails. O, how is the heart quickened, how are its motives ennobled, its affections deepened, by this communion! Under the education and discipline of the Holy Spirit, the children of God love one another, truly, sincerely, unaffectedly,—‘without partiality, and without hypocrisy.’ And this because the heart is in love with Jesus. Our affection for one another springs from our common relation to God. We are one family, we love one another as He loved us. When compared with this true, sanctified, disciplined affection, the shallow courtesy of the world, the meaningless expression of effusive friendship, are as chaff to the wheat.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 101.

5. What did this commandment also entail? Matthew 5:44-48.

“... The Saviour said to His disciples: ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.’ We are to love our enemies with the same love that Christ manifested toward His enemies by giving His life to save them. Many may say, ‘This is a hard commandment; for I want to keep just as far as I can from my enemies.’ But acting in accordance with your own inclination would not be carrying out the principles that our Saviour has given. ‘Do good,’ He says, ‘to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ This scripture illustrates one phase of Christian perfection. While we were yet enemies of God, Christ gave His life for us. We are to follow His example.” —*Medical Ministry*, pp. 253, 254.

REJECTION OF VIOLENCE

6. What do we obtain from this commandment that appears to be new? Matthew 5:48. What did the first Christians refuse to do since they longed for perfection, Christ’s coming, and His kingdom? 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

“The primitive Christians not only refused to be enlisted in the army, but when any embraced Christianity while already enlisted, they abandoned the profession at whatever cost. Marcellus was a centurion in the legion called Trajana. While holding this commission, he became a Chris-

tian; and believing, in common with his fellow Christians, that war was no longer permitted to him, he threw down his belt at the head of the legion, declaring that he had become a Christian, and that he would serve no longer. He was committed to prison; but he was still faithful to Christianity. 'It is not lawful,' said he, 'for a Christian to bear arms for any earthly consideration;' and he was, in consequence, put to death. Almost immediately afterward, Cassian, who was notary to the same legion, gave up his office. He steadfastly maintained the sentiments of Marcellus, and, like him, was consigned to the executioner. Martin, of whom so much is said by Sulpicius Severus, was bred to the profession of arms, which on his acceptance of Christianity, he abandoned. To Julian the Apostate, the only reason that we find he gave for his conduct was this: 'I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight.' (Jonathan Dymond, *Example and Testimony of the Early Christians on the Subject of War*, London, 1823-24; Philadelphia 1892).

"Maximilian, as it is related in the Acts of Ruinart, was brought before the tribunal to be enrolled as a soldier. On the proconsul's asking his name, Maximilian replied: 'I am a Christian, and cannot fight.' It was, however, ordered that he should be enrolled, but he refused to serve, still alleging that he was a Christian. He was immediately told that there was no alternative between bearing arms and being put to death. But his fidelity was not to be shaken: 'I cannot fight,' said he, 'if I die.' He continued steadfast to his principles, and was consigned to the executioner." *-Ibid.*

7. Was this a fundamental doctrine of the first Christian church? 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

"These were not the sentiments, and this was not the conduct of isolated individuals who might be actuated by individual opinion or by their private interpretations of the duties of Christianity. Their principles were the principles of the body. ... Lactantius, another early Christian, says expressly, 'It can never be lawful for a righteous man to go to war.' About the end of the second century, Celsus, one of the opponents of Christianity, charged the Christians with refusing to bear arms even in case of necessity. Origen, the defender of the Christians, does not think of denying the fact; he admits the refusal, and justifies it, because war was unlawful. Even after Christianity had spread over almost the whole of the known world, Tertullian, in speaking of a part of the Roman armies, including more than one-third of the standing legions of Rome, distinctly informs us that 'not a Christian could be found among them.'" *-Ibid.*

8. When was this principle set aside by the already apostatized church?

“It is therefore indisputable, that the Christians who lived nearest to the time of our Saviour believed, with undoubting confidence, that he had unequivocally forbidden war; and they openly avowed this belief; and that, in support of it, they were willing to sacrifice, and did sacrifice, their fortunes and their lives.

