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# Readings for the Week of Prayer

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## Introduction:

**W**E ARE again, as God's people, standing before the Week of Prayer, and the question, "How can we make of it a truly blessed week?" is of the utmost importance. The danger that this constantly returning Week of Prayer might become a mere form is always present, for which reason we must not lose sight of the basic meaning for ourselves and for the church.

We, as well as many others in the world, are conscious of the fact that life has become more serious than ever before, and that the condition in the world and the church is compelling us to draw nearer to God. The want of the world, and the problems that confront us as God's people, impel every sincere believer to earnest prayer. We ought to seek the Lord as never before in the most earnest manner. Without a living communion with God we are lost, and have no strength to resist the modern temptations to sin. The spirit of the world, materialism, intemperance, and world-mindedness are hindering the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget that, in the sight of the world, we are but an unim-

portant, poor people, and we can easily be crushed underfoot by Satan and his helpers. For this reason we, more than any other movement, need the assistance and help of the Holy Spirit. It is the great assignment resting upon our shoulders which impels us to seek the Lord, that He might impart strength to us to fulfill this obligation. Millions of people still wait for the last message of mercy. Let us therefore in this Week of Prayer pray for greater things from the Lord, and expect mighty things to be done by Him, alone.

We are responsible to warn our friends, relatives and neighbors of the soon-coming day of the Lord. Within the circle of the family and relatives a great work needs to be done, for there are many who are not acquainted with the truth and the work of God. Yet, this work often seems to be the most difficult, for which reason we must ask the Lord for special wisdom to reach the hearts of those who are so closely connected with us by the family-ties.

In this reformation we need a new, special experience with the Spirit of the Lord to

win souls for God. Let us therefore, in a special manner, pray for our workers, ministers, Bibleworkers, church leaders and deacons. They have a hard task, and the churches should remember them in their prayers. Also, let us pray for the literary work among us.

Yet, paramount above all this is one thing, which ought to affect our hearts and urge us to come to a more intimate relationship with the Lord--namely, to gain the victory over all our sins, and be willing to consecrate our all to the Lord. We must place ourselves and our means upon the altar of the Lord.

Let us not forget that prayer is a means to make possible the impossible. By prayer we may open the doors of heaven. Public prayer, above all, is a mighty power. By such prayer, Israel of old has gained many precious victories over their enemies.

During times of worry, danger and distress, fasting and prayer have always been a means to obtain the assistance of heaven and the answers to prayers.

The Week of Prayer should also be a week of complete self-denial. The General Conference purposes to enter into new territories, and for this reason means are needed. Every believer has the privilege to co-operate in this, and we know that God loves the cheerful giver. Therefore, in order that the Lord's work may be finished, we ought to bring truly sacrifice offerings of the means that have been entrusted to us. May these rich benefits of God be poured out upon His people, so that this Week of Prayer may be a real blessing to all who take part in it.

Your Brother in the Lord,

A. Ringelberg.

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#### T H E V A L U E O F P R A Y E R

by William Cowper

WHAT various hindrances we meet  
In coming to the mercy-seat!  
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer  
But wishes to be often there?

Prayer makes the darkest cloud withdraw;  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.

When Moses stood with arms spread wide,  
Success was found on Israel's side;  
But when, through weariness, they failed,  
That moment Amalek prevailed.

Have you no words? Ah, think again;  
Words flow apace when you complain,  
And fill your fellow-creatures' ears  
With the sad tales of all your cares.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent,  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would oftener be,  
"Hear what the Lord hath done for me!"

Reading No. 1 - Friday, December 9, 1960.

## The Necessary Preparation

by Mrs. E. G. White

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. . . .

Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from his word and the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.

Let each put the question to his own heart, "How have we fallen into this state of spiritual feebleness and dissension? Have we not brought upon ourselves the frown of God because our actions do not correspond with our faith? Have we not been seeking the friendship and applause of the world rather than the presence of Christ and a deeper knowledge of his will?" Examine your own hearts, judge your own course. Consider what associates you are choosing. Do you seek the company of the wise, or are you willing to choose worldly associates, companions who fear not God, and obey not the gospel?

Are your recreations such as to impart moral and spiritual vigor? Will they lead to purity of thought and action? Impurity is to-day wide-spread, even among the professed followers of Christ. Passion is unrestrained; the animal propensities are gaining strength by indulgence, while the moral powers are constantly becoming weaker. Many are eagerly participating in worldly, demoralizing amusements which God's word forbids. Thus they sever their connection

with God, and rank themselves with the pleasure-lovers of the world. The sins that destroyed the antediluvians and the cities of the plain exist to-day—not merely in heathen lands, not only among popular professors of Christianity, but with some who profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man. If God should present these sins before you as they appear in his sight, you would be filled with shame and terror.

And what has caused this alarming condition? Many have accepted the theory of the truth, who have had no true conversion. I know whereof I speak. There are few who feel true sorrow for sin; who have deep, pungent convictions of the depravity of the unregenerate nature. The heart of stone is not exchanged for a heart of flesh. Few are willing to fall upon the Rock, and be broken.

No matter who you are, or what your life has been, you can be saved only in God's appointed way. You must repent; you must fall helpless on the Rock, Christ Jesus. You must feel your need of a physician, and of the one only remedy for sin, the blood of Christ. This remedy can be secured only by repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the work is yet to be begun by many who profess to be Christians, and even to be ministers of Christ. Like the Pharisees of old, many of you feel no need of a Saviour. You are self-sufficient, self-exalted. Said Christ, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The blood of Christ will avail for none but those who feel their need of its cleansing power.

What surpassing love and condescension, that when we had no claim upon divine mercy, Christ was willing to undertake our redemption! But our great Physician requires of every soul unquestioning submission. We are never to prescribe for our own case. Christ must have the entire management of will and action.

Many are not sensible of their condition, and their danger; and there is much in the nature and manner of Christ's work averse

to every worldly principle, and opposed to the pride of the human heart. Jesus requires us to trust ourselves wholly to His hands, and confide in His love and wisdom.

We may flatter ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our moral character has been correct, and we need not humble ourselves before God, like the common sinner. But we must be content to enter into life in the very same way as the chief of sinners. We must renounce our own righteousness and plead for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to us. We must depend wholly upon Christ for our strength. Self must die. We must acknowledge that all we have is from the exceeding riches of divine grace. Let this be the language of our hearts, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

Genuine faith is followed by love, and love by obedience. All the powers and passions of the converted man are brought under the control of Christ. His Spirit is a renewing power, transforming to the divine image all who will receive it. It makes me sad to say that this experience is understood by but few who profess the truth. Very many follow on in their own ways, and indulge their sinful desires, and yet profess to be disciples of Christ. They have never submitted their hearts to God. Like the foolish virgins, they have neglected to obtain the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps. I tell you, my brethren, that a large number who profess to believe and even to teach the truth, are under the bondage of sin. Base passions defile the mind and corrupt the soul. Some who are in the vilest iniquity have borrowed the livery of Heaven, that they may serve Satan more effectively.

"Every one who is born of God doth not commit sin." He feels that he is the purchase of the blood of Christ, and bound by the most solemn vows to glorify God in his body and in his spirit which are God's. The love of sin and the love of self are subdued in him. He daily asks, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts the service of Jesus as the truest freedom. The law of God is his delight. Instead of seeking to bring down the divine commands, to accord

with his deficiencies, he is constantly striving to rise to the level of their perfection.

Such an experience must be ours if we would be prepared to stand in the day of God. Now, while probation lingers, while mercy's voice is still heard, is the time for us to put away our sins. While moral darkness covers the earth like a funeral pall, the light of God's standard-bearers must shine the more brightly, showing the contrast between Heaven's light and Satan's darkness.

God has made ample provision that we may stand perfect in his grace, wanting in nothing, waiting for the appearing of our Lord. Are you ready? Have you the wedding garment on? That garment will never cover deceit, impurity, corruption or hypocrisy. The eye of God is upon you. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We may conceal our sins from the eyes of men, but we can hide nothing from our Maker. ...

Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now. "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Some—yes, a large number—have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. These persons are ever slow to heed the testimonies of warning, reproof, and instruction indited by the Holy Spirit. They believe in the wrath of God, but put forth no earnest efforts to escape it. They believe in Heaven, but make no sacrifice to obtain it. They believe in the value of the soul, and that ere long its redemption ceaseth forever. Yet they neglect the most precious opportunities to make their peace with God.

They may read the Bible, but its threatenings do not alarm or its promises win them. They approve things that are excellent, yet they follow the way in which God has forbidden them to go. They know a refuge, but do not avail themselves of it. They know a remedy for sin, but do not use it. They know the right, but have no relish for it. All their knowledge will but increase their condemnation. They have never tasted and learned by experience that the Lord is good.

To become a disciple of Christ is to deny self and follow Jesus through evil as well

as good report. Few are doing this now. Many prophecy falsely, and the people love to have it so; but what will be done in the end thereof? What will be the decision when their work, with all its results, shall be brought in review before God?

The Christian life is a warfare. The apostle Paul speaks of wrestling against principalities and powers as he fought the good fight of faith. Again, he declares, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Ah, no. Today sin is cherished and excused. The sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God, does not cut to the soul. Has religion changed? Has Satan's enmity to God abated? A religious life once presented difficulties, and demanded self-denial. All is made very easy now. And why is this? The professed people of God have compromised with the powers of darkness.

