

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS

— OF ADVENTISM —



November 2017 | \$3.50



Editor's Letter

John J. Grosboll

The United States of America in Prophecy

In the 18th century John Wesley said that we do not know who the two-horned beast is but we expect it to arise soon. A beast in Bible prophecy represents a religious or civil power or nation (see Daniel 7:23).

The power described in Revelation 13:11–17 had the following characteristics:

1. It was to be arising at the time that the first beast (in verses 1–10) was going into captivity (see context in verses 10 and 11). In other words, it was to be arising in 1798.
2. It was to arise out of the earth; that is, in a territory previously unknown or unoccupied by peoples, nations, and languages (see Revelation 17:15).
3. It was to have two horns as a lamb when arising, indicating youthfulness (a young nation, thus it could not refer to the nations of Europe or Asia or Africa) and gentleness or peacefulness.
4. Since there were no crowns on the horns of this beast, it could not be of a monarchical government.
5. This beast would be a government where the power is in the hands of the people (see Revelation 13:14).
6. It would have to be a non-Catholic country because it causes the people who occupy its territory to worship the first beast, which denotes Catholicism.
7. This power would perform great signs or miracles by which he would deceive the people dwelling on the earth (Revelation 13:13, 14). These great miracles used to deceive the whole earth are ascribed in Revelation 16:13, 14 to the spirits of demons. Spiritualism will become a controlling power in the United States through the use of miracles.
8. This beast would exercise all the authority of the first beast (Rome) in his presence (Revelation 13:12). The authority of the first beast was the authority granted him by the dragon (Revelation 13:2) and the authority granted by the Roman Empire through Justinian to the papacy was authority over all churches (“You are the head of all Holy Churches” [letter from Justinian to the pope AD 533]). It is distinctly stated in Revelation 13:12 that this power will cause the peoples of the earth to worship the first beast; so we expect in the future to see the United States attempt to force all peoples to worship the papacy by acknowledging the papal rest day instead of God’s rest day commanded in the ten commandments.

LANDMARKS

Staff

Editor

John J. Grosboll

Graphic Designer

Martin Bernar

Subscriptions

United States—1 year, \$25.00

Other countries—Cost of Postage Only

*If you are unable to purchase a subscription,
please request a gift subscription.*

Publisher

Steps to Life, Inc.

P. O. Box 782828

Wichita, KS 67278

tel 316.788.5559

fax 316.788.6900

e-mail: historic@stepstolife.org

web: www.stepstolife.org

LandMarks is a magazine of Steps to Life, a ministry established in 1988 by Seventh-day Adventists. It is dedicated to the publication of the historic doctrines held by God's true people in all ages. Its special emphasis is to present truth (II Peter 1:12)—those historic doctrines espoused by Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in the nineteenth century. Its purpose is to help all of God's remnant people to press together in unity, holding high the banner on which is inscribed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Because the powers of darkness have attempted to take control of God's last-day people through infiltration and false signs and teaching which if possible would deceive the very elect, this magazine is intended to help those believers who are contending with professed brethren over the faith once delivered to the saints. Many historic believers have established home churches where they can bring new interests and converts to hear the Three Angels' Messages instead of the New Theology. This magazine is designed to help them to defend the faith and to expose the flood of false doctrine by which the truth is being assailed in these last days.

It is the goal of *LandMarks'* editors to present articles based on truth from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Viewpoints of writers and/or contributors expressed outside of articles printed in this publication are not necessarily the views of this magazine's editors and are not endorsed by Steps to Life Ministries.

Features

November 2017

4 The Rare Man

Once the veil is removed and you see Jesus clearly you will be changed into the same image. You will become Christ-like. The Lord is in the process of working miracles in people's lives, taking people that are ruined by sin, and not only taking away their guilt, but changing their lives.

By John J. Grosboll

9 Bible Biographies

One of the best evidences of the authenticity of the Scriptures is that the truth is not glossed over nor the sins of its chief characters suppressed. It is encouraging to our desponding hearts to know that through God's grace they could gain fresh vigor to again rise above their evil natures.

Ellen G. White

13 Love, the Law and Heaven

It does not matter how great the deed, how wonderful the gift or talent, how mighty the power, if it is not motivated by love, it profits me nothing. Love is the only motive that is sure. That is the only motive power that is safe. All other motives will eventually fail.

By Brenda Douay

More in this Issue

17 **Be Thankful**
Medicine for the Troubled

20 **Bible Puzzle**
Jesus' Last Days

22 **Current Events**
2017 Disasters

23 **Keys to the Storehouse**
Grace Be to You

24 **Pen of Inspiration**
Rejoice in the Lord Always

27 **Question and Answer**
Who Judges the Wicked?

28 **Health**
Defiled Meat/Diseased Meat

29 **Children's Story**
Kathy "Sees" Thanksgiving

31 **Life Sketches**
From Persecutor to Apostle

35 **Bible Study Guide**
Insights from the Book of Isaiah (1)

50 **Food**
Pumpkin—the King of Squash



THE RARE MAN

By John J. Grosboll

Matthew 13 is often called the parable chapter because it contains many of the parables that Jesus spoke. Some of them are explained and some are not.

Matthew 13:44 says: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

Those who heard then clearly understood. Since ancient times men have buried their treasure to protect it from marauding armies or thieves. Today we secure our treasure in investments or banks to be accessible when needed.

While on a Pathfinder camp in the 1950s in Colorado, an Adventist minister told the campers that in the 1800s gold was mined in Colorado. Fearing an attack by the Indians, one person took the gold and buried it being careful to write down the directions to find it again. The directions were complicated and the gold has never been found. In today's market the value is estimated to be several millions. There has been much money spent trying to find it.

Burying gold and other valuables also often happened in ancient times. When the person who buried the gold or treasure died and was buried, nobody knew where the treasure had been hidden.

In this parable, a poor man was farming on rented land. While tilling the ground to get ready for planting his crop, his plow hit something. Digging around to see what it was, he found a metal box. When he opened it, he could not believe what he saw. It was a fortune. If he owned this he would be the wealthiest man in town. There was only one problem – the field was not his. The owner did not know that the valuables had been hidden there. So he closed up the box and covered it just the way it was before. He decided that he would not dare tell anyone about it, even his wife. If anyone found out what was there, the price of the land would go up so high he could never buy it.

He told his wife that they would have to sell their house, and the yoke of oxen, and his tools, because he had to raise enough money to buy

that field. She thought he was crazy. Where would they live? How could they farm without tools? He even wanted to sell his wife's dowry. He was adamant that everything must be sold. Everyone thought he was crazy until he got the title to the field. It cost all that he had to buy the field and it looked like he was going to be a pauper, worth nothing. But once he had the title to that field, he became the wealthiest man in the city.

Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is like that. It is like treasure that is hidden and you have to find it. The treasure is the gospel. The field is

In Genesis 10 is recorded the nations that descended from Noah. Verse 22 lists the five children that were born to Shem. One was named Arphaxad, who had a son Salah, who had a son Eber, who had two sons. Verse 25 says, "To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided ..."

Eber also had another son named Joktan. Now Joktan had thirteen sons who became the seventh generation from Noah, sixth generation from Shem. One of Joktan's sons was named Ophir. We would like very much to know where Ophir

Since ancient times men have buried their treasure to protect it from marauding armies or thieves. Today we secure our treasure in investments or banks to be accessible when needed.

the Bible and in the Bible the treasure is hidden for those that study and find it. The rarer something is, the more expensive it becomes, and since ancient times, gold has been one of the rarest metals. It has always been worth a large amount of money. The Bible talks a lot about silver and gold in both the Old and New Testaments.

Not very many years ago there was a shortage of a metal called palladium. Car builders need that metal to build catalytic convertors. Due to the shortage, the price went up to ten times what it had been before. When something is rare and the demand is greater than the supply, it becomes very expensive. It has been that way with gold since ancient times.

settled down and lived. Bible scholars have wondered about this for many hundreds of years. It appears that Ophir lived in a place where there was an abundance of very good gold. The gold of Ophir was highly sought after because it was thought to be, just as the treasure hid in the field, high quality gold. The gold of Ophir represents the treasure, which represents the gospel. Throughout Old Testament times the gospel was hid in types and ceremonies. Paul says in Hebrews 4:2, "For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."

"But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains



Burying gold and other valuables also often happened in ancient times. When the person who buried the gold or treasure died and was buried, nobody knew where the treasure had been hidden.

unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:14–16).

People often talk about the gospel but it is still hidden from most people who do not try to understand it. I want to try to explain in simple language what the gospel is, what the treasure is, and its rare elements and what the gold of Ophir represents.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Many professed Christians who go to church every week do not understand the power of the gospel and what it will do in your life if you receive and accept it. Their faces are veiled.

In ancient times most people did not understand what the types and ceremonies meant or what they pointed to.

Today, many are still looking through a veil, unable to see clearly. Notice what Paul says: "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the gods of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:3–6).

Once the veil is removed and you see Jesus clearly, you will be changed into the same image. You will become Christ-like. If that is not your

experience, then pray that the Holy Spirit will remove the veil and work a change in your character.

Isaiah shows what the Lord intends to do to people that keep looking at this glory with unveiled face. "I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold. A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir" (Isaiah 13:12).

The gold from Ophir was the highest quality and most precious gold available in the world. When, through the gospel, your character is transformed into the likeness of Christ's character the Lord says you are more precious than that gold.

Would you like to be one of those people? The Lord is in the process of working miracles in people's lives, taking people that are ruined by sin, and not only taking away their guilt, but changing their life.

The rare man is he or she who looks with unveiled face seeing the glory of the Lord, and as a result, his character is being changed into the image of his Saviour, his Redeemer.

The following are a few characteristics of the rare man:

The rare man is meek and lowly.

The word *meek* simply means *to be gentle or humble*.

"Jesus loves the young, and He longs to have them possess that peace which He alone can impart. He bids them learn of Him meekness and lowliness of heart. This precious grace is rarely seen in the youth of the present day, even in those who profess to be Christians. Their own ways seem right in their eyes. In accepting the name of Christ, they do not accept His character, ... therefore they know nothing of the joy and peace to be found in His service." *Sons and Daughters of God*, 82.