“[Professing] Christians, however, afterward became soldiers, and when?—When their general fidelity to Christianity became relaxed; when in other respects, they violated its principles; when they had begun ‘to dissemble,’ and ‘to falsify their word,’ and ‘to cheat;’ when ‘Christian casuists’ had persuaded them that they might ‘sit at meat in the idol’s temple;’ when [professing] Christians accepted even the priesthoods of idolatry. In a word, they became soldiers when they had ceased to be Christians.

“The departure from the original faithfulness was, however, not suddenly general. Like every other corruption, war obtained by degrees. During the first two hundred years, not a Christian soldier is upon record. In the third century, when Christianity became partially corrupted, Christian soldiers were common. The number increased with the increase of the general profligacy; until at last, in the fourth century, [nominal] Christians became soldiers without hesitation. Here and there, however, an ancient father, still lifted up his voice for peace; but these, one after another, dropping from the world, the tenet that war is unlawful ceased at length to be a tenet of the [professing] church.” *Ibid.*

“The first Christians refused to take part in the legions because war was contrary to the teachings of the Lord. But three centuries later, politics led them to the point that they completely abandoned their previous position. The Middle Ages are a testimony of how unfaithful they had turned to be to the faith of their foreparents. The endless wars and slaughters of those centuries, and if I am allowed to mention it, even the events of our bright era are a convincing proof of the total separation from the doctrines of the early Christian Church.” (Written by an English Primer Minister about “*The First Christians and War*” published in *Dresdner Neuesten Nachrichten*, 14 June 1926.)

REFORMATION AND THE LAODICEAN PERIOD

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” Hosea 10:12.

A SPIRIT OF WAR AND A WORK OF REFORMATION

1. Was the Adventist Church warned of its fall by the Spirit of Prophecy? Revelation 3:18.

“...The world is stirred with the spirit of war.” [24 November 1904].
—*Christian Service*, p. 54.

“Five years later, or in the year 1909, she solemnly charged the representatives at the General Conference assembly to prepare their hearts for the terrible scenes of strife and oppression beyond anything they had conceived of, soon to be witnessed among the nations of the earth. She said, ‘Very soon the strife and oppression of foreign nations will break forth with an intensity that you do not now anticipate.’ (*Bulletin of the General Conference*, 1909, p. 57). Five years after this prediction was made, the great world war was precipitated...”

“While these calamities were witnessed among the nations of the earth, another scene was presented—a great reformatory movement among God’s people.” (—*The Time and the Work*, pp. 12, 13, published by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church after the First World War).

2. At the time of the First World War and the conflict among the nations, with whom should the reformation have begun? Nevertheless, what did the church, blinded by its apostasy, do with the faithful souls? Isaiah 8:16; 2 Kings 19:31.

The work of reformation began within the Adventist Church with the few believers that remained firm during the storm although both the message and the messengers were rejected by the official church.

“After the war broke out there was a division among the Adventists. The majority wanted to invalidate the principles during the war while others insisted on the sacredness of the Sabbath even in time of war. This dispute led to the disfellowshipment of those who proclaimed the validity of the old beliefs.” –*Koelnische Zeitung*, September 21, 1915.

BOTH THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGERS ARE REJECTED

- 3. As it has often happened in history, where did the reformation continue due to the intolerance by the apostatized church? What did the believers, who were forced by the persecution in the church to gather in a reform movement, long for? Acts 13:46; 18:6, 7; 19:9; Revelation 3:18, 20.**

“When the church leaves these words and uses her own she loses the power of the Word which is the power of God that saves all those who believe in it. If this happens with men, even if they say they are the church of Christ or a part of it, it is then time for them who are joined to her to remember this warning,... ‘from such turn away’. (2 Timothy 3:5).

“Love, truth and the faith and all the essential elements of the true church of God remain with those who left the body that apostatized from God. These are the ones who constitute the church of God.” –*Christliche Hausfreund*, March 12, 1906

THE REMNANT IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- 4. Therefore, who represented the light of this world when the great trial for the Adventist church came in 1914? Was it the church or the small remnant? Matthew 5:14; Isaiah 1:8, 9.**

“The Lord requires of all who profess His name a strict adherence to truth. This will be as salt which has not lost its savor, as a light amid the moral darkness and deception of the world.