There must be a revival of the straight testimony. The path to Heaven is no smoother now than in the days of the Saviour. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed, if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom, and to receive the kingdom of Heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained? ...

"He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk, even as He walked. And if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This conformity to Jesus will not be unobserved by the world. It is a subject of notice and comment. The Christian may not be conscious of the great change; for the more closely he resembles Christ in character, the more humble will be his opinion of himself; but it will be seen and felt by all around him. Those who have had the deepest experience in the things of God, are the farthest removed from pride or self-exaltation. They have the humblest thoughts of self, and the most exalted conceptions of the glory and excellence of Christ. They feel that the lowest place in his service is too honorable for them. ...

It is such workers that are needed in the cause of God to-day. The self-sufficient, the envious and jealous, the critical and fault-finding, can well be spared from his sacred work. They should not be tolerated in the ministry, even though they may, apparently, have accomplished some good. God is not straitened for men or means. He calls for workers who are true and faithful, pure and holy; for those who have felt their need of the atoning blood of Christ and the sanctifying grace of his Spirit. ...

I am deeply solicitous that our people should preserve the living testimony among them; and that the church should be kept pure from the unbelieving element. Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches"? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from him. ...

The Jews always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. "The vine," our Lord would seem to say, "which you prize so highly, is a symbol. I am the reality; I am the true vine. As a nation you prize the vine; as sinners you should prize me above all things earthly. The branch cannot live separated from the vine; no more can you live unless you are abiding in me." ...

The Father is the vine-dresser. He skillfully and mercifully prunes every fruit-bearing branch. Those who share Christ's suffering and reproach now, will share his glory hereafter. He "will not be ashamed to call them brethren." His angels minister to them. His second appearing will be as the Son of man, thus even in his glory identifying him with humanity. To those who have united themselves to him, he declares, "Though a mother may forget her child, yet will not I forget thee. I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. Thou art continually before me."

Oh, what amazing privileges are proffered us!

Will we put forth most earnest efforts to form this alliance with Christ, through

which alone these blessings are attained? Will we break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by turning unto the Lord? Skepticism and infidelity are wide-spread, Christ asked the question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" We must cherish a living, active faith. The permanence of our faith is the condition of our union. ...

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. ...

It is God who holds in his hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; he will not always be trifled with.

Already his judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm. ...

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 eye-salve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eye-salve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the viles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

Reading No. 2 - Sabbath, December 19, 1960.

## Jesus is Coming Soon

by A. W. Doerschler, U.S.A.

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.*

### IN NEED OF COMFORT

**J**ESUS WAS about to lay down His life for the sinful race. Once more He gathered His beloved disciples for the last Easter supper; once more He showed them His love and humility. But then He added a very sorrowful note to His services of love, telling them of His going away to a place where they could not follow Him. This they could not understand, for had they not followed Him day after day wherever He went? Already they had been made very sad when He, in a seeming distrustful manner, told them that one of them would betray Him. Now their sky was overclouded with another deep shadow, as he told them He was about to

leave them to go to a place where they could not go with Him. Jesus knew that His disciples needed comfort in this, their great disappointment and sorrow. Therefore He continued His discourse, telling them: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Then He added something that was to make their hearts thrill with hope and delight. He said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.."

### A PROMISE

"I will come again!—I will come again!" The disciples did not then fully realize the significance of these words. After their beloved Master had led them to Mount Olivet, spread forth His hands in a final blessing

and loving farewell, and was lifted up before their eyes and taken up to Heaven, they felt a terrible loneliness stealing over their hearts. But, behold! two messengers in glistening white apparel had been sent from the realms of glory to cheer their hearts anew with hope and aspiration.

"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." (Acts 1:11.) With this promise, spoken by celestial angels, the disciples received a definite assurance that Jesus, their beloved Master, would some day come again to take them home with Him. And they knew that ".all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen,.." (2 Cor. 1:20.) As the word 'Amen' denotes a ratification of every prayer, meaning "verily, so be it," so the promise of Christ's return was to become the final and favorite topic of meditation for all true Christians throughout the ages. Even before His first Advent as a babe in Bethlehem, Enoch, the seventh after Adam, proclaimed Christ's return, coming with ten thousands of His saints. He was the first Advent-believer on record, followed by a host of patriarchs and prophets, and concluding with the beloved John on lonely Patmos, saying, "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20.)

#### THE KEYNOTE

As a vein of gold grows from a mere strand in the beginning, and increases in size, becoming larger and larger, till it attains to a solid bed of gold, --so has the teaching of Christ's glorious return been growing in strength throughout the centuries, until in our day it is being proclaimed with thunderous acclamation by thousands of messengers over radio and television, by the press, and from the pulpits of most of the denominations of Christendom. Yet, there is one special people who made this teaching their own, being raised in the course of events which clustered around Bible prophecy, --the Advent people, deriving their name from the glorious hope, deeply imbedded in their hearts. And although tested severely in their expectations over a century ago, they took comfort in these inspiring words, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For

ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 19:35-37.) To this the Spirit of prophecy places the following emphasis, "The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message." --Test., Vol.6, p.406.

As Advent believers, this message of hope must be carried uppermost in our hearts; it must become the stimulus of all our actions, and fill our entire being with joy.

#### SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Signs, multiplying on every hand show that the coming of Jesus is imminent. You have read this many times before, and perhaps it has become monotonous to you. But I am prepared to say to you today that, for your own good, you should focus your entire attention upon the events that are at the present time transpiring all around you, for they are indeed momentous. Certainly, no one is compelled to believe; no one should be scared into acknowledging the truth. Yet, there is an intelligent approach of examining the meaning of the current events in politics, religion, and social life. It is an age-old truth that certain causes are followed by certain results, and as the sowing has been, so will be the reaping.

#### a) *in Politics*

Politicians and statesmen alike agree that a mighty catastrophe is looming before the entire world. The political philosophies of the East and those of the West are diagonally opposed to each other. Peaceful co-existence is wishful thinking, but an impossibility for any length of time. While talks of peace and disarmament increase, the arms-race is gaining greater and still greater momentum with the invention of new missiles, rockets, and other death-dealing devices. The ensuing clash is inevitable; it cannot be avoided. To ignore this fact would be the greatest folly imaginable. The Wise Man of old left us these words of warning, "A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Prov. 22:3.) Jesus, in His prophecy of latter-day events, calls on us to pay attention to certain developments among national relations as a sign that His

coming is near at hand. He tells us distinctly that just preceding His return "Men's hearts" will be "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth..." (Luke 21: 26.) If ever there were a time when deadly fear gripped all the nations, it is today. The end is, as it were, just around the corner. Let us not be deceived by apparent prosperity everywhere. Study history and you will see that Babylon perished at the height of its glory. So did Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and many others. The antediluvians were planting and building, having a grand time of gait, when the flood struck them. So it was also when Sodom was overthrown. It will be the same today.

#### b) *in Religion*

On the religious horizon it is very obvious that the trend is definitely towards a truce between Protestantism and the Vatican at Rome. The dark chapters of the bloody massacres of millions of faithful martyrs by the antichristian power during its reign of terror, are entirely forgotten and ignored. Worse than this is the fact that they have never abandoned their former principles of crushing Protestantism, and setting their church authority above state legislation. The aims of Rome are the same today, as they were centuries ago. We are forewarned as follows: "The Protestants of the United States will be foremost.., they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power,..". "She (the Catholic Church, ins.) is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike." --Great Controversy, pp. 588, 581.

Over seventy years have passed since this was written. America, once a fortress of Protestantism because of its sound Constitution, which guarantees the free exercise of one's religion, is now fast succumbing to the Roman influence. Once America is controlled by the Vatican power, the Constitution is bound to fall, and the foregoing prediction will be literally fulfilled. The image to the beast will be set up on short

notice, and we will experience such scenes of intolerance, tests, trials, ordeals, and persecutions, as the strongest imagination can not picture. The false Sabbath will be urged upon all mankind in opposition to God's holy day of rest. This is another sign of the near return of Jesus, fulfilling itself before our eyes. We need no further proof to know that the end is very, very near.

#### c) *in Social Life and Nature*

Another unfailing evidence is the disintegration of society and family-life everywhere. Crime is on the increase. Moral life is at the lowest ebb in history, proving the words of Jesus, when He compared the last days with the time of Noah and Lot. And lastly, we mention the ever-increasing tempo of calamities on land, water, and in the air, that strikes mankind without a moment's notice. Any person who is endowed with an average reasoning power can conclude that our days on earth, indeed, are numbered; that everything points to a culmination, a crisis, a dead-end in the road, and that civilization is travelling downwards at an ever-increasing speed, to be smashed to atoms in the bottomless pit. The stone without hands in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is about to fall, to grind the kingdoms of this earth to powder. This thought should make us tremble in anticipation. It should startle us from our dreams and make us realize the solemnity of the hour.

#### OUR PREPARATION

In this Week of Prayer, let us solemnly examine our hearts to know whether we actually long for the coming of Jesus, or whether this world has become attractive to us, feeling rich and increased with earthly goods. I ask, Are we homesick to be with Jesus? Remember, He will come, and will not tarry! O, what preparation is needed to welcome our Royal Guest!