The rare man is filled with the Holy Spirit. "Just prior to His leaving His

disciples for the heavenly courts, Jesus encouraged them with the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs as much to us as it did to them, and yet how rarely it is presented before the people. ... Prophecies have been dwelt upon, doctrines have been expounded; but that which is essential to the church in order that they may grow in spiritual strength and efficiency, in order that the preaching may carry conviction with it, and souls be converted to God, has been largely left out of ministerial labor. This subject has been set aside, as if some time in the future would be given to its consideration. Other blessings and privileges have been presented before the people until a desire has been awakened in the church for the attainment of the blessing promised of God; but the impression concerning the Holy Spirit has been that this gift is not for the church now, but that at some time in the future it would be necessary for the church to receive it." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 174.

The Bible contains the life-record of a number of these rare men, which include the Apostle John, the prophet Daniel, and Moses. "Moses possessed a spirit which is rarely found at the present day. He had a sacred regard for the right, a morality unmingled with selfishness and policy." *The Review and Herald*, September 14, 1886.

The rare man is thankful. "The Lord sends His blessing and manifests His love to the children of men. 'He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matthew 5:45), and yet how rarely is the Lord thanked, how seldom is His praise upon human lips! How few are found to testify to His loving-kindness, and to acknowledge His mercies



Many professed Christians who go to church every week do not understand the power of the gospel and what it will do in your life if you receive and accept it. Their faces are veiled.

to the children of men!" *The Review and Herald*, November 13, 1894.

Many do not know what to be thankful about. If you can see, be thankful. If you can hear, be thankful. If you can walk, be thankful. That's just the beginning. Most people have so many things to be thankful for. Have you told the Lord you are thankful that He sent His Son into this world to save you and give you the opportunity to be adopted into His family, again, to be delivered from the slavery of the devil? Are you thankful for the mercies of God that we receive?

The rare man's face is unveiled. He has looked at the glory of the Lord until he has been changed into the same image, and therefore he is godly. A godly person is a person who has a god-like character.

"A truly godly life is rarely seen." *The Review and Herald*, August 10, 1905. A godly life is the same as a holy life.

The rare man always has Christian courtesy. Christian courtesy is so lacking in today's society. Christian

courtesy is to be kind and considerate to all, including my enemies. The rare man sees the glory of the Lord with unveiled face and has been changed so that he has become courteous to all people under all circumstances.

The rare man has been born again.

"The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. They have been baptized, but they were buried alive. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, 51.

The rare man has both virtue and modesty.

The rare man is heart to heart with Christ. When people get married, they are supposed to be heart to heart. This person's heart is supposed to respond to the other person's heart. In other words, if I am heart to heart with Christ, I am interested in what He is interested in.

By the way, when you are not heart to heart with each other anymore, it is sometimes hard to live together in the same house. You no longer walk together because your heart determines everything in your life. One person's heart says, I want to go here, and the other, I want to go there. If one person's heart is in the world and the other person's heart is in the Lord, there will be no unity.

"The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from the churches. Heart union with Christ is a rare thing now." *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 295. Rare!

The rare man has spirituality and devotion. He is devoted to the Lord. We are living in an evil time. Would you be a rare person?

Some people have become confused about this and believe that Jesus made fermented wine because the Greek word could refer to either fresh grape juice or alcoholic drink. Ellen White wrote about this in *The Bible Echo*, September 4, 1899. "Christ never placed a glass of fermented liquor to His lips or to the lips of His disciples. Drunkenness was rare in Palestine, but Christ looked down the ages, and saw in every generation what the use of wine would do for the users, therefore at this feast He set a right example." New wine, fresh grape juice was provided.

The rare man is obedient to what God says. Don't worry because you are different from everybody else. When Noah and his family were inside the ark and the rain began to

man being, but after that, He walked down a path of humiliation and self-denial. He went lower, and lower, and lower. Paul says, "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8 KJV).

Jesus said, If anybody wants to follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. The disciples didn't know what that meant because He had not yet been crucified. They did not expect that to ever happen and thought He spoke in symbolic language. Soon they found out it was not symbolic.

"The spirit of self-denial is becoming a rare thing." *The Review and Herald*, March 27, 1900.

The rare man has genuine and true love. This love is not just for his brothers or his friends, but for those who are also his enemies. "Christ's requirements are not met by His people today. A strange deception is upon the people of God. Selfishness prevents the union which should exist. True love for one another is rare in our churches. This lack of love reveals most certainly that the members do not love God as they suppose they do." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, 411.

Isaiah 13:12 says, "I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir." May you be one of those rare people.

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

The gospel is like treasure that is hidden and you have to find it.

"Spirituality and devotion are rare." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 469. But God says, I'm going to make some people more rare than fine gold, more precious than the golden wedge from Ophir.

The rare man is the man of faith.

"The faith that takes God at His word, which works by love and purifies the heart, is very rare." *The Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883.

The rare man is sober. Jesus' first miracle is recorded in the gospel of John, chapter 2. When He made water into wine, He did not even touch those jars.

fall, they were happy to be one of the rare people.

The rare man has practical religion.

His religion is not just a profession. He actually lives it out. "Practical religion as it was manifested in the life and character of Christ is a rare thing." *The Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892.

The rare man has the spirit of self-

denial. Jesus Christ had the spirit of self-denial. The whole story of His life reveals one denial after another. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation simply to become a hu-

Pastor John J. Grosboll is Director of Steps to Life and pastors the Prairie Meadows Church in Wichita, Kansas. He may be contacted by email at: his-toric@stepstolife.org, or by telephone at: 316-788-5559.



BIBLE BIOGRAPHIES

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

The lives recorded in the Bible are authentic histories of actual individuals. From Adam down through successive generations to the times of the apostles we have a plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred and the genuine experience of real characters. It is a subject of wonder to many that inspired history should narrate in the lives of good men facts that tarnish their moral characters. Infidels seize upon these sins with great satisfaction and hold their perpetrators up to ridicule. The

inspired writers did not testify to falsehoods to prevent the pages of sacred history being clouded by the record of human frailties and faults. The scribes of God wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, having no control of the work themselves. They penned the literal truth, and stern, forbidding facts are revealed for reasons that our finite minds cannot fully comprehend.

It is one of the best evidences of the authenticity of the Scriptures that the truth is not glossed over nor

the sins of its chief characters suppressed. Many will urge that it is an easy matter to relate what has occurred in an ordinary life. But it is a proved fact that it is a human impossibility to give an impartial history of a contemporary; and it is almost as difficult to narrate, without deviating from the exact truth, the story of any person or people with whose career we have become acquainted. The human mind is so subject to prejudice that it is almost impossible for it to treat the subject impartially. Either the faults of

the person under review stand out in glaring relief, or his virtues shine with undimmed luster, just as the writer is prejudiced for or against him. However impartial the historian may design to be, all critics will agree that it is a very difficult matter to be truly so.

But divine unction, lifted above the weaknesses of humanity, tells the simple, naked truth. How many biographies have been written of faultless Christians, who, in their ordinary home life and church relations, shone as examples of immaculate piety. No blemish marred the beauty of their holiness, no fault is recorded to remind us that they

faults for the possible inspection of our friends.

Had our good Bible been written by uninspired persons, it would have presented quite a different appearance and would have been a discouraging study to erring mortals, who are contending with natural frailties and the temptations of a wily foe. But as it is, we have a correct record of the religious experiences of marked characters in Bible history. Men whom God favored, and to whom He entrusted great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sins, even as we of the present day strive, waver,

history would fail to teach us the lesson that it does.

Infidels and lovers of sin excuse their crimes by citing the wickedness of men to whom God gave authority in olden times. They argue that if these holy men yielded to temptation and committed sins, it is not to be wondered at that they, too, should be guilty of wrongdoing; and intimate that they are not so bad after all, since they have such illustrious examples of iniquity before them.

The principles of justice required a faithful narration of facts for the benefit of all who should ever read the Sacred Record. Here we discern the evidences of divine wisdom. We are required to obey the law of God, and are not only instructed as to the penalty of disobedience, but we have narrated for our benefit and warning the history of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and the sad results of their disobedience of God's commands. The account is full and explicit.

The law given to man in Eden is recorded, together with the penalty accruing in case of its disobedience. Then follows the story of the temptation and fall, and the punishment inflicted upon our erring parents. Their example is given us as a warning against disobedience, that we may be sure that the wages of sin is death, that God's retributive justice never fails, and that He exacts from His creatures a strict regard for His commandments. When the law was proclaimed at Sinai, how definite was the penalty annexed, how sure was the punishment to follow the transgression of that law, and how plain are the cases recorded in evidence of that fact!

The pen of inspiration, true to its task, tells us of the sins that overcame Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David, and Solomon, and that even Elijah's strong spirit sank under tempta-

It is a subject of wonder to many that inspired history should narrate in the lives of good men facts that tarnish their moral characters.

were common clay and subject to the ordinary temptations of humanity. Yet had the pen of inspiration written their histories, how different would they have appeared. There would have been revealed human weaknesses, struggles with selfishness, bigotry, and pride, hidden sins perhaps, and the continual warfare between the spirit and the flesh.

Even private journals do not reveal on their pages the writer's sinful deeds. Sometimes the conflicts with evil are recorded, but usually only when the right has gained the victory. But they may contain a faithful account of praiseworthy acts and noble endeavors; this, too, when the writer honestly intends to keep a faithful journal of his life. It is next to a human impossibility to lay open our

and frequently fall into error. But it is encouraging to our desponding hearts to know that through God's grace they could gain fresh vigor to again rise above their evil natures; and, remembering this, we are ready to renew the conflict ourselves.

Israel's Experience—A Warning

The murmurings of ancient Israel and their rebellious discontent, as well as the mighty miracles wrought in their favor and the punishment of their idolatry and ingratitude, are recorded for our benefit. The example of ancient Israel is given as a warning to the people of God, that they may avoid unbelief and escape His wrath. If the iniquities of the Hebrews had been omitted from the Sacred Record, and only their virtues recounted, their

tion during his fearful trial. Jonah's disobedience and Israel's idolatry are faithfully recorded. Peter's denial of Christ, the sharp contention of Paul and Barnabas, the failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles, are all laid bare by the Holy Ghost, who lifts the veil from the human heart. There before us lie the lives of the believers, with all their faults and follies, which are intended as a lesson to all the generations following them. If they had been without foible they would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But seeing where they struggled and fell, where they took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged, and led to press over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way.