“Ye are the light of the world,’ says Christ. Those who are truly connected with God, by reflecting the light of heaven will have a saving power in the church and also in the world; for the perfume of good deeds and truthful acts

will make them of good repute, even among those who are not of our faith. Those who fear God will respect and honor such a character; and even the enemies of our faith, as they see the spirit and life of Christ exhibited in their daily works, will glorify God, the source of their strength and honor.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 356.

5. What happened whenever the church rejected the light received and trampled on it? Genesis 1:4; Isaiah 5:20.

“It pains me to say, my brethren, that your sinful neglect to walk in the light has enshrouded you in darkness. You may now be honest in not recognizing and obeying the light; the doubts you have entertained, your neglect to heed the requirements of God, have blinded your perception so that darkness is now to you light, and light is darkness. God has bidden you to go forward to perfection. Christianity is a religion of progress. Light from God is full and ample, waiting our demand upon it. Whatever blessings the Lord may give, He has an infinite supply beyond, an inexhaustible store from which we may draw. Skepticism may treat the sacred claims of the gospel with jests, scoffing, and denial. The spirit of worldliness may contaminate the many and control the few; the cause of God may hold its ground only by great exertion and continual sacrifice, yet it will triumph finally.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 28.

“When this happened, there was a reformation in the church, but not a reformation of the church, because a church was never reformed. The reformation and conversion is applied only to a few and not to corporations.” (Quotation from the Adventist Magazine *Christliche Hausfreund*, March 12, 1906).

6. What did a few good men believe in the time of Luther? Jeremiah 7:3, 4.

“Some are in danger of being satisfied with the glimpses they have had of the light and love of God, and so ceasing to advance. Watchfulness and prayer have not been maintained. At the very time when the acclamation is made, ‘The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these,’ temptations come in, and darkness gathers about the soul—earthliness, selfishness, and self-glorification. There is a necessity for the Lord Himself to communicate His own ideas to the soul.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 485, 486.

"In Luther's time there were some good men who worked thinking that the Roman Church could be reformed. Not long after they realized their mistake. The reformation was not applicable to the Roman Catholic Apostolic church, but it was a reformation of some men and women who were in that church and participated in its false doctrines." (Quotation from the Adventist Magazine *Christliche Hausfreund*, March 12, 1906).

THE FALLEN CHURCHES AND THE LIGHT BEARERS

7. Was that always how a reformation came to be? Ecclesiastes 1:9; Numbers 16:3.

"Some who occupy the position of watchmen to warn the people of danger have given up their watch and recline at ease. They are unfaithful sentinels. They remain inactive, while their wily foe enters the fort and works successfully by their side to tear down what God has commanded to be built up. They see that Satan is deceiving the inexperienced and unsuspecting; yet they take it all quietly, as though they had no special interest, as though these things did not concern them. They apprehend no special danger; they see no cause to raise an alarm. To them everything seems to be going well, and they see no necessity of raising the faithful, trumpet notes of warning which they hear borne by the plain testimonies, to show the people their transgressions and the house of Israel their sins. These reproofs and warnings disturb the quiet of these sleepy, ease-loving sentinels, and they are not pleased. They say in heart, if not in words: 'This is all uncalled for. It is too severe, too harsh.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 440.

"Thus it was with all reformations before and after that time. The church continued to exist with its outward forms and ceremonies and even increased its wealth and membership, since a church is always popular in the measure that it conforms to worldly customs so that the great mass of the world may easily enter the apparent door of salvation." (Quotation from the Adventist Magazine *Christliche Hausfreund*, March 12, 1906).

8. What happened with the Waldenses and the Hussites? 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9.

"Those who remained faithful to the gospel were subjected to a bloody persecution.

"As their former brethren, entering into compact with Rome, imbibed her errors, those who adhered to the ancient faith had formed themselves into a distinct church, taking the name of 'United Brethren.' This act drew upon

them maledictions from all classes. Yet their firmness was unshaken. Forced to find refuge in the woods and caves, they still assembled to read God's Word and unite in his worship." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 119.