Of all the stirring appeals of the Lord to His people who live just before His second coming, none is of greater significance than the parable of the ten virgins. Do you understand its solemn application in your personal life? Does it speak to your heart? to your soul? Does it stir you to greater alertness, to greater preparedness? Think of it! all ten virgins were asleep.



Yes, dear ones, let us remember the words spoken about the accurate fulfillment of Bible Prophecy, as quoted in Hab.2:3, "...at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Gather courage in the Lord! Re-examine the prophecies relating to the Saviour's glorious return and you will know that Jesus is coming very soon.

#### THE OIL

For us there is but one question to be answered individually: Do I have the oil of the Holy Spirit in my lamp? or has Satan succeeded to harden my mind and emotions to the tender impressions of the "still small voice" from heaven? Remember, the Holy Spirit dwells only in a broken and contrite heart. Do I acknowledge my sinful, undone condition? or do I ignore my shortcomings? Can you answer this and similar questions in the affirmative? There remains but a very short time to prepare for eternity. Listen to these inspired words: "The end is near, stealing upon us stealthily, imperceptibly, like the noiseless approach of a thief in the night. May the Lord grant that we shall no longer sleep as do others, but that we shall watch and be sober." —Test., Vol.9, p.135.

#### HOW LONG YET?

How often I have been approached by those of long standing in the truth, asking, "How long do you think it will be till the Lord comes?" This question, no doubt, stems from disappointed hopes and from tiredness of waiting. And—humanly speaking—there is ground for such a question. My answer has always been the same. It is found in the following explanations of the Spirit of prophecy: "It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But 'they could not enter in because of unbelief.' ...In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed, and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up

to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning, and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out." —Great Controversy, p.458. "If every soldier of Christ had done His duty, if every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. While men have slept, Satan has stolen a march upon us." —Test., Vol.9, p.29.

This answer is concise and to the point. It therefore becomes obvious that it is not we who are waiting for Jesus to come, but in reality, it is He who is waiting for us to get ready. What is He waiting for? He expects of us to develop faith, and then in this faith to go forth in proclaiming His coming "for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come." God's people must be a missionary people. He who does not witness of the soon coming of Jesus, really has no faith in this doctrine, and actually hinders and retards this solemn event. The fault lies with us, dear brother and sister, because our faith is not yet made perfect by the obedience to the truth we profess. What we need in our days of waiting are not sweet-sounding words and many good intentions, but rousing missionary activities. We need active proof for our internal conviction. "Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God." —Test., Vol.6, p.450.

#### HOME SICKNESS

Who of us has not sweet memories that cluster around our earthly home?—the place where mother and dad gave us their paternal affection? It reminds me of an incident I experienced years ago in the state of North Dakota. While visiting the homes of our believers, one of our brethren asked me to drive him a short ways into the country, where he would like to show me something. I gladly obliged. We drove over a lonely, rolling prairie road until the brother told me to stop at a certain spot. Although quite elderly, he was the first one to get out, and I followed him. He pointed to what

appeared to be some rocks grouped together. His voice trembled with deep emotion and his eyes gathered tears as he said, "This was our first homestead after coming from Russia in the early days." It touched me deeply. Here, our dear brother, old and grey, was still remembering his young days,—his earthly home.

What a deep, longing desire for the heavenly home is expressed by our dear Sister White in these words: "Then the angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I can stay here no longer; all things on earth look so dreary. I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better land. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest." "...With our lives we should honor Him, and with holy conversation show that we are born from above, that this world is not our home, but that we are pilgrims and strangers here, traveling to a better country." --Early Writings, pp.20,113.

#### HOMeward BOUND

"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. O, 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 ever 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." —Test., Vol.8, p.253.

Dear ones in Christ, do we long for the heavenly home? If we have tasted in spirit of the joys of heaven, there will be nothing here on earth to satisfy us. Will you come with me? Will you gladly bear the cross now, with all kinds of affliction, hardships, deprivations, and earthly loss, to gain the crown everlasting? God bless you in your decision!

"No burdens yonder, not a single care,  
When home is entered, not a load to bear;  
No burdens yonder, all will be laid down,  
Before we share His glory, and enter  
our heavenly home.

No trials yonder, all the testing done,  
The schooldays over, and the prizes won.  
No parting yonder, and no sad goodbys;  
No pain, no sickness, and no weeping eyes.  
But, best of all, my Saviour I shall see,  
The future bright, the past all understood,  
We'll be at home forever and all is good."

—Selected.

Yes, Jesus is coming very, very soon! How soon it will be depends on you and me. Let us speed His coming by daily dying to the world and living for Jesus. Let us, during this Week of Prayer, pledge ourselves, body, soul and spirit, to the finishing of the work within ourselves, and in the world-wide field beyond, that we may be able to say with the beloved John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." May God grant this in mercy!

AMEN!

Reading No. 3 - Sunday, December 11, 1960.

## A Message to All the World

by A. Mueller, Germany

"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Numbers 14:21.

**W**HEN the plan of redemption was laid, the purpose was already included that the gospel

should be proclaimed to the whole earth and its inhabitants. The propagation of this plan of redemption has been marvelous in its history to this very day. Our Lord always found means to frustrate man's plans, when laid by the powers of darkness with

the intention of destroying the divine plan. Beginning in Paradise, with the shadow of death spreading over the whole world, the Lord always provided ways and means to accomplish His will. The Spirit of the Lord early influenced the descendents of Adam to "call upon the name of the Lord." Gen. 4:26.

#### MESSENGERS OF GOD FOR THE WORLD

The message of the Lord's name was ever directed to the whole world, and it ended in the first time-period of 1600 years with the message of the Preacher of Righteousness, the patriarch Noah. Only eight souls, my means of the ark, were saved from the world-catastrophe, and they were the nucleus to start a new time-period. However, before long, men began again to walk in their own ways, until God had to intervene to keep His name alive. The Lord called upon Abraham to proclaim His name. In continued line, up through the twelve sons of Jacob, the Lord's name was magnified. In a special way, Joseph, one of the twelve sons, was employed to proclaim the true God to the most prominent nation of that time. By Joseph all of Egypt became enlightened, and by the dwelling of Israel in Egypt the name of God became known.

#### MOSES AND HIS WORK

The time had come when God would give the proclamation of His name a greater significance. After the marvelous preparation of Moses for the work of God, the comforting word reaches him amidst the great disputations with Pharaoh, "And in every deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." Exodus 9:16. Egypt and many other nations received through Moses a message from God, and to this day his work has been preserved by his books as a lightgiving power among the nations. The works of Moses stand as a shining example in the history of humanity.

#### GOD'S PURPOSE WITH ISRAEL

"God chose Israel to reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God's will. In the early days of Israel,

the nations of the world, through corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. They had once known Him; but because 'they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, ... their foolish heart was darkened.' Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them an opportunity of again becoming acquainted with Him through His chosen people. Through the teachings of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before all nations, and all who would look up to Him should live. Christ was the foundation of the Jewish economy. The whole system of types and symbols was a compacted prophecy of the gospel, a presentation in which were bound up the promises of redemption.

But the people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God's representatives. They forgot God, and failed to fulfill their holy mission. The blessings they received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages they appropriated for their own glorification. ... They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow-men of religious guidance and a holy example." —Acts of the Apostles, pp.14,15.

It grieved God greatly that Israel retained the leadership in the principles of truth but for a short time. The glorious times under David and Solomon soon paled away, and Jerusalem, having been placed among the nations as a light, lost its importance.

#### INDIVIDUAL MESSENGERS OF GOD

In spite of all this, the Lord in His mercy made His name known to the nations by individuals among the apostatized Israel and Judah. We know the story of the young maiden from Israel, who as a captive in the house of Naaman, general of Syria, accomplished a special work as messenger of God.

By the rejection of Judah and the Babylonian captivity, the position of the Israelite people as the messenger of God was past. Yet the Lord is not dependent upon numbers; he selects single God-fearing men and places them in the midst of the greatest nations. The Lord takes Daniel with his three friends and places them before kings and governments in Babylon and Medo-Persia, as witnesses for heaven. The

king of Babylon is obliged to make known the true and living God before his vast empire. In like manner king Darius becomes a messenger of God and extends the following proclamation: "Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast forever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worked signs and wonders in heaven and in earth." Dan. 6:25-27.

There were also Nehemiah and Ezra who stood in prominent positions in Persia as messengers of God, as also Mordecai and Esther, and by them the name of God was revealed among the Heathen.

We have no inspired written records from the last prophet of the Old Covenant till the days of Christ. Yet in this time of dispersion of the Jews the Lord did not permit the knowledge of the true God to be obliterated. Alexander the Great and his successors in Greece received knowledge of the divine truth. The Old Testament was in the year 277 B.C. translated into the Greek language, and became a widely circulated book, receiving great esteem. Supposedly, 100,000 Jews have resided in Alexandria.

#### AT THE TURNING-POINT OF TIME

Now backslidden Judaism and the surrounding nations were to come into the influence of the greatest messengers of truth. Emperors and kings, without their knowledge, were employed and called upon by God to co-operate in the propagation of the great plan of redemption. The most powerful emperor of Rome, Augustus, had to issue a decree throughout his realm that all the world be taxed; by which he caused Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, to go to Bethlehem, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah 5:1. The light began to shine throughout the world, and was never to be extinguished again. A turning-point of time had come, unfolding and revealing the plan of redemption more completely. In the final outcome the entire world is to come into the influence of the eternal gospel and will be filled with the glory of the Lord.