God has ever been faithful to punish crime. He sent His prophets to warn the guilty, denounce their sins, and pronounce judgment upon them. Those who question why the word of God brings out the sins of His people in so plain a manner for scoffers to deride and saints to deplore, should consider that it was all written for their instruction, that they may avoid the evils recorded and imitate only the righteousness of those who served the Lord.

We need just such lessons as the Bible gives us, for with the revelation of sin is recorded the retribution which follows. The sorrow and penitence of the guilty, and the wailing of the sin-sick soul, come to us from the past, telling us that man was then, as now, in need of the pardoning mercy of God. It teaches us that while He is a punisher of crime, He pities and forgives the repenting sinner.

In His providence the Lord has seen fit to teach and warn His people in various ways. By direct com-



Even private journals do not reveal on their pages the writer's sinful deeds. Sometimes the conflicts with evil are recorded, but usually only when the right has gained the victory.

mand, by the sacred writings, and by the spirit of prophecy has He made known unto them His will. My work has been to speak plainly of the faults and errors of God's people. Because the sins of certain individuals have been brought to light, it is no evidence that they are worse in the sight of the Lord than many whose failings are unrecorded. But I have been shown that it is not mine to choose my work, but humbly to obey the will of God. The errors and wrongdoings in the lives of professed Christians are recorded for the inspiration of those who are liable to fall into the same temptations. The experience of one serves as a beacon light to warn others off the rocks of danger.

Thus are revealed the snares and devices of Satan, the importance of perfecting Christian character, and the means by which this result may be obtained. Thus God indicates what is necessary to secure His blessing. There is a disposition on the part of many to let rebellious feelings arise if their peculiar sins are reprov'd. The

spirit of this generation is: "Speak unto us smooth things" (Isaiah 30:10). But the spirit of prophecy speaks only the truth. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many who profess to follow Christ waxes cold. They are blind to the wickedness of their own hearts and do not feel their weak and helpless condition. God in mercy lifts the veil and shows them that there is an eye behind the scenes that discerns their hidden guilt and the motives of their actions.

The sins of the popular churches are whitewashed over. Many of the members indulge in the grossest vices and are steeped in iniquity. Babylon is fallen and has become the cage of every foul and hateful bird! The most revolting sins of the age find shelter beneath the cloak of Christianity. Many proclaim the law of God abolished, and surely their lives are in keeping with their faith. If there is no law, then there is no transgression, and therefore no sin; for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4).

The carnal mind is enmity against God, and it rebels against His will.

Let it once throw off the yoke of obedience and it slips unconsciously into the lawlessness of crime. Iniquity abounds among those who talk grandly of pure and perfect religious liberty. Their conduct is abhorrent to the Lord, and they are co-workers with the adversary of souls. The light of revealed truth is turned from their sight, and the beauties of holiness are but as shadows to them.

It is astonishing to see upon what flimsy foundations very many build their hopes of heaven! They rail at the law of the Infinite One as though they would defy Him and make His word

The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of His people. Painful though it has been to me, I have faithfully set before the offenders their faults and the means of remedying them, according to the dictates of the Spirit of God. This has, in many instances, excited the tongue of slander and embittered against me those for whom I have labored and suffered. But I have not been turned from my course because of this. God has given me my work, and, upheld by His sustaining strength, I have performed the painful duties He has set before me. Thus has the Spirit of God

No Occasion For Despair

Repentant sinners have no cause to despair because they are reminded of their transgressions and warned of their danger. These very efforts in their behalf show how much God loves them and desires to save them. They have only to follow His counsel and do His will, to inherit eternal life. God sets the sins of His erring people before them, that they may behold them in all their enormity under the light of divine truth. It is then their duty to renounce them forever.

God is as powerful to save from sin today as He was in the times of the patriarchs, of David, and of the prophets and apostles. The multitude of cases recorded in sacred history where God has delivered His people from their own iniquities should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the judgment.

Bible history stays the fainting heart with the hope of God's mercy. We need not despair when we see that others have struggled through discouragements like our own, have fallen into temptations even as we have done, and yet have recovered their ground and been blessed of God. The words of inspiration comfort and cheer the erring soul. Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously. Thus may we trust in the virtue of the atoning sacrifice and be overcomers in the name of Jesus. Humanity is humanity the world over from the time of Adam down to the present generation, and the love of God through all ages is without a parallel.

Testimony Treasures, vol. 1, Ellen G. White, 435-442. **LM**

It is one of the best evidences of the authenticity of the Scriptures that the truth is not glossed over nor the sins of its chief characters suppressed.

null. Even Satan with his knowledge of the divine law would not dare to make the speeches which some law-hating ministers make from the pulpit, yet he exults in their blasphemy.

I have been shown what man is without a knowledge of the will of God. Crimes and iniquity fill up the measure of his life. But when the Spirit of God reveals to him the full meaning of the law, what a change takes place in his heart! Like Belshazzar, he reads intelligently the handwriting of the Almighty, and conviction takes possession of his soul. The thunders of God's word startle him from his lethargy, and he calls for mercy in the name of Jesus. And to that humble plea God always listens with a willing ear. He never turns the penitent away comfortless.

pronounced warnings and judgments, withholding not, however, the sweet promise of mercy.

If God's people would recognize His dealings with them and accept His teachings, they would find a straight path for their feet and a light to guide them through darkness and discouragement. David learned wisdom from God's dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly and humiliated himself before God. "The law of the Lord," he exclaims, "is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7).

Love

LOVE, THE LAW AND HEAVEN

BY BRENDA DOUAY

"Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways."

PSALM 119:2, 3



Understand the most basic requirement of heaven, the deciding factor of entrance into heaven.

If I am seeking something with my whole heart, it must be something that I value above all other things. It is something that I love. Why is this so important in whether I am seen fit to gain entrance into heaven? I believe that answer to this question is stated very succinctly, in fact in three words: “Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:8, *first part*). This is not speaking of human love, but divine love as is defined in the preceding verses.

Let’s think about this for a moment. If I am motivated to do something from any other motive than pure, true principled love, I

love of the purity, holiness, righteousness of God’s government, law, kingdom, I will not be a safe subject for that kingdom.

The universe has endured over 6,000 years of sin, of rebellion, of spurious, self-centered love. It can be unequivocally stated that God will not allow it a second time. And as He is not a God of force, the only option He has is to restrict entrance to only those who are motivated by the unchanging principle of divine love. Because as the Bible says “love never fails.”

1 Corinthians 13 elaborates on this: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift

Immediately after these words “it profits me nothing” follows a description of true love. In our world today, basically what we know and see is Satan’s counterfeit for God’s true principle of love. So we need to be educated as to what true love is. 1 Corinthians gives a definition of true love, principled love. It is this divine, principled love that is expressed in the Ten Commandments. It is this love that is the basis of the government of God. It is His very character.

This principled love is the basic requirement of entrance into heaven. 2 Thessalonians 3:5 NASB also sheds some light as to why this is the case. It says, “May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.” The love of God and of Christ are steadfast.

What does *steadfast* mean? Here is the first definition from Merriam-Webster: “firmly fixed in place; immovable.” Does that sound like something based on that love would be secure? Something based on that kind of “steadfast love” will not be changed.

Two more scriptures among many state clearly God’s requirement for those who would be citizens of His kingdom of glory.

Mark 12:30: “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

Deuteronomy 10:12 NASB: “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

The most basic problem of the human race is whether or not I sin. I would like to propose to you that love is involved in the motive of everything I do or choose. It is either self-

“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30

believe that it is a given that sooner or later that motive would change, and as the motive changes, the action also changes. However, God never changes. His character is love, the basis of His government is love, His law is love, and we are told that He never changes.

If our lives, our words and actions are based on love, divine love, true love based on principle, will we ever change? No, so if my motivating factor is love, then I am safe to be in the kingdom of glory restored. If I live, speak, act, make decisions based on God’s principle of love, I will be a safe citizen of that heavenly realm. If the motive power for my obedience is not

of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing” (verses 1–3 NASB).

God says it doesn’t matter how great the deed, how wonderful the gift or talent, how mighty the power. If it is not motivated by love, it profits me nothing. Why? It is because of those three words we read earlier from 1 Corinthians 13:8 – “Love never fails.” That is the only motive that is sure. That is the only motive power that is safe. All other motives will eventually fail.

love or love of God. Think about that for a moment. When man sinned he lost the natural goodness, the propensity for good, that total lack of propensity to do evil which was the condition in which he was created by God. He lost the ability to do good and became wholly depraved, evil, wicked. The Bible teaches that, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9)? As a result of that first sin, mankind is now under the power that is the exact opposite of love, the epitome of hatred, evil and death. There is one power alone that is stronger than death – love, pure, divine love. Therefore, there is only one power that is stronger than sin. In other words, there is one power alone that gives us the power to overcome sin – love.

“If God has given His only begotten Son to die, the just for the unjust, He wants every voice to proclaim it; for this is the truth that is to work counter to the lies of Satan. Christ’s death for man shows that his compassion and love are without a parallel. Christ’s resurrection proves that He has power over death and the grave. He is willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.” *The Review and Herald*, August 13, 1889.

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow



Even if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1–3).

These are wonderful attributes – wonderful ability of speech, prophecy, understanding all mysteries and knowledge, faith even so strong as to move mountains, giving all you have to give to others, and even martyrdom. But God says all these are worth nothing without the motivating power of love.

There is another Scripture in the Bible that gives this exact same principle, but stated in the negative rather than in the positive, and in another setting. You all know these famous words of Christ. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from

Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21–23 KJV).

Again we have a description of someone doing wonderful things in Jesus’ name. But Jesus says, “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.” What? Doing all these wonderful and good things, and Jesus says, “I never knew you?”

The problem here is one of motive. The issue is self-love, rather than love of God and the principles of His kingdom.

Inspiration says it this way: “No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusi-

These are wonderful attributes – ability of speech, prophecy, understanding all mysteries and knowledge, faith even so strong as to move mountains, giving all you have to give to others, and even martyrdom. But God says all these are worth nothing without the motivating power of love.