"Stripes and imprisonment, cold and hunger and thirst, perils by land and by sea, in the city and in the wilderness, from his own countrymen, from the heathen, and from false brethren—all this he endured for the sake of the gospel. He was 'defamed,' 'reviled,' made 'the offscouring of all things,' 'perplexed,' 'persecuted,' 'troubled on every side,' 'in jeopardy every hour,' 'always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.'" —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 296, 297.

Please, read the Missionary Report from Cuba on page 118.

13

Sabbath, June 26, 2010

TRUTHS TRAMPLED ON AND DEFENDED

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." Psalms 60:4

THE DAY OF REST IS CHANGED

- 1. How does the Catholic Church defend its apostasy from the law in contrast to the three angels' messages? What do the Protestant churches tenaciously cling to proving thus their fall from the law and the three angels' messages? 2 Thessalonians 2:2-4; Matthew 28:1-6.**

“When the secretary of Cardinal Gibbons was asked in November 1895 whether the Roman church had changed the Sabbath, his answer was: ‘Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change (Saturday Sabbath to Sunday) was her act... And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things.’” (H.F. Thomas, *Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons*, November 11, 1895).

“Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honor was given to the day by Christ or his apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that ‘mystery of lawlessness’ [2 Thessalonians 2:7, Revised Version] which, even in Paul’s day, had begun its work. Where and when did the Lord adopt this child of the papacy? What valid reason can be given for a change which the Scriptures do not sanction?” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 54.

DEVIATION AMONG THE ADVENTIST PEOPLE

2. Nevertheless, in what subtle way does the Adventist Church cover her apostasy from the law of God? What verses does she use? Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13, 14.

“As soon as the war began in Europe, this subject was thoroughly studied in America... We decided that everyone should act according to his own conscience in this matter... We should allow each citizen to take a position before the government according to his own conscience.... While we do not have certain limitations and guidelines regarding our position before the government, we should let each one act according to his own conscience. The brethren from America have taken the same moderate and tolerant stand as our brethren from Europe. We have followed the same way as our brethren in England, France and other countries.” (The president of the General Conference, A. G. Daniells, in Friedensau, July 1920, in the *Protokoll der Verhandlung mit der Gegenbewegung* [Minutes of the Negotiations with the Opposition Movement], pp. 33-38).

“The delegates of the Southern German Conference declare that they agree with the point of view of the leadership of the work regarding military service in time of war. They consider it the duty of the citizens to obey the government because, according to the authorities established by God referred to in 1 Peter 2:13, 14 and Romans 13:4, 5, they have the right to demand compliance. The General Conference Commission considered also this point of view and in its session of November 1915, as an answer to the question of the brethren in charge of the leadership in Europe, expressed its position in the following way: The brethren in the different countries of the world are totally free, in the future, as they

have been until now, to comply with the respective legal determinations.” (German Adventist Magazine *Zionswaechter*, Hamburg, March 6, 1916; see also *Curierul Misionar Bucuresti* No. 3, 1916. Romania. This resolution was approved and published in all the Conferences in Germany).

3. How did the Spirit of prophecy exactly predict this fall among the people of God? Jeremiah 12:5.

“There is a prospect before us of a continued struggle, at the risk of imprisonment, loss of property, and even of life itself, to defend the law of God, which is made void by the laws of men. In this situation worldly policy will urge an outward compliance with the laws of the land, for the sake of peace and harmony. And there are some who will even urge such a course from the Scripture: ‘Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. . . . The powers that be are ordained of God.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 712.

BELIEVERS ARE DISFELLOWSHIPED

4. Under what pretext did the Adventist Church disfellowship the members who remained faithful to the law and the three angels’ messages during the First World War? John 18:14; 11:50.

“At the beginning of the war there were isolated members who either out of a lack of solidarity or due to an exaggerated feeling of solidarity did not want to serve in the war. These people started to spread in the church and in writing their scruples of conscience in order to seduce others to do the same thing. They were warned by the congregation, but they had to be disfellowshipped because they stubbornly clung to their ideas and endangered our inner and outward peace...” (E.G. pastor and leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Württemberg, Germany, *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt*, September 26, 1918).