#### THE GREAT MISSIONARY COMMISSION

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. 28:20.

Here we have the great Missionary commission which our Saviour left for His disciples after three and one-half years of strenuous work. It was a small band of illiterate and worldly uneducated men. It is astonishing how to just these men the greatest and all-embracing commission ever given on this earth, was conferred. At that moment they did not understand the great significance and extent of this missionary task.

Yet, there was one thing which they did understand, namely, that the work to be accomplished rested upon the foundation of the prophetic Word. As living witnesses of the great events during the life of Jesus, His suffering, His death, and His resurrection, they were able to proclaim what they had seen and heard. The message of a sin pardoning Saviour was living within them, and they were able to proclaim the plan of redemption more fully. The things they had learned from their Master during their time of schooling made them capable of preaching reconciliation in Christ's stead. They would not wait till people would come to them, but they went with their message to the people, and with sacred earnestness they worked for souls to free them from the misery of sin. They were always to remember their missionary commission, delivered to them by the Master, Himself.

In the name of the three Highest Ones they were to venture forth, and the least show and outer display they would use, the more would be their success and influence for good. The contents of the great missionary commission was clearly outlined, and they knew the message they were to carry to the world. Nothing were they to add to it, neither diminish ought from what the Master had commanded them. Until this day this has remained the same, for all doctrines we teach must be based upon a "thus saith the Lord."

Also, the disciples were to know that their message would be met by fierce oppo-

sition; they were to go as sheep among the wolves. With principalities and powers, yes, with the evil spirits under heaven they were to contend, but sure victory would be theirs. The church of Jesus Christ shall live, beyond the graves of its persecutors.

During the course of history many commands have been given by the great men of earth, yet none has remained in force; but the missionary commission of Jesus is being prosecuted today as it was 1,900 years ago, and the banner of the cross of Christ is being hoisted upon the ruins of the vanquished powers of Satan. The commands of governments have often been carried out by blood, pain, tears, and much suffering; the command of our Lord imparts peace, joy, and blessing.

#### THE MISSIONARY DOMAIN

Jesus said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Here the marching route and borderline is distinctly marked, showing the messengers of the Lord how far they were to go. A mighty task! At the farewell from His co-workers, the Master divined for them, "And ye shall be witnesses unto me at Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the world." Their place of labor was first to be at Jerusalem, the center of God's original church, and from there they were to set their stakes of endeavor farther and still farther. The Lord Himself powerfully assisted them by the election of Paul, who became the great apostle to the Heathen and in a short time made known the gospel message to great parts of Asia-minor and Europe. Paul and his co-workers were accused at Thessalonica, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

As seen from the prophetic letters to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3, there were large Christian churches in Asia-minor at the turn of the first century, which exerted a powerful influence in the world. The cross of Christ was elevated in the larger cities of the cultural cities of that time, and the standard-bearers of the Lord died for their beloved Master at the places of their activity.

It is obvious from the annals of history of the church of Christ, that the disciples of the Lord faithfully performed the miss-

ionary command, in discipleship, as in their work in far-away lands.

Peter was crucified under Nero; Andrew at Achaja; James was beheaded by Herod Agrippa; Phillip suffered martyrdom in Phrygia; Bartholomew in Armenia; Thomas, called Dydimus, was stoned to death in India; Matthew suffered cruel death in Ethiopia; James, the righteous, was killed in Jerusalem; Jude in Persia; Simon Zelotes in Jerusalem; only John, after being marvelously saved from a caldron of boiling oil, died a natural death. Of the remaining authors of the New Testament, Mark died of his wounds in Alexandria, after having fought with wild beasts; Luke was hanged on a tree in Greece; and Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was felled by the hatchet of Nero in Rome.

#### THE LAST MESSAGE TO THE WHOLE WORLD

With Christ, under the symbol of a beautiful white horse and its rider, having a crown on his head and a bow in his hand, the message of the everlasting gospel entered into the world. The kings and great men on earth trembled at the message of peace and pardon. The message of the gospel received in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gave impetus and strength, and it was heard in all known languages. Here we have an example for the time when God shall finish his work here on earth. We are being told that the message from heaven will, to a much greater extent, fill the whole earth. This will be fulfilled during the pouring-out of the latter rain.

All important events in this world, standing in close conjunction with the accomplishment of the plan of redemption, have a prophetic foundation, and are not only announced once, but several times by several writers of the Bible. Thus we have received fundamental principles through the prophetic books of Daniel and the Revelation to be proclaimed in the last message to the inhabitants of the world. Two time-prophecies of the prophet Daniel, and five from the Revelation are proclaiming the importance of the last message of God to all the world.

The threefold angel's message of Revelation 14:6-12 comprises the finishing work of God through His children. Its contents embraces all the truths of the Bible that

are needed in order to be saved from the destruction of the world. This message is directed to all peoples and tongues, therefore being of universal importance. From the beginning the Lord provided all precautions and now, in this last time, the whole earth shall be enlightened. The only ensuing question for us is this, How will God accomplish this work and bring this message to the whole world? We are eager to answer, By His Spirit! It's spoken well; yet this Spirit can only work through souls who place themselves into the service of God. We are confessing to belong to the Lord's congregation, and are united as such. Yet what does congregation stand for? It stands for being united for a purpose, namely to partake in the same endeavor, partake in the same work, partake in sacrifice for the cause of the Lord.

"The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers." ---Testimonies, Vol. 9, p.117.

"He who becomes a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost." ---Ministry of Healing, p.105.

"Those who have united with the Lord in the covenant of service are under bonds to unite with Him in the great, grand work of soul-saving." ---Testimonies, Vol.7, p.19.

Our Lord and Master has been our Helper time and again; He will continue to help us in all our distress and difficulties. Should we not come to His help and pull His gospel net to the shore?

Dear brethren and sisters, again a year has passed into eternity. What has been neglected in co-operative effort in building the temple of the Lord, can never be recalled. Nevertheless the Lord leaves us the joyful news that He will use us in the last hour. It will mean a blessing to others, and yet, the greatest blessing is waiting for you. If we help the Lord, He will also help us!

AMEN!

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Reading No. 4 - Wednesday, December 14, 1960.

## In God's Hand

by S. Gutknecht, Africa

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*  
Isa. 55:8,9.

**W**E MIGHT stride over sunny hills or through dark valleys, crowned with success and admired by humans, or be visited with failure and crisis, to be forgotten by man; severe tests and dark hours might come upon God's cause and His people, that we might say with Elijah, "I am left alone ..", nevertheless we have the assurance that we, ourselves, and His cause are resting in God's hand. One thing we must believe, namely that God's ways are not our ways, and God's thoughts are not our thoughts.

The greatest, and in many ways the hardest lesson for us to learn is simple belief. Yet the last church needs above anything else a never-wavering trust and perfect patience, in order to have the precious promises fulfilled to them, after they have done the will of God.

The Seer of Patmos hears the angel say, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus." Rev.14:12.

There is a people, gathered by the three-fold angel's message, which carries the three highly significant marks of identification. They are existent, even though we might not see them nor recognize them. God's eye beholds them.

Most certainly, Christ will come in a little while and not tarry, and as concerning this time it is said, "The just shall live by faith." Heb. 10:37,38. In this same letter to the Hebrews, Paul brings this mighty Son of God to view, who is not only destined to be heir over all things, by whom God has created the world, but who, by His mighty word, upholds all things, and now after receiving all power in heaven and earth is seated at the right hand of God. There He pleads as merciful High Priest for His last church, and comforts them through His Holy Spirit.

Indeed, Christ has upheld all things from the beginning by His mighty word. He has always been with His church and never placed her ultimate triumph in question. When our first parents succumbed to the deceptions of Satan, there came from the Throne of God the glad tidings of salvation of the promised Seed. When the blood of the first martyr had been shed by the hand of his own brother, God gave Adam in Seth (whose name means replacement) another son. During the time of Enos, the son of Seth, man began "to call upon the name of the Lord". Enoch, the seventh after Adam, who was a true Adventist, walked in such close communion with the Lord amidst his wicked generation, that the Lord took him.

After the deluge, when mankind sank low into idolatry, God drew the attention of Abraham, the only God-fearing decendent of Shem, to the starry firmament and assured him, "So shall thy seed be." The father of the faithful, having full confidence and seeing in his day already the days of Christ, went to Canaan, a strange country with a strange language, there to erect altars and preaching the name of the Lord, ignoring the giants and the walled cities that were there. Yes, his faith was so strong, so real, that, instead of building a city he lived in tents, because he waited for the city of God as his eternal heritage.

Jacob in his flight and his loneliness, saw in his dream the ladder uniting heaven and earth. In his weakest hour he finds heaven on earth. On the eve of his life, when his eyes had become dim, he saw by faith a scepter rise in Judah, to whom all the people could flee.

God, in a marvelous manner, prepared the way for the seed of Abraham to go into Egypt. A lad had strange-sounding dreams. He saw the sheaves in the harvest field bow

down before his sheaf, and the sun, moon, and stars bowed down before him. In his child-like simplicity he related his dreams. This aroused the jealousies of his older brethren, and they decided to kill him in order to see what would become of his dreams. Yet Christ, who upholds all things through His mighty word, made their wickedness not only serve in the interest of Joseph, but to be a blessing for themselves. From prison Joseph came to the throne of Egypt, and when he saw his brethren, he remembered the dreams and said to them, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." The road might have been ever so dark, yet it was the way of God leading to the light.