GOD IS LOVE.

ast or an ambitious hypocrite.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 318, 319.

Why? Why is this attribute of love so important? The crux of the matter is stated in these few words of Jesus recorded by John the Beloved. “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15 NASB). God does not say if you are afraid of Me, or if you know I exist, or if you obey because you have to, and the list could go on. Satan has myriads of counterfeit reasons. God says, “If you love Me.” Period.

Let’s think about this in a logical way for a moment. Would you want to be in heaven if heaven is like this earth? Of course not. In that case, you and I must change. Think of this from the perspective of God. Think of the extreme cost of putting into effect the

wonderful plan of salvation by which alone you and I have hope of eternity. Will God allow sin to rear its head again? Never. If we are to be in that kingdom of glory restored, we must have the attributes that would make us safe to be there—for eternity. That means obedience from that most basic principle – love for God and for the principles of His kingdom.

Do you have that kind of love? How do we get that kind of love? The answer is very simple.

The inspired writer says, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV). What is that glory of the Lord? It is self-sacrificing love.

“It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which ‘seeketh not her own’ has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.” *The Desire of Ages*, 20.

“But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13 NASB). **LM**

All quotes NKJV unless otherwise noted.

Brenda Douay is a staff member at *Steps to Life*. She may be contacted by email at: brendadouay@stepstolife.org.

BE THANKFUL

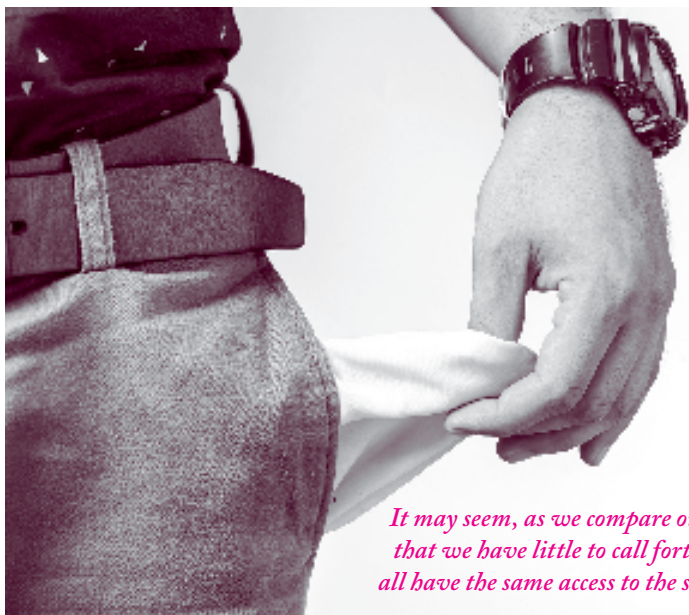
GOOD MEDICINE FOR THE TROUBLED

There are many man-made formulas for peace of mind, but none is so effective as the command of God to be thankful. Paul in writing to the church at Colossae encouraged the believers with these words:

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

Colossians 3:15





It may seem, as we compare ourselves with others, that we have little to call forth thankfulness. But all have the same access to the storehouse of heaven.

Once a year in the United States the President sets aside a day for thanksgiving. He calls upon the people of the nation, as he did in a recent proclamation, to consider the “richness of our blessings,” “our bountiful harvests,” “our productivity of goods abundant,” and the privilege “to walk as free men unafraid.”

soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 251.

Thus we are admonished by the prophet Samuel, “Consider how great things He hath done for you” (1 Samuel 12:24); and our hearts should respond as did the psalmist, “The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad” (Psalm 126:3).

Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise.

Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, Harry S. Truman, 1948. It is good to remind ourselves of such things once a year. But it is far better to set a time each day to ponder the things for which we should be thankful.

The spirit of thankfulness is like a tonic. It causes one to lift his head, to walk more erect. It smooths the ruffled brow, and places a smile upon the countenance. “Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of

Just the uttering of praise and thanks sends the blood coursing through one’s veins faster, cleansing out the impurities of the mind and the heart, and giving health to the bones.

Again we are told, “It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 251.

Certainly we have much to be troubled about, for there never was

a time when so many demands were made upon us. Life becomes more and more complicated and uncertain every day. We seem to be hedged about by unpleasant events over which we have no control. We often feel disconcerted in the face of issues that must be settled without delay. How can we remain calm and collected in such a time as this?

The best way to do it is to have a background of confidence that we have an Almighty Helper at our side every moment, and that He will not permit any circumstance to overwhelm us. We need constantly to remind ourselves of this, and be thankful for it. This is what Paul meant when he wrote the words quoted before. Weymouth’s translation reads:

“Let the peace which Christ gives settle all questionings in your hearts, to which peace indeed you were called as belonging to His one Body; and be thankful” (Colossians 3:15, literal translation).

The consciousness that we are not alone in the daily conflict, that we belong to a body of people who are called to peace through Christ, tempers every trial and helps to settle all our questionings. This is one of the greatest blessings that the Christian way of life has to offer. We not only look forward to the day of salvation, when we shall be delivered wholly from earthly conflicts, but we are promised daily deliverances here and now. That is why Christ bade us pray, “Deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13). This freedom comes not by its removal, for this is impossible in an evil world, but by God making evil powerless over us, even as rain is repelled by a waterproof garment. We can then say with Paul, “None of these things move me” (Acts 20:24).

How thankful we should be for these spiritual blessings that moderate



To let money lie idle often defeats one's purpose. But to put it into circulation, and let it produce something useful to others, is the best way to increase one's own benefits.

the trials of life. And the more we are thankful for them, the more they can do for us. Of this we read:

"It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him." *The Desire of Ages*, 348.

When we think of our material blessings we may not have as much as some for which to be thankful. We may be poor in this world's goods; we may have afflictions of the body and be restricted in our activities. It may seem, as we compare ourselves with others, that we have little to call forth thankfulness. But all have the same access to the storehouse of heaven, and we are only limited by our faith in laying hold of the spiritual blessings God so freely offers to all. If it is money you need, God can bless the little and make it sufficient. If it is health

you need, God can give you the grace to endure the trial. There is no material need of man that some spiritual grace cannot match. Just take the key of faith and open God's treasury, and there you will find all that is necessary for a life of happiness. Help yourself to the riches of joy and gladness stored up in Christ Jesus.

There are two ways to multiply our blessings. One is to recognize them. The other is to share them. This is an axiom of life in general, and of Christian life in particular. To let money lie idle often defeats one's purpose. But to put it into circulation, and let it produce something useful to others, is the best way to increase one's own benefits. This law of economics is recognized in the business world. It was recognized by Christ in the parable of the talents. The man who buried his one talent in the ground, thinking he would have wherewith to meet some future need, learned to his great regret that even that which he had felt was so secure was taken from him.

Exaggerated self-interest leads sooner or later either to poverty of material things or poverty of soul. What, then, should be the response of one to every blessing that is received? "Freely

ye have received," saith the Master, "freely give" (Matthew 10:8). And the psalmist asks, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits" (Psalm 116:12)? There is no peace for one who simply offers thanks for what he receives. He must likewise be glad for the opportunity to serve. To give is life; to stop giving is death. To Abraham, God said, "I will bless thee, ... and thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2). The one who stops being a blessing will soon lose the blessing.

There are too many people today talking about the Bill of Rights and forgetting the bill of responsibilities. We love our freedom to do as we wish. But does what we wish include the desire to be of some help to others? No nation, no people, no individual, would have any freedom at all if no consideration were given to human relationships.

Above all, spiritual life is absolutely dependent upon the act of sharing. One concerned only with his own salvation is doing the very thing that will keep him from receiving what he desires.

So let us be thankful for the faith that helps us lay hold upon the eternal riches, for the hope that keeps us patient until we fully realize all that God has promised, and for the love that prompts us to give thanks for blessings bestowed and leads us to share them with others. This is the way of peace to which we are called. Let us walk in it.

Thoughts of Peace, Frederick Lee, 1950, 24-27. **LM**

Reader's comment: "This is a wonderful 'nugget' to help a person find true peace in this turbulent world that we live in. Even though it was written in 1950, it is very relevant to today. If you are struggling with finding peace, this book will be a great source of comfort and direction in finding it."

Jesus' Last Days

Matthew 26

Clues

BY ROB HAGAR

Across

B2	What Jesus called last supper bread (two words)	v.26
B16	Jesus: high priest will see Me in these	v.64
C8	Judas and company brought these	v.47
D2	Peter denied Jesus with this	v.72
D17	Jesus was hit/slapped with these	v.67
E12	Jesus reminded priests He had taught here	v.55
F2	The high priest claimed Jesus spoke this	v.65
G13	Peter did this for emphasis	v.74
G19	Jesus: better for betrayer to not be _____	v.24
H1	Jesus gave this "curse" for betrayer	v.24
I5	Jesus quoted Zechariah saying flock will be _____	v.31
I19	Jesus told the disciples to do this	v.45
J2	Peter: even if I _____ I'll not deny Thee	v.35
K18	This sung after supper	v.30
L2	Jesus: I'll sit on _____ hand	v.64
L11	Jesus: do this and pray	v.41
M17	Judas gave the priests this	v.48
O7	Jesus promised to go here later	v.32
O15	Caiaphas tore these	v.65
Q1	How Peter wept	v.75
Q10	Peter did this for emphasis	v.74
Q16	How much further Jesus went from disciples	v.39
S2	Type of witnesses who testified against Jesus	v.59
S8	Judas' first word to Jesus in garden	v.49
S13	Jesus: high priest will see Me coming from here	v.64

Down

A19	A liar said Jesus could do this	v.61
B4	Jesus warned that one would do this	v.21
B10	Jesus told the three to do this	v.38
B12	Caiaphas did this for emphasis	v.65
C8	Jesus said now was the time for this	v.45
D17	Disciple who insisted on his loyalty	v.33–35
D21	Judas and company brought these	v.47
E6	This betrayed Peter	v.73
E15	Peter was recognized here	v.71
F2	Jesus: grape juice represents this	v.27, 28
G11	Twelve responded to Jesus' news with this emotion	v.22

A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		20	21	A
B																					B
C																					C
D																					D
E																					E
F																					F
G																					
																					H
I																					
J																					J
K																					K
L																					L
M																					M
N																					N
O																					O
P																					P
																					Q
R																					R
S																					S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		11	12	13	14		16		18	19	20	21	22

Answer key on page 26.