5. How were the Bible statements twisted in order to deceive and seduce the people? Isaiah 5:20.

“In everything that was said up to now, we have proved that, on the one hand, the Bible teaches that participation in the war is not a transgres-

sion of the sixth commandment and on the other hand that participation in the war even on the Sabbath day is not a transgression of the fourth commandment.” (from their treaty written by Josef Wintzen, called *Der Christ und der Krieg* [The Christian and the War], p, 18).

“What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? ... Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks from God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease, and will and impulse control.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 27, 28.

6. How were the disfellowshipped believers considered? Proverbs 17:15; 24:23; Exodus 23:6, 7; Leviticus 19:15.

“But the position of those who believe that because of their conscience they cannot take part in the war leads directly to anarchy and this is a sin, a transgression of the law.” (Leaflet published in Dresden, November 1915).

“At the beginning of the war our denomination divided into two parts. While ninety-eight per cent of our membership took position on Bible grounds that it was their conscientious duty to defend the fatherland with weapons and that also on the Sabbath...; two per cent, however, did not submit themselves to this united resolution, and therefore had to be disfellowshipped... They falsely call themselves preachers and Adventists, but they are not; they are deceivers...” (*Dresdener Neuesten Nachrichten*, April 12, 1918).

A REFORMATION WAS NEEDED SINCE A LONG TIME

7. What had the Lord asked many years before through the Spirit of Prophecy? Revelation 3:19.

“God is testing and proving His people, and many will not endure the test of character, the measurement of God. Many will have close work to overcome their peculiar traits of character and be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, unrebukable before God and man. Many professed Sabbathkeepers will be no special benefit to the cause of God or the church without a thorough reformation on their part. Many Sabbathkeepers are

not right before God in their political views. They are not in harmony with God's word or in union with the body of Sabbathkeeping believers. Their views do not accord with the principles of our faith. Sufficient light has been given to correct all who wish to be corrected. All who still retain political sentiments which are not in accordance with the spirit of truth are living in violation of the principles of heaven. Therefore as long as they thus remain they cannot possess the spirit of freedom and holiness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 533, 534.

"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.... A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer." —*The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1887.

"God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children." —*The Review and Herald*, February 25, 1902.

8. Under what circumstances should a reformation begin? Isaiah 60:1, 2.

"...The world is stirred with the spirit of war." [24 November 1904]. —*Christian Service*, p. 54.

"Five years later, or in the year 1909, she solemnly charged the representatives at the General Conference assembly to prepare their hearts for the terrible scenes of strife and oppression beyond anything they had conceived of, soon to be witnessed among the nations of the earth. She said, 'Very soon the strife and oppression of foreign nations will break forth with an intensity that you do not now anticipate.' (*Bulletin of the General Conference*, 1909, p. 57). Five years after this prediction was made, the great world war was precipitated..."

"While these calamities were witnessed among the nations of the earth, another scene was presented—a great reformatory movement among God's people." (*The Time and the Work*, pp. 12, 13, published by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church after the First World War).

Missionary Report from Cuba

To be read on Sabbath, June 26, 2010

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, July 3, 2010*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Whole World,

It is with great joy that I work in the Lord's vineyard. I can see that the gospel of Jesus Christ is being received in the hearts of many in new fields as well as old.

The Republic of Cuba is an island country in the Caribbean, located 90 miles south of Key West, Florida. Cuba is the principal island, which is surrounded by four main groups of islands. The main island of Cuba constitutes most of the nation's land area or 40,543 square miles (105,006 km²). The second largest island in Cuba is the Isla de la Juventud (Isle of Youth) in the southwest, with an area of 1,180 square miles (3,056 km²). Cuba has a total land area of 42,803 square miles (110,860 km²). The capital city is La Habana (Havana).

The name "Cuba" comes from the Taíno language and though the exact meaning is unclear, it may be translated either as "where fertile land is abundant" (cubao), or as "great place" (coabana).