The experience of Moses was just as remarkable. A ruler had risen that did not know Joseph. He intended to act prudently in the affairs of the Egyptian realm, and thus he resolved to curb the increase of Israel's population, and at the same time to hinder them leaving the country. The ensuing persecutions and trials may have been very severe and especially painful for the parents, yet it was by these means that God could save His people and set them free. All designs of Pharaoh against Israel were turned by God for their best good. When Moses was placed in a basket into the water, God sent Pharaoh's daughter to save the helpless child and educate him at the expenses of the state to become a leader. The plan of God will be accomplished, even if all the powers of hell war against it.

In no smaller measure Christ revealed His power through the prophets. When Isaiah was given his great commission, he saw the Throne of God and heard the cry of the Seraphims, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." This vision gave to the young prophet sufficient conviction and strength of faith to stand immoveable in the tests and trials. When the youthful Jeremiah was called upon to bear testimony before kings and kingdoms, God gave him the assurance that He would be with him and redeem him. God showed him a rod and said, "Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord to me, Thou has well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it." Jer. 1:11,12.

Eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, quite a number of obstinate Jews

were taken as prisoners to Babylon. Because they would not believe that Jerusalem would finally be destroyed, God sent them the prophet Ezekiel, telling him that he should not be afraid, even if he were to live among scorpions, because God would make his forehead as hard as an adamant stone. It was also at this time that He gave him that marvelous vision of the chariot of the Almighty, with four wheels, running in every direction without being turned, full of eyes, and upheld by four living beings, signifying the ways of God's eternal purpose. All moved in perfect harmony, because the Spirit of God was everywhere present.

Zechariah was chosen to encourage the people of God in the restoration of the temple. God gave to him the wonderful vision of the oil, flowing from the olive tree to keep the lamps burning bright, signifying that the Spirit of God, given to the church, is to make of her the light of the world. Zechariah, also, received the promise of the coming Branch, Jesus, and viewing the stone with seven eyes--the fulness of divine providence.

#### **The Hand of God in the New Testament**

When Christ took upon Himself human nature, the prophecies concerning His first coming were fulfilled. Christ verified the prophecies of old concerning His return in glory, and, through parables, made known to His people the triumph of His kingdom. At His ascension Jesus gave to His followers the comforting promise that He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world.

During the dark hour of persecution, which scattered the church, the most zealous persecutor, Saul, to the surprise of all, was changed into the great apostle Paul, to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. The life and work of the apostle Paul furnishes conclusive evidence that God's cause and His servants are in His hands. Thus the Lord showed him, for instance, when he came to Troas to preach the gospel, not only the church, but pointed him in vision to an open door in Macedonia and the rest of Europe. "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." The devil seeks to hinder the cause and discourage His servants; yet, if God be for us--and He truly is--then who can be against God's church which is following His command and performs her mission?

The Saviour, after His ascension, appeared as the first and the last to His favorite disciple John on the isle of Patmos. He holds the seven stars in His hands among the seven candlesticks--His seven churches on earth. The Son of Man said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1:17, 18.

The servants of the gospel are resting in the hands of Jesus and He walks in the midst of His churches. This is a precious comfort for His people in the dark days of struggle, persecution, tests and trials. All has been done to give to the waiting children of God the assurance, that He will lead the work to its accomplishment and soon will gather them to Himself to glory.

#### **God's Care for His People**

##### **in the Time of the End.**

Not only in the time of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Mordechai, the prophets and apostles do we behold the benevolent and loving hand of God, but we may, in an especially marked manner, behold the providence of God and His tender care for His beloved people in the last church. Scarcely has a church ever been given so much grace and so many blessings from heaven, as this last church, in particular, has received. By means of the Spirit of prophecy, God gave His church the most precious testimonies. Again and again the Lord spoke through His handmaid to His people, to show them in a clear light the ways, statutes, and commandments they were to keep. Nevertheless the people became proud, indifferent, rich and rebellious, for which reason the Lord called for Reformers to carry forward the light, and place the commandments again upon the candlestick. The Lord requests of us as a reformatory people unconditional faithfulness to His commandments. We should not only carry the name, but should be examples in keeping all of the commandments, in dress, in healthreform, in love, in patience, in faith, in words and actions, in missionary zeal; and should, in the home and in the church, furnish proof that we are, what we profess to be. Then the Lord will be with His people, protecting and blessing them, and leading them triumphantly.

As long as we remain faithful to God and walk in His paths, we need not fear the future. True enough, the last battle is in



the making, and the little remnant of those who trust implicitly in God and lean on the arm of the Almighty is facing a world filled with enemies. But we have the comforting promise, given by Daniel the prophet, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Dan.12:1.

The Rider on the white horse is leading forth His people, conquering and to conquer. So the Saviour of heaven, having all things

at His command, will, in the last, bitter struggle, lead His people victoriously through the night into eternal light. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of God. Therefore, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

My dear brethren, sisters, and friends in the Lord Jesus, shall we not, in this Week of Prayer lay our lives unconditionally and trusting into the hands of God, in order that He may lead us victoriously to the goal, now so near? May God help us to this end!

AMEN !

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Reading No. 5 - Friday, December 16, 1960.

## "To Give is More Blessed than to Receive"

by A. Craviotto, South America.

**W**HAT blessed truth is expressed in the topic of this Week of Prayer reading! "To give is more blessed than to receive!" And yet, the vast majority of humans are more satisfied to receive, than to give. There is no doubt that the heart is made happy in receiving a present, especially when the person that gives it is highly esteemed and gives it with a loving heart. The children are especially made glad when the parents bring them a present, no matter how little or how much it costs. The young heart is always delighted to receive something new. And, in return, there is joy in the hearts of the parents when they see how happy their children are through this present. He, therefore, who creates joy in the hearts of others, will reap joy as a logical consequence.

### TO GIVE WITH JOY

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor.9:7.

Anything to be given, must be given with a free will. Joy, and not the counting of the cost, must be the leading motive. If it is being done grudgingly, or is accounted a duty, it would be better not to give any-

thing. And there is still another reason for giving presents, which is not right, namely to give to receive approbation and honor. Another such wrong motive is to give, in order to receive something in return; this rests upon a selfish conclusion, and is also false.

The giving must be done to help others, and to do them good. It is always in place to help the needy; those that have not as much as we do. There are people that beg for help for their homes, for their needy, orphaned children. It is never right to deny help in such cases. There are poor ones, which simply are poor to test the kindness and mercy of God's children. The Lord desires that we should help the truly poor, who are visited with sickness and misfortune. To feed the hungry and clothe the naked is a help which God desires we should give. For this purpose let the Spirit of prophecy speak to us:

"Those who are fighting the battle of life at great odds may be strengthened and encouraged by little attentions that cost only a loving effort. To such the strong, helpful grasp of the hand of a true friend is worth more than silver or gold. Words of kindness are as welcome as the smile of angels."

There are multitudes struggling with poverty, compelled to labor for small wages, and able to secure but the barest necessities of life. Toil and deprivation, with no hope of better things, make their burden very heavy. When pain and sickness are added, the burden is almost insupportable. Care-worn and oppressed, they know not where to turn for relief. Sympathize with them in their trials, their heartaches, and disappointments. This will open the way for you to help them. Speak to them of God's promises, pray with and for them, inspire them with hope." --Ministry of Healing, p.158.

In these earnest days of the Week of Prayer, dear brethren and sisters, we ought to ponder deeply upon the subject, "To give is more blessed than to receive." God requires an account of everything, and also of the managing of the means He has entrusted into our hands. Egotism is the cancer which destroys even the finest cells of our organism. An egotist thinks only about himself, and closes his eyes to the wants of others. He is satisfied if his table is set with the most delicious food, his home is furnished lavishly, and his closet is filled with all kinds of clothing. It does not matter to him if in his vicinity there live families which suffer as a result of dire want. The final results of an egotistic heart will be catastrophic. One day the egotist will appear before the heavenly tribunal. Then he will clearly see that his life has been a curse. Altogether too late he will realize that all he possessed here on earth was but vanity, as the wise man, Solomon, in Ecclesiastes 2 has expressed it. Again, shall we let the Spirit of prophecy speak to us on this matter:

"I am acquainted with persons who make a high profession, whose hearts are so encased in self-love and selfishness that they cannot appreciate what I am writing. They have all their lives thought and lived only for self. To make a sacrifice to do others good, is out of the question with them. They have not the least idea that God requires this of them. Self is their idol. Precious weeks, months, and years pass into eternity, and they have no record in Heaven of kindly acts, of sacrificing for other's good, of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or taking in the stranger. This entertaining strangers at a venture is not agreeable. If they knew that all who sought

to share their bounty were worthy, then they might be induced to do something in this direction. But there is virtue in venturing something. Perchance we may entertain angels." --Testimonies, Vol.2, p.26.

#### RIGHT GIVING DOES NOT ENCOURAGE IDLENESS

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Proverbs 6:6. There are the poor, who are poor, because they wish to be poor. They love idleness. They scold when they are asked to do some useful labor. Yet they are always ready to criticize those who, in the sweat of their face, earn their bread. When they see that others forge their way ahead because of their dilligence, they become envious and criticize. Slothfulness is an evil with dire results. "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger." "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in the harvest, and have nothing." Proverbs 19:15; 10:4; 20:4.