I9	Jesus yielded His will in prayer to this (two words)	v.42
I13	Priests said Jesus was guilty of this	v.66
J3	All twelve asked this (three words)	v.22
J18	Caiaphas demanded Jesus admit He was this or not	v.63
K5	Jesus compared His disciples to these	v.31
K15	Jesus predicted Peter would deny Him _____	v.34
K20	Peter: "I do not know the _____"	v.72
M7	Jesus could have called these	v.53
N21	Disciples were this when Jesus prayed	v.43
O2	Jesus compared Himself to this	v.55
O12	Time of day of the last supper	v.20
O17	This mount a scene of agony	v.30
Q10	Jewish leaders did this on Jesus	v.67
R15	Jesus: do this to broken bread	v.26

2017

Nearly every continent of this earth has been hit by climate and weather disasters.



Zimbabwe—Hundreds of people have been killed due to the severe rains in the first few months of the year.

China—1 million people were displaced and over 200 people killed due to severe flooding and other natural disasters in the first half of the year.

Peru—Flooding triggered by unusually warm Pacific waters off the coast killed 150 and affected more than 1 million.

Afghanistan—Avalanches caused by heavy snowfall caused deaths and loss of homes.

Democratic Republic of the Congo—A horrific landslide killed hundreds, leaving 280 children orphaned.

Sri Lanka—Heavy rainfall and strong monsoon winds left hundreds dead and affected another half million. Hundreds more have died from dengue fever since the disaster.

Mexico—A major 7.1 magnitude earthquake shook Mexico City on September 19, killing at least 225 people. The earthquake struck on the 32nd anniversary of a devastating 1985 quake that killed thousands in Mexico. Twelve days earlier, the even

larger Chiapas earthquake struck 400 miles away, off the coast of the state of Chiapas, killing at least 96 people.

Colombia—A massive landslide in the southern city of Mocoa killed at least 300 and injured hundreds more. Two weeks later, 17 more people were killed and dozens more injured in another landslide set off by heavy rains.

South Asia—Flooding and landslides resulting from monsoon rains have affected at least 41 million people in Bangladesh, India and Nepal during the summer with a death toll of 1,200.

United States—Three hurricanes in quick succession have caused unprecedented havoc and devastation. Hurricane Harvey was an extremely destructive Atlantic hurricane which became the first major hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. since 2005. Harvey was the wettest tropical hurricane on record in the U.S., causing widespread flooding. At least 75 were confirmed dead from the flooding along its path of destruction. Hurricane Irma with its deadly storm surges and Maria with her catastrophic high winds that totally devastated Puerto Rico followed in quick succession leaving a trail of death and destruction.

Las Vegas, USA—October 1. Thirty thousand people were gathered on the Las Vegas Strip for a music festival when a lone shooter opened fire on them from the 32nd floor of a hotel building. Initial reports say 59 people are dead with more than 500 injured in the largest mass shooting in U.S. history.

Might this be what has been described “as the beginning of sorrows”? If ever there was a time to get on your knees and pray for the inhabitants of this world to turn to their Creator it is now. The devil is “enraged” and enlisting all in his power to destroy, for he knows that his time is short.

In the midst of all of this disaster was an amazing display of God’s creation when the moon eclipsed the sun.

August 21, 2017—Eclipse Day

The people of the United States looked in wonder as the lunar shadow entered the United States near Lincoln City, Oregon, at 9:05 a.m. before totally eclipsing the sun at 10:16 a.m. Many had travelled from abroad to see this phenomenon while others were transfixed to their televisions for the next couple of hours to follow the lunar shadow until it left the U.S. at 4:09 p.m. EDT. **LM**



Heavenly Father: I did not realize that Your grace is Your character and how much I need it. I understand now why Paul knew that Your grace was truly sufficient and that he was satisfied with his “thorn in the flesh.” I pray for Your grace and Your peace that I may reflect Your character at all times and under all circumstances even amidst all of the thorns, because I now know that Your grace is truly sufficient. Amen.

GRACE BE TO YOU

BY JUDY HALLINGSTAD

Paul sent a most meaningful greeting in most of his letters in which he said: “Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:2). This salutation from Paul’s heart has much more meaning than many realize.

“To learn of Christ means to receive His grace, which is His character.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 271.

With the character of Christ, there would be no complaining because you would be satisfied with what God’s will was for you knowing “... that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

When Paul asked for healing in 2 Corinthians 12:9, God replied, “... My grace is sufficient for thee [My character is sufficient for you]: for My strength is made perfect in weak-

ness. ...” Paul then says, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Whatever your “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7), God’s grace is sufficient. “The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul.” *The Desire of Ages*, 187.

Grace be to you! But it is not only grace that Paul wants you to attain. He adds, “... and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:2). As Peter also states in 2 Peter 1:2, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you ...” This word *peace* is a state of quiet or tranquility, free from agitation or disturbance, being calm. It also means an absence of strife or discord—a state of reconciliation. Paul knew God’s desire to give to all grace and peace.

There was much strife, discord and agitation in Paul’s day but he knew that if they would obtain that grace and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son, they would have such tranquility and calmness in their hearts that others would be drawn to them.

God is talking to you through Paul and Peter and other writers. As you read their words, hear His voice talking to you. He says, “Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ask for His grace! Ask for His peace! These gifts are for you and for me.

How do I multiply these gifts? 2 Peter 1:2 tells us how: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord ...” Spend quality time in His word and the Spirit of Prophecy. As you grow in knowledge, so will the grace and peace of God swell within you. **LM**

Rejoice in the Lord Always

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

In this life we shall be tempted and tried. Friends may prove treacherous, enemies may be inspired by Satan to cause sadness. In these trials let us turn to the Strong for strength. There we shall find comfort, consolation, and tender sympathy.



Every day we should make advancement in gaining perfection of character.



Christ interposes between us and the difficulties that appear so formidable. The flame and the flood are behind Him. Then lift Him up, with voice and song, and let the melody of thanksgiving and praise ascend to heaven in your life service. Keep cheerful, full of faith and courage and hope. Elijah was subject to like passions as we are, yet the Lord was his strength. He prayed most earnestly, and the Lord heard his prayer. Let us, under all circumstances, preserve our confidence in Christ. He is to be everything to us—the first, the last, the best in everything. Then let us educate our tongues to speak forth His praise, not only when we feel gladness and joy, but at all times.

Let us keep the heart full of God's precious promises, that we may speak words that will be a comfort and strength to others. Thus we may learn the language of the heavenly angels, who, if we are faithful, will be our companions through the eternal ages. Every day we should make advancement in gaining perfection of char-

acter, and this we shall certainly do if we press toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Let us not talk of the great power of Satan, but of the great power of God. We are to speak even as Christ spoke, allowing no harsh, impatient words to fall from our lips. Thus we shall be a savor of life to all with whom we come in contact.

In every soul two powers are struggling earnestly for the victory. Unbelief marshals its forces, led by Satan, to cut us off from the source of our strength. Faith marshals its forces, led by Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Hour by hour, in the sight of the heavenly universe the conflict goes forward. This is a hand-to-hand fight, and the great question is, Which shall obtain the mastery? This question each must decide for himself. In this warfare all must take a part, fighting on one side or the other. From the conflict there is no release.

Paul says to those who are fighting on the side of truth: "We wrestle

not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). We are urged to prepare for this conflict. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10, 11). The warning is repeated, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (verse 13).

He who is mighty in counsel, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given, will come to the help of those who trust in Him. In the Scriptures we read that in certain places Christ could not do many mighty works, because of the unbelief existing there. It is of great importance that we have a faith that will not wait for the evidence of sight before it ventures to advance. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:3-6).

The Youth's Instructor, January 10, 1901. **LM**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

President Trump declared Sunday (September 3) as a National Day of Prayer for the millions of Americans harmed by the disastrous Hurricane Harvey, and for those at work in rescue and recovery efforts.

"I don't know when this was done last, but it's been a long time coming," he said during a Friday signing ceremony in the Oval Office.

Trump was surrounded by officials from the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, all of which have been active in feeding and sheltering storm survivors.

"From the beginning of our Nation, Americans have joined together in prayer during times of great need," the official proclamation reads.

"I call on all Americans and houses of worship throughout the Nation to join in one voice of prayer, as we seek to uplift one another and assist those suffering from the consequences of this terrible storm."

How easy it will be, by the stroke of a pen, to declare a National Day of Rest! Are you ready?

Crossword Puzzle (p. 21) Answers

A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	A	
B	M	Y	B	O	D	Y				T	R					C	L	O	U	D	S	B
C			E				S	T	A	V	E	S					I					C
D	O	A	T	H			L	R	N							P	A	L	M	S	D	
E	R		S		E	R		T	E	M	P	L	E		D	W	E					
F	B	L	A	S	P	H	E	M	Y		O	T										
G	L	Y	E	P			S		C	U	R	S	E		B	O	R	N				
W	O	E		E			O				C	R			D	H						
I	O		S	C	A	T	T	E	R	E	D		H			R	E	S	T			
J	D	I	E		H			H	R	E						C						J
K		S		S			Y	O	A	T						H	Y	M	N	K		
L	R	I	G	N	T			W	A	T	C	H				R	A					
M		T	E		A		I		F	H					R	S	I	G	N			M
N		I	E		N		L	U			I				S		A	N				
O	T		P		G	A	L	I	L	E	E				C	L	O	T	H	E	S	O
P	H				E				V		E				L							L
B	I	T	T	E	R	L	Y		S	W	E	A	R		L	I	T	T	L	E	Q	
R	E				S		P			N					E	V						E
S	F	A	L	S	E		H	A	I	L		H	E	A	V	E	N					P
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	

November 2017

Dear friend,

When Jesus came to the end of His earthly life He said, "I have finished the work that You gave Me to do." That was the last night of His earthly pilgrimage. Some day you will come to the last night of your earthly pilgrimage. Whether you die before Jesus returns to the earth or whether you live to see Him coming in the clouds of heaven, there will be a night when it will be your last night in this world.