History records that Christopher Columbus discovered Cuba before the dawn of the 28th of October 1492, landing in Bariay, a harbor near the eastern tip of the island. When Christopher Columbus first set out to discover the New World, he could not have imagined that he would see some of the world's most beautiful sights that would undoubtedly take his breath away. As gathered from his chronicles, the exotic beauty of a particular island in the Caribbean Sea left him absolutely spellbound. In his essay about the discovery of this land of Cuba, he passionately describes the splendor of its lush greenery and landscape; a land of exotic flowers and trees and wide, clear rivers. Despite finding very little gold on the island, Columbus was infatuated.

According to the last census, the population of the island in 2002 was 11,177,743 inhabitants. The official language is Spanish. The average life expectancy for Cubans is 77.08 years which is comparable to that of the United States, although Cuba is a relatively poor, developing country.

Cuba is an officially atheist state; however, it has many faiths representing the widely varying culture. Catholicism was brought to the island by the Spanish,

and is the most dominant faith. The religious landscape of Cuba is also strongly marked by syncretisms (fusions of different systems of belief) of various kinds. Catholicism is often practiced in tandem with Santería, a mixture of Catholicism and other, mainly African, faiths that include a number of cult religions. La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre (the Virgin of Cobre), the Catholic patroness of Cuba, has been syncretized with the goddess Ochún. Three hundred thousand Cubans belong to the island's 54 Protestant denominations which have grown rapidly in recent years. Cuba has small communities of Jews, Muslims and members of the Bahá'í Faith.

I would like to share with you the history of the Reform message in Cuba. Brother Carlos Kozel, sent by the General Conference, paid a missionary visit to Cuba in 1950 and won one soul for the Lord. Afterwards this soul gained another soul. In 1980, brother Raúl Escobar visited Cuba and baptized that second soul who had been waiting for baptism a long time. Both of these souls are now asleep in Jesus. The other souls that they had won have unfortunately left the church due to the difficulties they had to face.

In October 2007, I visited the "Pearl of the Caribbean," as the island is also called, accompanied by sister Ana Castillo, a Cuban-American who lives in Florida, U.S.A., and by Pastor Pedro Ruiz from Guatemala, upon request of the General Conference to reinitiate the work of the Reform Movement on the island.

Sister Castillo made arrangements for us to meet some Adventist families in Humberto Álvarez in the Matanzas province. The Lord blessed us richly as He gave us the first eight souls that were baptized. From there we traveled to Cienfuegos and although some Adventist leaders opposed us, twelve souls made a decision for the Reform. Thereafter, we went to Havana where three brothers were baptized. There was a total of twenty-three souls baptized on our first visit!

The work of God is rapidly growing and has spread to Camagüey, Cienfuegos, Matanzas, Granma and Pinar del Río. At present we have a total of 70 members and were therefore able to organize the Cuban Field Conference. We have six Bible workers and two candidates to be ordained as elders. We fervently ask the Lord Jesus and hope that soon, maybe by the time this offering is gathered, the number of members will exceed one hundred.

However, as the work grows so do the needs increase:

1. We need help for the members affected by the hurricanes. Since Cuba is an island country in the Caribbean, in 2008 it was hit by three devastating hurricanes that destroyed many of our members' and their families' houses. Many Cuban believers who live in the USA, brethren from Mexico, as well as the General Conference, have provided help for the victims, but there are still about 25 homeless families that need your help.

2. We need funds to print new publications and to buy a little printing and photocopy machine. The Cuban Field needs materials such as lessons, brochures, and books in order to be able to give Bible studies. Since it is not easy to get literature from abroad, we wish to have our own little printing press

3. We need to buy bicycles and motorcycles. One of our greatest challenges is transportation; therefore we need bicycles and motorcycles to be able to give Bible studies and make missionary visits since at times we have to travel 20 kilometers to visit an interested soul.

4. We need to build a church. The members in Havana need to buy a plot to build a church where they can come together.

We need to gain the Cuban people for the Lord and bring the message of truth to the most remote corner of the island. In order to do that we need the solidarity of God's people. Therefore, I appeal to your good hearts to generously contribute with a voluntary offering so that we may be able to take care of the most urgent needs of our new members and continue adding to the church those that are to be saved.

Your brother in Christ,

—Martín A. Lagunas Ramos
Subregional Representative
of North and Central America and the Caribbean