There are the poor who ask for money to spend it for items which are detrimental to health, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful things. We, therefore, have to be discriminating to whom we give. Of course, we cannot always investigate, whether the petitioner will use the gift judiciously, else we would finally arrive at the point not to give anymore at all. But we must be reluctant in a case where the petitioner is a drunkard, or is enslaved by other evil habits. To this the Spirit of prophecy says:

"We may err in making gifts to the poor which are not a blessing to them, leading them to feel that they need not exert themselves and practice economy, for others will not permit them to suffer. We should not give countenance to indolence or encourage habits of self-gratification by affording means of indulgence." --Historical Sketches, p.293.

#### TO GIVE TO THE TRULY POOR

"He that oppressed the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoreth him hath mercy on the poor." Proverbs 14:31.

God permits that in His church there will always be the poor, to test our hearts. The truly poor are worthy to receive help from

their fellow-believers and the church. For this purpose a special fund is laid up. The Spirit of prophecy gives clear instructions about this needed help. In this manner we nourish a spirit of sacrifice. There are widows, elderly people, and believers among us who can no longer work. Thus it becomes the duty of the church and the believers to open up their hand of sacrifice for these souls. Yet, when we help those also, who are poor through their own neglect, waste, and idle attitude, and by this unbiblical attitude remain poor, we commit an error. To help souls who do not practice economy is a sin, because in this manner we support laziness, idleness, and slothfulness,—all things which finally end in a rejection of truth.

#### THE LORD REQUESTS HIS OWN

Let us not forget, dear believers, that the Lord requests of us only what is lawfully His own. "To give is more blessed than to receive," must in first line be applied upon the things that belong to the Lord. Some live under the impression that, if they did not faithfully perform their duty in the giving of the tithe and offerings, it would not be so serious. Yet, one day, they will have to give an account for this great error and sin, with its fatal results in the end. The egotist withdraws his hand and does not give God His own. He figures his income in a manner that pleases him, and then doles out whatever suits him. The paying of the tithe and offerings must be made with all faithfulness and punctuality. He, who in a faithful and scrutinizing manner pays his tithe, and is not small in giving his offerings, shall receive great blessings. (Mal.3:7-10.)

If it is already a part of the Christian life to pay one's just dues, and not to owe anyone anything, how much more is it then his duty to be faithful in the paying of the tithe and offerings. It is a sin to neglect the duty as God's children in giving to the Lord in order to help the poor. Prior to everything else we must fulfill our duty before the Lord, in order that the blessings of heaven may not depart from us. If we are punctual and faithful in the giving of the tithe and offerings, the Lord will bless us so that we are able to fulfill our duties also to our fellow man. Yet, if we act before God in an indifferent manner, permitting time to pass by without fulfilling

our duties, we prove that we hang our affections on this earth, not on heaven. May the Lord help us to change this course of actions, before it is forever too late. The Spirit of prophecy says:

"All that is withheld of that which God claims, the tenth of the increase, is recorded in the books of Heaven as robbery against him. Such defraud their Creator; and when this sin of neglect is brought before them, it is not enough for them to change their course and begin to work from that time upon the right principle. This will not correct the figures made in the heavenly record for embezzling the property committed to them in trust to be returned to the Lender. Repentance for unfaithful dealing with God, and for base ingratitude, is required." —Testimonies, Vol.3, p.394.

Even though we might have to pass through difficult times, and the necessary means for living might be lacking, we must not disregard our duty toward God. It is better to economize and to live with a clear conscience, than to follow idleness with an evil conscience.

#### ERRONEOUS CALCULATIONS

The prince of darkness is working strongly to cause our calculations to fail. At the moment when we are intending to pay our tithe, which has been held back, Satan sends difficulties to keep us from doing so. Therefore, what must be done today, should in no way be shifted to tomorrow. We wish to emphasize that, in the paying of tithes and offerings, we must be faithful and zealous, so that we may not fall into disfavor with God. It is the correct procedure to lay aside the tithe and offerings, as soon as we have received anything. Thus we shall avoid falling under the curse of indifference, and we shall receive the blessings which our dear heavenly Father has promised to His faithful ones.

#### TO GIVE THAT WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED

".. freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt.10:8.) Here we touch a significant point, and in this Week of Prayer we shall determine to think seriously about it. There are not only egotists from the material viewpoint, but also from the spiritual aspect. Those who are silent about the word of God, and are satisfied with a theoretical knowledge of it, without putting

forth efforts to impart it to others, are egotists. We have received the precious truth from the Lord, and are duty-bound to impart it to our neighbors. It is our duty to sound the truth, with certain tones, that many souls in the folds of error may yet receive the light of the Holy Scriptures. The great apostle, Paul, under divine inspiration, says, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" 1 Cor.14:8. In another place he says, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" 1 Cor.9:16.

The saving grace should cause us to work diligently for lost humanity. To limit our efforts is not in order. We must work for the Saviour as long as it is day, for the night cometh when no one shall work any more. The gospel must be preached to all the world for a witness. Our field of labor is immense; it embraces the whole world. Yet, there are many who are well content to remain in one place; they will not leave for a destination where duty might call them, for they fear to leave their homes, relatives, friends, and conveniences. All who act in this manner will remain dwarfs in the knowledge of the truth. Stagnant waters become contaminated; running waters remain fresh and clear. Thus it will happen to those who prefer to remain at home with their knowledge of the truth, not doing anything for Christ. We call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists, because we believe that Jesus is coming soon; yet we remain inactive, nonchalant, and occupied with earthly pursuits, and do not warn those that know nothing of the truth. How long is this discouraging condition to remain among God's professed people? Shall we wait until the door of probation is closed? Shall we flee, like Jonah, instead of voluntarily doing our duty? Shall we calm our conscience with the idea that the Lord has called the ministers, church-leaders, and colporteurs to do this work? Many may be thinking that *they are doing what they can*, when in reality very little is done for the Lord. What shall the Lord do with those who have hidden their gifts (tithes) that He has given them? All these questions must be pondered in this Week of Prayer, for this is God's will.

#### THE MACEDONIAN CALL

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Acts 16:9.

The same calling is extended to us to-day. It is not limited or applicable to just one country. This is a calling of divine providence, which we ought to obey, no matter to what place it may lead us. If we do not go to the place the Lord has designated for us, we do wrong. The gospel is to be preached to every nation, race, language, and people. Young people, receiving training in institutions, should be the first ones to answer such a call. But there are many who prefer to remain in their own country, for they fear to leave the country. Some excuse themselves that they do not know the language; others that they are too young and cannot leave their parents. There is no lack of excuses if one is not willing to do God's will. Brethren of experience should take all this into consideration and help the young brethren to make their decisions for the furtherance of the work. Yet, if the brethren of experience do not furnish a good example in this matter, they will not exert a good influence. I, therefore, petition all dear brethren to be a worthy example in this direction, for then many will lay their hand to the plow, before it is too late.

God is a God of love, and He desires that we may perform the work, entrusted to us, in a practical manner, as long as the door of probation remains open. Let us, voluntarily, go to any place on this earth with the message of peace and joy. Let us seek for souls which are still in the snares of Satan. All of us, as a united people, ought to go into the field of labor. Shall we with zeal and courage go forward in the proclamation of the three-fold angel's message, trying to impart to men, a knowledge of "present truth" which God has given us. And shall we never forget the topic of this Prayer Reading, "To give is more blessed than to receive." If we try to fulfill this in our daily life, we shall receive joy and peace, which is so essentially needed in our work for the Master. May the Lord graciously impart this to us during this Week of Prayer. AMEN!

Reading No. 6 - Sabbath, December 17, 1960.

## The Great Importance of the Holy Spirit

### in the Finishing Work

by Jose C. Leon, South America

*This Sabbath is set aside for a day of Fasting. At the conclusion of this Reading the Offerings will be gathered.*

*"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." Acts 3:19,20.*

#### THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN TIMES PAST

THE MISSION and work of the Holy Spirit is clearly visible from the words of Christ, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. The work of the Holy Spirit and His influence in the cause of saving souls is worthy of attention. The work He has wrought in every time-period is very important and marvelous. His power is clearly visible to convict men of the misery of sin, and to lead them to a truly deep conversion. His workings are quiet and noiseless "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." He revealed Himself in great power, full of signs and wonders; it was a revelation without equal. In temptation He imparted joy, hope, courage, comfort, and a great spirit of enterprize. He stood with the martyrs in the darkest hour of temptation; He strengthened them with the precious promises of the word of God. He was a great help, for He reminded them during the most difficult moments of the most important discourses in the Bible. In a special measure He changed the character of human beings.

The works of the Holy Spirit, performed and reported during the course of time, and written down in ecclesiastical history, are only a very small glimmer in comparison to the extraordinary and special revelations in the near future. The time has already come, and the longed-for "latter rain" will

be poured out. It is, therefore, so important that we, in this Week of Prayer, held once every year, consider earnestly and with all our heart and soul the work which the Holy Spirit will perform in this time of the end, which work will by far supersede every other in past periods of time. This extraordinary event will come as a surprise, as was the day of Pentecost.

"The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the dark ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions, and for the translation of the Bible into the languages and dialects of all nations and peoples." -Acts of the Apostles, p.53.