At that time, that night, will we be able to say, "I have finished the work that You gave me to do"? We must give an account of the manner in which we have stood at our post of duty. "Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 327.

"The Lord is about to punish the world for its iniquity. He is about to punish religious bodies for their rejection of the light and truth which has been given them. The great message, combining the first, second, and third angels' messages, is to be given to the world. This is to be the burden of our work. ... The Sabbath is the sign between God and His people; and we are to make visible our conformity to the law of God by observing the Sabbath." "Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 949.

Every time you walk out the door of your house on Sabbath morning and either walk or drive to church, you are bearing testimony to the world that you are keeping God's commandments and that the law is still binding. Every time you tell your employer that you cannot do commercial or secular work on the Sabbath you are witnessing to the fact that God's law is still in force. Of course, if you say these things but then your acquaintances see you at a worldly place of amusement, the force of your witness for God is destroyed and you as well as other Sabbath keepers will be considered hypocrites.

If we could only understand the truth about our own lives—that every act of life is either bearing witness in favor of what we profess to believe or it is negating the effect of our verbal witness. He that is faithful in the least is faithful also in much (Luke 16:10).

Your brother in end-time witnessing,



John J. Grosboll

The Amazing Dolphin



By Judy Hallingstad

Dolphins are highly intelligent mammals and are part of the family of toothed whales. They are found worldwide, mostly in shallow seas of the continental shelves, and mostly eat fish and squid. Dolphins are generally gray in color with darker backs than the rest of their bodies. Like bats, dolphins use echolocation to navigate and hunt, bouncing high-pitched sounds off objects, and listening for the echoes.

Dolphins are well known for their agility and playful behavior, making them a favorite of wildlife watchers. Many species will leap out of the water, spy-hop (rise vertically out of the water to view their surroundings) and follow ships, often synchronizing their movements with one another. Scientists believe that dolphins conserve energy by swimming alongside ships, a practice known as bow-riding.

Dolphins live in social groups of five to several hundred. They use echolocation, like bats, to navigate and to find prey. They often hunt together by surrounding a school of fish, trapping them and taking turns swimming through the school and catching fish. Dolphins will also follow seabirds, other whales and fishing boats to feed opportunistically on the fish they scare up or discard. To prevent drowning while sleeping only half of the dolphin's brain goes to sleep while the other half

remains awake so they can continue to breathe!

Excerpts from www.defenders.org/dolphin/basic-facts

A True Story

"For many years a dolphin named Pelorus Jack guided ships through French Pass, a channel through the D'Urville Islands off New Zealand. This dangerous channel is so full of rocks, and has such extremely strong current, that it has been the site of literally hundreds of shipwrecks. But none occurred when Pelorus Jack was at work. There is no telling how many lives he saved.

"He was first seen by human beings when he appeared in front of a schooner from Boston name *Brindle*, just as the ship was approaching French Pass. When the members of the crew saw the dolphin bobbing up and down in front of the ship, they wanted to kill him—but, fortunately, the captain's wife was able to talk them out of it. To their amazement, the dolphin then proceeded to guide the ship through the narrow channel. And for years thereafter, he safely guided almost every ship that came by. So regular and reliable was the dolphin that when ships reached the entrance to French Pass they would look for him, and if he was not visible, they would wait for him to appear to guide them safely through



the treacherous rocks and currents.

"On one sad occasion, a drunken passenger aboard a ship named the *Penguin* took out a gun and shot at Pelorus Jack.

The crew was furious, and when they saw Jack swim away with blood pouring from his body they came very close to lynching the passenger. The *Penguin* had to negotiate the channel without Pelorus Jack's help, as did the other ships that came through in the next few weeks. But one day the dolphin reappeared, apparently recovered from his wound. He had evidently forgiven the human species, because he once again proceeded to guide ship after ship through the channel. When the *Penguin* showed up again, however, the dolphin immediately disappeared.

"For a number of years thereafter, Pelorus Jack continued to escort ships through French Pass—but never the *Penguin*, and the crew of that ship never saw the dolphin again. Ironically, the *Penguin* was later wrecked, and a large number of passengers and crew were drowned, as it sailed—unguided—through French Pass." *Diet for a New America*, John Robbins, pg 4-5, 1987, New World Library.



Kansas

State Fair 2017

By Brenda Douay

State Fair – Fall Festival – Pioneer Days – These words conjure up many different images, memories, and responses for different people. Food, animal exhibits, farm equipment, vendors, rides, and more. But for Steps to Life and friends, the Kansas State Fair, as well as smaller local events, invoke far different thoughts, pictures, and emotions. These festivals are about people, all kinds of people. Tall people, short people, old people, young people, healthy people, unhealthy people, educated and uneducated. There are people from many different walks of life, different jobs, different backgrounds, and different experiences. But all have one thing in common—all are sinners, trapped in the pit of sin and in need of a Saviour. Some recognize their need and are grateful for the materials that we make freely available. Others recognize their need, but feel they know the answers. Some are satisfied with their condition and feel no need.



Our Lord has a message for everyone and it is our Lord alone who knows how to reach each soul. As fellow humans, it is impossible to know what words, what material, what approach will be the entering wedge for any individual. Therefore, it was with earnest prayer, before starting the car, that two of us began our journey to the Kansas State Fair. We prayed for God's Holy Spirit to guide and direct our words, our actions, the tone of voice, the expressions on our faces; prayer for the Holy Spirit to work on hearts before we even met, prayer that He would prepare hearts to desire His words.

One of Jesus' methods to reach people was ministering to their health. This year, our health exhibit at the State Fair focused on the "hidden" sugar in ten popular drinks from Pepsi to sweet tea, from 7-Up to energy drinks. In front of each bottle or can were jars containing the actual amount of sugar in each drink, displayed in a semi-circle. Front and center of this

semi-circle of popular drinks was a bottle of water, with a poster of information on the benefits of water. "What is not to love about water?"

The literature displayed covered three major areas of life—spiritual, mental and physical, with inspired writings in the spotlight for each. Children's and youth's activity bags are a big hit at the fair, and often draw adults to add their own choice materials from the selections available.

In the spiritual section, the books *The Great Controversy*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, and *High Priest and Coming King* were highlighted. Booklets and tri-folds on the *Foundation and Pillars of the Christian Faith* rounded out the selections.

The health section featured the book *The Ministry of Healing*. Various other health booklets were also available. Surprisingly to the workers, *The Ministry of Healing* proved to be one of the more popular offerings. Perhaps the display on the sugar content of

popular beverages stimulated that interest in visitors.

Finding Peace Within, *Steps to Christ*, and several magazines, including "Radiant Living" rounded out the section on mental health.

In my experience, this year more people have shown interest; more people are open and receptive, and far more materials have been accepted into willing hands.

We invite you to participate with us in our outreach efforts by remembering the contacts made at the Kansas State Fair Steps to Life booth and the local festivals in which we participate in your prayers. Pray that each individual that received material at these outreach efforts will recognize God's truth in the materials and respond to the information presented therein. Pray that there will be many souls in the kingdom resulting from these efforts.

People to be reached for the Lord—these are the thoughts, the emotions, the sentiments of Steps to Life and friends.

Watch
us on



Work continues to progress on the development of our redesigned website, and we offer praise and glory to God for the use it is receiving.

Another method we are taking advantage of for website evangelism is YouTube. Though much can be said about the evils presented thereon, there is also much good available there, just as in any other method of mass medium.

To take advantage of the good side of YouTube, we, as well as several other people, have uploaded many videos of Pastor Grosboll's sermons on a wide variety of present truth topics. They can be used for personal worship and spiritual edification at any time and for group worship when two or three are gathered together.

To view Pastor Grosboll's sermons, launch YouTube and enter "John Grosboll sermons" in the search box. Literally hundreds of videos will be available. Although Steps to Life has its own YouTube channel, far more videos have been posted by others, and especially by Michael Walston, who is now a Steps to Life employee.

As we continue to explore the many and varied possibilities for evangelism that the Internet offers, we gratefully accept your assistance. Please mark your 13th Sabbath offerings *Internet Evangelism* to aid us in these efforts.

November Sermon of the Month

Fanaticism in the Church

By Marshall Grosboll

Like our first mother, Eve, most have learned to trust in their own wisdom of what is right or wrong. Many will be lost presuming God will accept their shortcomings, not because they were deceived, but because they did not believe the truth when it was presented to them.

All who have donated in the past month will automatically receive this Sermon of the Month free of charge.

Question

Who judges the wicked?

Answer

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters” (1 Corinthians 6:2)?

“Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God, and the wicked dead were judged, and their acts were compared with the statute book, the word of God, and they were judged according to the deeds done in the body. Jesus, in union with the saints, meted out to the wicked the portion they must suffer, according to their works; and it was written in the book of death, and set off against their names. Satan and his angels were also judged by Jesus and the saints. Satan’s punishment was to be far greater than that of those whom he had deceived. It so far exceeded their punishment that it could not be compared with theirs. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was to still live and suffer on much longer.” *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 212, 213.

“After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened—the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. ‘Behold ye,’ said the angel, ‘the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.’ This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus through the one thousand years in the Holy City before it descends to the earth.” *Early Writings*, 52, 53. **LM**



Defiled Meat / Diseased Meat

BY DAVID PAULSON

Daniel purposed in his heart not to eat defiled meat. Have you purposed just as resolutely in your heart that you will refrain from eating *diseased*, meat? If you have, you will be sure not to eat any meat at all; for with the alarming increase of disease among cattle at the present time, you can never be sure that you are eating perfectly healthy meat, even if such a thing now exists. The true Christian never strives to see how near he can get to the danger line, but rather how far he can keep away from it.

The God of Daniel inspired him to take a definite stand upon this question. Are you allowing God to inspire a similar definite purpose in your heart with reference to the diet question, or have you sometimes thought it had no bearing upon your physical or

moral nature? Again and again during the last few months I have had the opportunity personally to observe the moral effect of a flesh diet upon men and women who were seeking to rise to a higher level. They would struggle to give up the habits of drink and other evils, and fall again and again; but when they came to the point where they purposed in their hearts to adopt the simple diet of Daniel, then God seemed at once to give them power to rise above the other things.

Not only in this sense, but in an economical sense, those who use flesh foods are spending their money for that which is not bread. A pound of meat contains only a quarter of a pound of food, the remainder being water; while either a pound of peas, beans, or lentils, actually contains more

of the *very same food elements* of which meat is composed, and a large part of the remainder of the pound is made up of useful food substances. The same is practically true of grains, only they do not contain so much of the particular food element of which meat is largely composed. A pound of flesh food costs three times as much as a pound of any of these legumes, yet it contains less than a third as much food, and it has *ten times* more *poisonous* substances, which is, after all, the most expensive part; for it wears out human energy to dispose of this. Add to all this the fact that disease is likely to be lurking in the meat, and then we certainly ought to purpose in our hearts not to spend our money for that which is not bread.

The Review and Herald, November 28, 1899. **LM**

KATHY "SEES" Thanksgiving

Jeanie awoke the morning before Thanksgiving Day with a happy and thankful heart. Usually she awoke every morning feeling this way because she was a happy little girl, but today she had a special reason for being thankful.

Jeanie and her parents lived on a farm in the United States quite a distance from town or from neighbors. There was a big white house across the road, but Jeanie could not remember anyone ever having lived in it. Then last week Daddy told her and Mother that a family with a little girl Jeanie's age was going to move into the house today.

Swiftly Jeanie jumped out of bed and ran to her window to peek at the house across the road. Sure enough, there was a moving van unloading furniture onto the front porch.

"Oh, now I will get to meet my new playmate before Thanksgiving!" Jeanie exclaimed to herself as she hurriedly began to dress.

She was almost to the kitchen when she remembered something she had to do today. She had promised to gather the pine cones that Mother always used to decorate the table on Thanksgiving Day. Would she have time to search for them and visit the little girl across the road too?

Then a thought flashed into Jeanie's mind. I'll go see my new neighbor first and invite her to go with me to gather the cones.

By this time Jeanie was at the kitchen doorway. "Oh, Mother," she sang out, "our new neighbors have come!"

Mother looked up from the plate of toast she was preparing and smiled. "Yes, I saw them. I am making some soup for their lunch. We will take it over as soon as it is ready."

Jeanie nodded. She was glad Mother was making the soup, but she didn't know whether she could wait so long to meet her new playmate.

"I'm going to invite the little girl to help me search for pine cones," she told Mother. "Do you think she will like that?"

"Yes, I'm sure she will." Mother looked a little thoughtful. "There is something, though, I think you should know. Daddy learned about it only yesterday and told me last night."

Jeanie had been watching Mother and saw her strange expression. "What is it? Is it about the new neighbors?"

Mother nodded. "It is about the little girl," she answered gently. "She can't see as you and I see, Jeanie. She is blind."

Jeanie put down the plates she was holding and stared at Mother. Blind! She had never known a blind person. In school there was Cindy who had to walk with crutches, but being blind was different. Not to be able to see at all.

Jeanie had read about several famous blind people, such as Helen Keller, but she had never really

thought much about them. She had never tried to feel what it would be like never to see the bright blue sky, the green grass, other people—anything at all. Why, it was night all the time in a blind person's world.

Jeanie took a deep breath. "Then—then maybe she won't enjoy going with me to look for pine cones," she managed to say.

"I think she may." Mother surprised Jeanie by her answer. "You can invite her anyway and find out what she says."

Jeanie was glad Mother had helped her decide. At worship Jeanie prayed a special prayer for Jesus to help her be friends with her blind neighbor.

Later when the steaming kettle of soup was ready Mother and Jeanie went across the road to see the new neighbors. As they entered the front gate, Jeanie's heart began to beat faster. A little girl just her age was standing on the porch.

The little girl spoke first. "Hello," she called. "I'm Kathy. Do you live across the road?"

"Yes, we do," Jeanie told her. "My mother and I have brought you and your parents some soup for lunch, and I would like you to go pine cone hunting with me."

"Oh, I would love that!" Kathy exclaimed happily. She turned toward the doorway of the house. "May I go, Mother?"

Jeanie turned, too, in surprise. She certainly hadn't seen Kathy's mother come to the door.

After Kathy had gotten her mother's permission, the girls started for the pasture where the pine trees grew.

"I've never seen a pine cone," Kathy stated.

Jeanie couldn't help staring at her. And somehow

Kathy knew that she was puzzled.

"I mean I've never touched a pine cone," she corrected.

"I see things by feeling them. I've never seen many of the things that go with Thanksgiving. My parents and I have always lived in an apartment in New York City. I've never seen a pumpkin or an ear of corn. I surely would like to sometime."

"Oh, you can today!" cried Jeanie. "Daddy has corn and pumpkins in the barn, and we'll gather cones from the pine trees in the pasture."

It wasn't long until Jeanie spied a large cone under the pine tree by the pasture gate. "Oh, here's one," she told Kathy and gave her new friend the cone to hold.

Kathy ran her fingers quickly over the cone at first. Then she touched it more slowly. "It isn't at all like I thought it would be. I thought it would be rough all over, but parts of it are smooth."

Jeanie laughed and held out a black walnut. "If you want to feel something really different, touch this."

Kathy was fascinated by the texture of the walnut hull. Then she felt the bark of the trees and the gritty surface of a sand rock. After the girls had gathered enough of the cones, they hurried to the barn, where Jeanie showed Kathy the big yellow pumpkins and the ears of yellow corn.

"Oh, this feels like Thanksgiving!" laughed Kathy as she patted the biggest pumpkin in the pile. "What a pie it would make!"

"One almost big enough to feed all the Pilgrims!" humored Jeanie.

Kathy smiled. Then she looked serious. "I've read about the Pilgrims and about the first Thanksgiving in my Braille books, but I've often wondered what a Pilgrim looked like."

Jeanie smiled, too. "I wish I had a Pilgrim to show you, but I—" Then she stopped right in the middle of her sentence and caught Kathy's hand. "Come to the house. I do have a Pilgrim to show you. Two of them, in fact!"

When they were inside the house, Jeanie took Kathy to her room. "Here, sit in my rocker, and I'll get my Pilgrim dolls from my doll collection. Grandmother got them for me two years ago at Thanksgiving. They are a Pilgrim man and a Pilgrim woman."

Jeanie put the dolls in Kathy's hands and told her about each doll's clothing, the colors, and how the man carried a Bible in his hand.

Kathy sat for a long time touching the dolls. Then she turned toward Jeanie with joy and wonder in her face. "Oh, Jeanie, this has been such a wonderful day! I've never really been able to know about the things that Thanksgiving means because I couldn't touch them. But today you really have helped me to 'see' Thanksgiving. I think I want to thank Jesus for you."

Jeanie took the Pilgrim dolls from Kathy and put them back with her doll collection. Then she took Kathy by the hand. "And I want to thank Jesus for you too," she said. "So let's thank Him together right now."

On the rug beside Jeanie's bed the two little girls knelt down and gave a special prayer of thanksgiving to Jesus, even though Thanksgiving was still a day away.

Heaven, Please! Helena Welch,
122-127. **LM**



FROM PERSECUTOR TO APOSTLE

BY JOHN J. GROSBOLL

How much evidence do you need before you are willing to commit to a settled decision? It is said that seeing is believing. However, there is even stronger evidence than sight and sound.

Peter, James, and John saw Jesus glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration. In 2 Peter 1:16, Peter says, “We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” Peter says, “We saw His majesty.” Not only that, he heard something. It says, “For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’ ” (verse 17). They both saw Him glorified and they heard a voice that came from the Father in heaven confirming His “Sonship.”

But then, Peter says in verses 18, 19, *first part*, literal translation, “We heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain ... we also have the prophetic word made more sure ...” a more sure prophetic word, a more sure word of prophecy, more sure than what? “More sure than what we saw, and more sure than what we heard.” Scripture plainly teaches that the prophecies in this book, are more sure, they are more certain and stronger evidence than what you see and what you hear.

of night settled upon his vision. He thought that his sudden blindness was punishment from God.

He had been a cruel persecutor of the followers of Jesus and now he finds himself groping about in darkness. His companions, in fear, amazement, and astonishment at what has happened to Saul, took him by the hand, and led him into Damascus. How different it was from what he expected. He thought he was going to enter this city to meet with ostentation, and applause, and honor, because of his position. But now,

to the house of a certain disciple by the name of Judas, and there he remained in solitude, studying in his mind the strange revelation that had broken up all his plans and turned his life upside down. The entire current of his life had changed suddenly. He spent there three days in total blindness.

Spending that time in repentance, reflection, and prayer, he did not eat or drink. He remembered with bitterness of mind how he had consented to the stoning of Stephen. And he remembered the evidence that he had seen in Stephen that there was a power higher than any earthly power that sustained Christ’s servant. He thought with horror of his guilt, that he was one of the ones who had consented, saying, “Stone this man.”

He had been controlled by malice and prejudice. He had closed his ears against the most striking evidence and continued in persecution of the Christian religion. At some time, every person who is a persecutor of the Christian religion must face the truth and reality. The Lord says in both the Old and New Testaments that the day is coming when every knee is going to bow down to Me, and every tongue is going to swear. Not because they will be forced to but that the evidence will be so overwhelming that they will see there is no other suitable solution, no other answer.

Saul at that time was in lonely seclusion. He had no communication with the church because they feared and avoided him; they knew what he was there for. They had been warned by believers in Jerusalem what he was coming there to do. Thus there was not any Christian who wanted to be anywhere near him. He was devoid of human sympathy as he pondered what he could do now with the Jews. He was a broken man, but he had a repentant spirit.

At some time, every person who is a persecutor of the Christian religion must face the truth and reality.

Peter says, “We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to take heed as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (verse 19, literal translation).

Before Paul’s conversion, he had that experience as well. He was lying on the ground when he saw Jesus Christ in His glorified form and heard His voice say, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). And he said, “Lord, what do You want me to do” (verse 6, *first part*)? And Jesus said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and it will be shown to you what you shall do” (verse 6, *last part*, literal translation). And then the vision was over. Saul, trying to get up, finds that he is totally deprived of sight. The brightness of Christ’s glory had been too intense for his mortal sight, and when it was removed, the blackness

although he had come there to cause the Christians to be condemned and punished without mercy, and had determined that no Christian would escape his vigilance in entering their houses to seize the inmates and send them as prisoners to Jerusalem, how different it all was.