#### WE MUST DAILY BE BAPTIZED

##### WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1:5.

This very day we have a favorable opportunity to petition the Throne of Grace for the Holy Spirit. Without being baptized daily, and without His presence, we will not be able to bear up under the fierce temptations, affecting deeply our hearts. We must live with Him and for Him. As the Scripture says, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:38,39.

Our spirit and entire being must stand ready for His disposition; He must use us as His own chosen instruments. Every moment of our life we must be enlightened, strengthened, and refined. We must become conscious of the fact that He is a guest in the heart of every child of God that is faithful to Him. It is the Holy Spirit that leads us to a complete understanding of the truth; it is thus that He opens, by His grace, our vision, to behold the beauty of the sacredness of God. The same spirit will present to our entire being the beauty and fragrance of the exalted love of the Redeemer. We must, by His mercy and power, which enables us to behold His great love and sacrifice for the human race, continually remember the agonies of the Saviour on the cross of Calvary, which He suffered for our sake. Also, without the daily presence of the Holy Spirit, we cannot keep His commandments. (Ezek. 36:27.)

It is impossible without the power of the Holy Spirit to understand the truths of the Word of God; we would find no light nor satisfaction in reading it, and would not be in a condition to have it impress the heart, nor remind us of the precious divine counsels. We would not love the truth, nor would we love righteousness; our affections would not deepen to accomplish a real change in our heart; there would be no spiritual power to part with the old, and live with Christ a new life. (John 3:1-7.) Without receiving this divine power every day, our life would be unfruitful and without the desirable fruits of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23.)

Let us incessantly, with emphasis and deep longing, pray for the grace of His Spirit, as Elijah petitioned the servant of God for a "double portion of thy Spirit." 2 Kings 2:9,10.

Groups of Christian workers should gather to petition special help and divine wisdom, that they move ahead wisely. They should pray especially for the chosen messengers of God in missionary fields, that God might pour out unto them the rich means of His Spirit.

**PRAY AND BELIEVE!**

#### *THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INDISPENSIBLE*

In these latter days, being the most perilous times, we are in dire need of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The great work of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in every heart which hungers and thirsts to become a true Christian. We must live in intimate connection with Him, and have a constant contact with this marvelous Power, which the world does not know, neither can receive. We must seek for it with consecration and enduring prayer. Let us not forget that we are living in the time, when the Lord will pour out the 'latter rain'.

We must pray for it with our whole heart, and long for it as the best thing in our life. The divine promise is, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zech. 10:1. "Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit?" --Acts of the Apostles, p.50.

A work of repentance and Reformation must be accomplished. All must share in it, that the Holy Spirit can be poured out. As with the disciples after the ascension of Christ, so it needs some days of earnest seeking after God, that sin might be blotted out. When the Holy Spirit is working in God's children, they will show a zeal in harmony with their knowledge. They will reflect the light which God for years has radiated. The spirit of criticism will be blotted out. Permeated by the spirit of humiliation, they will all be one, united to one another by love. When a man is filled with the Spirit, how much heavier will be the tests and temptations which he has to suffer, yet he will prove by this very means that he is a representative of Christ. In his face the peace that rests in his soul will be witnessed. His words and actions express the love of the Redeemer. There will be no more strife for a higher office. Self has been denied. The name of Jesus penetrates all that one does and says.

#### *THE ENEMY RESISTS THE SOUL'S NEEDED*

##### *PREPARATION TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT*

We live in the last days of human history, in which the enemy in a subtle manner is resisting our personal preparation to re-

ceive the Holy Spirit. The enemy studies the prophecies of the Revelation and of Daniel; he, therefore, knows that but little time remains for him to do his evil work. For this reason he lays with skill his nets to ensnare the people of God. His nets are intended to bring souls into a certain position, and then he puts them to sleep in their sin, in order that they may not feel the necessity of a complete surrender and a better preparation. Some he works upon to become covetous for earthly treasures, that they may become insensible to heavenly things. To others he shows the world in her golden glitter--the many amusements, fashions, games, theatricals, worldly music, and other things which separate their spirit from the kingdom of God.

The Spirit of prophecy says, "I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' 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." --Early Writings, p.71.

#### FALSE REVELATIONS OF THE SPIRIT

Before the latter rain will be poured out, the enemy will attempt to hinder it by running ahead with a counterfeit, very

similar to the genuine work. The Lord's handmaid said, "The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it, by introducing a counterfeit." --Great Controversy, p.464.

Recently we have heard of strange happenings among those who call themselves evangelical Christians. They perform false miracles with apparent divine healings. Men, who cannot discern the spirits, are being deceived by such unnatural happenings. The enemy is reaping a rich harvest of souls among those who fall a prey to his well-prepared snares, laid out to deceive poor souls. Let us, therefore, listen to this important testimony: "Through spiritualism many of the sick, the bereaved, the curious, are communicating with evil spirits. All who venture to do this are on dangerous ground. The word of truth declares how God regards them. In ancient times He pronounced a stern judgment on a king who had sent for counsel to a heathen oracle: 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.'

"The magicians of heathen times have their counterpart in the spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants, and the fortune tellers of today. The mystic voices that spoke at Endor and at Ephesus are still by their lying words misleading the children of men." --Acts of the Apostles, p.290.

#### THE LORD WITHDRAWS HIS SPIRIT FROM THE EARTH

The Spirit of God is slowly but surely withdrawing from the earth. Impending plagues and judgments are coming. Here, in the far-spread Latin-Americas, the report of crimes of all descriptions appear rampant everywhere, murders, armed robberies, thefts of valuables, injustices, fiery conflagrations with enormous loss, accidents, juvenile delinquencies, earthquakes, cyclones, floods, strikes, revolutions, invasions, etc. Little by little the Lord withdraws His Spirit from the earth. Honest and compassionate men disappear from the earth. The wave of guilt in the human race is clearly delineated; one being a good friend today, is quick to betray the other tomorrow. Moral deterio-

ration is rapidly increasing; infidelity threatens like a catastrophe. Faithfulness and trust in God are disappearing; sin is becoming more popular by the day, and is doing its deteriorating work on the heart which, being deceived by sin, becomes hardened. The signs of the soon coming of the Lord are fast fulfilling; yes, Christ is standing at the door. The Lord will withdraw His Spirit as in the days before the flood. (Gen. 6:1-15; Matt. 24:37-39.)

"At the present time, when the end of all things earthly is rapidly approaching, Satan is putting forth desperate efforts to ensnare the world. He is devising many plans to occupy minds, and to divert attention from the truths essential to salvation. In every city his agencies are busily organizing into parties those who are opposed to the law of God. The arch-deceiver is at work to introduce elements of confusion and rebellion, and men are fired with a zeal that is not according to knowledge." —Acts of the Apostles, p.219.

#### *THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THIS TIME*

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." Joel 3:1,2.

Soon we shall see the fulfillment of this prophecy for our days. In these solemn hours in which we live, we must, as never before, prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit. This is, because the Lord calls us more earnestly and with greater interest, saying, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." Acts 3:19,20.

For the finishing of the work of God, the Holy Spirit is indispensable. "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zech. 4:6.

My dear Brethren and sisters: Permit the Lord to work on your hearts from the very moment that you hear His voice. "While it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

We know that the Holy Spirit reveals sin. By the Spirit the heart is made pure again. By the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given us His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all inherent and cultivated tendencies to evil; He will impart to the church His own character. When the Spirit takes possession of the heart, the life will be changed, sinful thoughts will vanish and evil deeds will be left undone, love and patience, instead, will take possession of the heart of the believers. Cheerfulness takes the place of sadness, and the joy of heaven will be reflected in the countenance. Blessings will be anticipated through faith, and the soul yields itself to God. Then this Power, which no human eye can detect, will create a being according to the divine similitude.

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declares that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service." —Acts of the Apostles, p.49.

#### *THE EARLY RAIN*

"That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil." Deut. 11:14.

"Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seed-time and harvest, the Hebrew prophet foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result." —Acts of the Apostles, pp.54,55.

As a result of a thorough and complete preparation on the part of the believers, there followed an over-abundant blessing of God in its train. Even though they were small in number and poor in earthly possessions, they made a deep examination of the conscience and searching of hearts, followed by sincere repentance and conversion, as a result of which the Lord at that time poured out His Spirit in abundant measure. All were united in the same



doctrinal faith in the Son of God. They felt a deep love in the work of saving souls, and also learned to love each other. In word and action they were fully united. These were days of sincere preparation by prayer and fasting, waiting at the same time for the promise of the Master, saying to them, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts 1:8.

The hearts of the apostles were overflowing with thankfulness, and they obeyed their Master, forgetting self, and their great interest was to receive the Power from on high. "And ye are witnesses of these things: And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:48, 49.

The repentance of the apostles was great; They were occupied with searching their own hearts. Every one examined himself; again and again they would re-examine their consciences. They had no time to look upon the faults of their neighbor; no time was left to criticise and accuse. These were solemn moments of preparation and confession of sin. They loved each other tenderly and with fervent love. They were honest in all points of truth. A desire to evil, envy, and covetousness was banished from among them. It were days of deep and thorough reviewing of their past life. They loved each other deeply as never before. They were fully united and stood like one man. They were all of one accord, and full of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-4. The result of it was marvelous; on one single day thousands were converted.

#### *THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT WILL ENLIGHTEN THE WHOLE EARTH*

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Rev. 18:1. Shortly before the time, marked by the latter rain and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the seed of truth must be sown in all the world. The truth of the gospel of peace and the glad tidings of a crucified and risen Saviour has been proclaimed. Men have read our publications which were carried by messengers (colporteurs) from house to house. Even children participated in this work of preparation. Young people made their decision, were

baptized, and devoted themselves to the cause of present truth. The whole church is in action, perseveringly, and has a living interest. Until the very last moment the whole church will be at work. Until the moment of joyful decision, preachers, colporteurs, and members will stand solidly united. Yet, some of us will not participate in this spiritual blessing because of hidden sins, hypocrisy, lying, etc. That which was predicted in Jeremiah 8:20 will be fulfilled. May the Lord not permit it to be fulfilled with you or I. God may help us in this. Amen!

The precious testimonies of the Spirit of prophecy tell us that we shall see the messengers of heaven running hither and thither, trying every means to warn the people of the coming judgment, and bring the glad tidings of the redemption in Christ Jesus to their attention. The standard of righteousness will be elevated. The Spirit of God will take possession of the hearts of men, and those who yield to His promptings will be converted and become lights of the world. They will be seen everywhere, hastening from place to place, to impart the light, which they have received, to the people, as it was at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And while they let their light shine forth, they will receive a constant supply of the power of the Spirit. The earth will be lightened with the glory of God.

"The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message, is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of world-wide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The Advent Movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has ever been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel.

The work will be similar to that of the day of Pentecost. As the 'former rain' was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the 'latter rain' will be given at its close, for the ripening of the harvest." —Great Controversy, p.611.

*HOW WILL THE GREAT WORK OF GOD BE ENDED ON  
THIS EARTH? WHAT GLORIOUS POWER WILL  
ACCOMPANY IT DURING ITS CLIMAX?*

The great task allotted to the Holy Spirit at the finishing of the work of God cannot be replaced by material matters, nor by human inventions. It is left for the Holy Spirit to bring the glorious work of Reformation to its conclusion. The handmaid of God, who witnessed the closing events of this marvelous work, has said,

"I saw that this message will close with power and strength far exceeding the midnight cry.

Servants of God, endowed with power from on high, with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven."—Early Writings, pp. 278, 279.

If we do prepare ourselves, dear brethren and sisters, the work of the Holy Spirit has become a reality. May the Lord bless us in this endeavor, is my sincere desire.

AMEN !

Reading No. 7 - Sunday, December 13, 1960.

## An Appeal for Earnest Labor in the Closing Work

by A. Ringelberg, Holland

### THE LAST ACT

**S**OON the six-thousand year drama of this sinful world will be ended. For nearly six-thousand years the great controversy between light and darkness, good and evil, Christ and Satan, has continued.

Almost all humanity has yielded to the power of the prince of this world. The history of the antediluvian world is being repeated, for men do not want the Spirit of God to strive with them any longer. Satan's mark is resting upon the whole of human society. Among modern science, striving with brutal force to shut out the power and providence of God, we find ourselves standing face to face with the powers of darkness. In the human being, sinking deeper and deeper, we sense the all-destroying influences of Satan. The youth is more than ever without restrictions. The conceptions of reverence, honesty, unselfishness, and temperance are no longer fully understood, so many of them having been completely wiped out.

The social and economical conditions are not only shaken up, but immobilized. The economical life is struggling with severe difficulties, and unrighteous actions are increasing in a terrifying manner. We hear, more and more, how men of great responsibilities are being convicted of embezzlement

and corruption, and finally seek relief in murder or suicide. All of this, and more, is clear evidence of the corruption of our time. In all of it Satan is working, with his helpers, to destroy all of mankind. He has systematically undermined the foundations of well-being, of peace and confidence, so that human beings have been robbed of all stability. The world lives, so to speak, on a dangerous volcano. None would be surprised, if this world, led entirely by Satan, would be visited by a sudden catastrophe, putting an end to it. Satan knows that he has little time, and he has therefore, begun to plan the last act of the world's history with increased power.

### OUR TASK

The picture of the present, deplorable condition of this world cannot be painted too dark. Unfortunate humanity cannot be warned any too seriously. Those, who are willing to listen, must receive an opportunity to escape before it is too late. This is our task.

For us, also, time is very short. Right around us, many human beings are dying daily from accidents and sickness; men, who perhaps have never heard of the seriousness of the time in which we live, and who, at that moment when eternity is beginning for

them, may have to leave this life fully unprepared. It may be that the light of truth once shone upon their pathway; perhaps Christ did knock at their hearts' door and they did not heed it. Yet, how would it have been if we had once more used the opportunity presented to us, warning them, and bringing them an invitation to salvation?

The Bible teaches us that we are called to be a light, and the salt of the earth. We are carrying a responsibility for the souls who are living around us. Ezekiel 33:7-9.

What an earnest, solemn truth! We should, therefore, use every opportunity given to us, and act upon it. We must relate to every human we come in contact with, the seriousness of the time. "Jesus is coming soon," must be our daily message to every one who will hear it. If we, in word and action, show to the world, our friends, and relatives that we believe in the soon end of the world and the near coming of Jesus, our hands will be clean of the blood of the lost on the day of judgment. The thing we need, in order to fulfill this great task, is a greater measure of divine love for the lost, a deeper experience with the Holy Spirit. Then it will no longer be hard for us to find and save souls for eternity. It will not be a drudgery any longer to keep aloft the banner of Christ's righteousness and the precious present truth of salvation, wherever we may be.

#### THE FINISHING OF THE CAUSE OF GOD

The cause of redemption will, in a short time be completed. The Lord, Himself, will do a short work with this earth. And yet, He has called His church to co-operate with Him in this closing work. The missionary task of the last church is being outlined for us in Revelation 18:1-4. "This scripture points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14, is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844." —Great Controversy, p.603.

"In every generation God has sent His servants to rebuke sin, both in the world and in the church..."

"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 themselves 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:" —Great Controversy, p.606.

This work, in a special sense, must come into being through this last reformed church. It is the movement which is described in Revelation 18:1-4. "The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message, is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of world-wide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The Advent Movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel..."

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close." —Great Controversy, pp.611, 612.

#### ONLY IN WHAT MANNER CAN THE WORK BE CLOSED?

The finishing of the work of God can only be anticipated when God's people will engage in it with all powers at their command. God is testing the consecration of His church and her willingness to follow the leadings of His Spirit. The standard of righteousness must be elevated. The Spirit of God is working upon the hearts of men, and those who place themselves under His influence will be lights unto the world. They may be seen everywhere, imparting the light which they have received to others, as the disciples did after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost had taken place. And because they let their light shine, they

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receive more and more of the power of the  
Holy Spirit. (acc. to "The Time And The  
Work.") )

Should we reveal less faith than did the  
apostles? Shall we not reach out in living  
faith for the promises which prompted them  
to a full surrender? Not only the minis-  
ters, but the entire church must become  
aware of her duty, every brother and sister,  
and the youth as well, must reach for the  
promises of the Saviour, and work toward an  
experience with souls.

"The work of God in this earth can never  
be finished until the men and women compris-  
ing our church-membership rally to the work,  
and unite their efforts with those of minis-  
ters and church officers." —Testimonies,  
Vol. 9, p. 117.

"The ministers may do their part, but  
they can never perform the work that the  
church should do." —Vol. 4, p. 69.

"Every son and daughter of God is called  
to be a missionary; we are called to the  
service of God and our fellow men;..."  
—Ministry of Healing, p. 305.

"Throughout the world, messengers of  
mercy are needed. There is a call for

Christian families to go into communities  
that are in darkness and error, to go to  
foreign fields, to become acquainted with  
the needs of their fellow men, and to work  
for the cause of the Master. If such fam-  
ilies would settle in the dark places of the  
earth, places where the people are en-  
shrouded in spiritual gloom, and let the  
light of Christ's life shine out through  
them, what a noble work might be accom-  
plished.

"This work requires self-sacrifice.  
While many are waiting to have every obsta-  
cle removed, the work they might do is left  
undone, and multitudes are dying without  
hope and without God. Some for the sake of  
commercial advantage, or to acquire scienti-  
fic knowledge, will venture into unsettled  
regions, and cheerfully endure sacrifice and  
hardship; but how few for the sake of their  
fellow men are willing to move their fami-  
lies into regions that are in need of the  
gospel." —Ministry of Healing, pp. 155, 156.

My dear brethren and sisters in all the  
world, may we at the close of this Week of  
Prayer once more examine ourselves very  
thoroughly, being conscious that we are  
standing in the presence of God. Are there  
not among us many more opportunities we  
could use, in order that the cause could be  
hastened on to its conclusion? Should our  
youth not arise and devote themselves to  
this task? The Lord is calling for volun-  
teer laborers to go to such places where the  
message of Reform has never been heard.  
Should we shrink back from difficulties and  
toil? Do we want to wait till all obstacles  
are removed?

It is the will of the Lord that we reach  
for every opportunity, disregarding our own  
self; not being tied down by anything, but  
always ready to go where the Master sends  
us. May this be the fruit of this Week of  
Prayer, and God, who is omnipotent, will  
make the impossible, possible for His  
people.

AMEN!

## THE BLESSING

"THE LORD bless thee, and keep thee:  
The LORD make His face shine upon thee,  
and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift  
up His countenance upon thee, and give  
thee peace." Numbers 6:24-26.