His world was turned upside down in a few minutes. Instead of wielding power and receiving honor, he was led as a blind man into town. He had caused many Christians to be cast into prison. Now he is effectively in prison himself. He cannot see anything. He is blind and has to be led here and there and waited upon, dependent upon the guidance of his companions.

Saul is helpless and tortured by remorse. He felt himself to be under the sentence of death, not knowing what the Lord was going to do with him. The Scripture says that he was taken

Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 21:44: "Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." As Saul, about to become the apostle Paul, was thinking about it, he was astonished, as every atheist and agnostic and unbeliever will be astonished someday. He was astonished at his former blindness, that he did not see the tremendous evidence of the Messiahship of Christ. In fact, he was astonished at the blindness of the Jewish nation in general. How could they reject Jesus, the promised Messiah, when all the Old Testament scriptures were fulfilled in His life? It all was plain to him now. He had not studied the scriptures for nothing. It all came back to his mind, even though he was physically blind. And he realized that it was prejudice and unbelief, which had clouded his perceptions and prevented him from discerning Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of prophecy.

The same is still true. People are prevented from belief by prejudice, by settled unbelief, reinforced by their friends and associates, just as was Saul of Tarsus when friends and associates convinced him that Jesus was a fraud. This wonderful conversion of Saul demonstrates in a startling manner the miraculous power that Jesus Christ has to convict the mind and heart of man. Some people might say, "Well, why doesn't Jesus do that for everybody?" Friend, Jesus knows people's hearts, He knows how people would respond and He is not interested in forcing someone to believe who does not want to and chooses not to. Jesus knew the struggles that the apostle Paul had had night and day with his conscience.

O, friend, are you struggling with a guilty conscience? Are you kicking against the pricks and struggling to keep from making a decision to



People are prevented from belief by prejudice, by settled unbelief, reinforced by their friends and associates.

surrender to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ in your life? Do you know that Jesus cannot be your Saviour from sin unless He is also the sovereign and Lord of your life? The apostles made this very clear. He has been made both a Lord and a Saviour. Those are the two things you must believe in regard to Jesus Christ if you are going to receive salvation. He must not only be your Saviour from sin, but He must be the Lord of your life.

Saul said to Him on the Damascus road, "Lord [in other words, Master, Sovereign, Ruler], what do You want me to do? What shall I do?" Jesus said, "Arise and go into the city, and it will be shown to you what you shall do." And now something astonishing happened. Jesus revealed Himself to Saul for the purpose of arresting him in his mad career. He would now make from what was a most unpromising subject an instrument to bear the gospel of salvation to all the Gentiles of the world.

Saul was overwhelmed by this revelation, Jesus of Nazareth, the One that he had been opposing, the One that he had arrayed himself against,

was the Redeemer of the world, and there was no other way to be saved but through Him. He was overwhelmed by his sense of guilt.

Those were torturous days for Saul of Tarsus. What disposal was going to be made of him? What was the Lord going to decide in regard to his case? He knew that he had been the leading, most relentless persecutor of the Christian church. What was going to be his penalty? What was going to be his punishment? Could he be forgiven? He repented. It says, "Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.' So the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for, behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight'" (Acts 9:10-12).

Ananias had heard about who this man was, and even though this was the Lord of glory speaking to him in a vision, he began to expostulate, trying

to reason with the Lord. Don't we all do that at times? The Lord tells us what to do, He knows what we need to do, but we don't think so. We think that it could not be quite like that, surely not that, Lord.

Notice what Ananias said: "Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Your name'" (verses 13, 14).

it was going to be safe to go. He was going to visit the persecutor, the one who had come to Damascus to seize all the Christians and put them in prison. The Lord said, "You go. Just go." "The Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake'" (verses 15, *last part*, 16).

So, Ananias went to see the blind

because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

When you turn to the Lord you may not understand everything. You may have a veil over your eyes. You may not see anything clearly, but Paul says, the scales are going to fall from your eyes, the veil is going to be taken away. You're going to be able to see. You're going to start to understand what you are reading, when you read God's word.

There are even Christians today who say they cannot understand the Old Testament, yet the Old Testament provides the foundation for the Christian church. The Christian church is built on "... the foundation," Paul says, "... of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20). When you turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. "... the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

O, friend, has the veil been removed from your eyes so that you can see clearly and understand spiritual things when you read the Old and the New Testaments? Paul has promised, when you turn to the Lord, the veil will be taken away. You'll start to see. Do you want that experience to happen to you?

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

He was astonished at his former blindness, that he did not see the tremendous evidence of the Messiahship of Christ.

So often, when Jesus sends us a message, we start reasoning it out, and say, "Lord, not that. No, no. I can't do that. Not that road, Lord, not that direction, Lord, not that decision, Lord." So often, Jesus doesn't give a full explanation of what He wants us to do. Look at the life of Jesus when He was here. It happened repeatedly. Jesus did not explain, and people started to try to reason it out. Lord, Why do You say not to do that? Why do You say to do this? It is human nature to enquire why, but Jesus did not reason it out. He just gave this reply to Ananias in the vision, "But the Lord said to him, 'Go'" (verse 15, *first part*).

When the Lord says to go, we need to go. Whether or not we understand why is not the issue. Whether we understand the consequences, we have nothing to do with them. The Lord will take care of the consequences. The Lord did not show Ananias that

Saul. Verses 17, 18 say, "And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized."

The apostle Paul talks about this very thing in his letters. The scales fell from his eyes and now he could see. Notice what he said in 2 Corinthians 3:12-16: "Since we have such great hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were hardened. For until this day, the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament,

Pastor John J. Grosboll is Director of *Steps to Life* and pastors the *Prairie Meadows Church* in Wichita, Kansas. He may be contacted by email at: his-toric@stepstolife.org, or by telephone at: 316-788-5559.

November 26 – December 2

Humanity Held Accountable

Key Text

“At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 17:7).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 686–694.

Introduction

“Each one of us should stand where we realize our responsibility and accountability to the God of heaven. When we realize this, Divine blessing will rest upon us.” *Australasian Union Conference Record*, July 28, 1899.

Sunday

1 PRIDE AND PRESUMPTION CONDEMNED

- a. Just as the Assyrians were brought to judgment, what did Isaiah prophesy would happen to haughty Babylon? Isaiah 13:1, 4–6, 17–22; 47:1–3, 7–9. When did the great city indeed meet her doom? Daniel 5:1, 18–23, 28, 30.

- b. Explain the parallel that the Lord declares will soon come upon spiritual Babylon. Revelation 18:1, 2, 7–17; Ezekiel 7:9.

- c. Why should everyone be watchful in this regard? Proverbs 15:3.

Note: “The eye of the Lord is upon every scene. ... To every word and action of our lives, the holy, sin-hating God stands as a witness. We cannot escape our accountability to Him, for God is everywhere. Why should we not live in such a manner that we may render up our account with joy, and not with grief. God has given us our appointed work, and we are to do it under His direction. If we place our powers under the control of Satan, we are rebels against God, and there will be found in our life-records, as there was found in Belshazzar’s, a fatal deficiency when the accounts are balanced.” *The Signs of the Times*, September 14, 1888.

Monday

2 DEPENDING MORE ON GOD, LESS ON SOCIETY

- a. In the hustle and bustle of city life in modern society, of what warnings must we be ever mindful? Isaiah 17:12–14. For example, what was the Lord’s last-day messenger bidden to write regarding one city (in this case, Melbourne, Australia) having less than half a million people when she was alive?

Note: “It is not God’s will that His people shall settle in the cities, where there is constant turmoil and confusion. Their children should be spared this; for the whole system is demoralized by the hurry and rush and noise.

“The Lord desires His people to move into the country, where they can settle on the land and raise their own fruit and vegetables, and where their children can be brought in direct contact with the works of God in nature. Take your families away from the cities, is my message.” *Medical Ministry*, 310, 311.

“The cities will become worse and worse. In them will be strife and bloodshed, and at last they will be visited by earthquakes. Buildings will be thrown down, and will be consumed by fire from heaven. ...

“Will our brethren and sisters in Melbourne move without the counsel of God? Will they make large plants in Melbourne, when the world is growing worse and worse, when the cities are becoming as Sodom and Gomorrah? Will they put out the eyes of the people, that they shall not discern the signs of the times?

“The cities must be worked. Those who are living in them must be warned of what is before us. Let time and means be wisely spent. See if you cannot do something in the highways and byways of the cities to proclaim the message of present

truth. But do not locate your families in the city, and do not establish business interests there. If you do this, you will in the future be expected to conform to the observance of various holidays. Watchers will be set to seek occasion of complaint against the commandment-keeping people of God. Satan will exercise his power and enmity, and oppression will be the result. The larger the city, the greater will be the oppression. At such a time as this, shall we invest our money and our time in business enterprises in the cities, when they are so much needed to advance the work in new fields? Let those who can teach the truth go forth into the highways and hedges, and compel men and women to come in, that God's house may be full." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, 336, 337.

- b. Instead of leaning on an arm of flesh, where are we to look? Isaiah 17:7, 8.

Tuesday

3 CONSECRATION IN THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

- a. What does God declare about the eating of "clean" flesh foods in the antitypical Day of Atonement? Isaiah 22:12-14, 20-22 (compare Revelation 3:8, 7). When the Lord's messenger was taken off into vision, what was revealed about this "open" and "shut" door?

Note: "The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the city of the living God. Then I was shown that the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ relating to the shut door could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which are contained the ten commandments. This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches.

"I saw that Jesus had shut the door of the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it (Revelation 3:7, 8); and that since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God's people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question." *Early Writings*, 42.

- b. What is our most urgent duty in view of the time in which we live? Isaiah 34:16. Summarize the mission of the Lord's messenger for our time and explain why it has been so important.

Note: "I have not come to cry peace; you can hear this voice wherever you go. There are those who will be glad to lull you to sleep in your carnal security; but I have a different work. My message is to alarm you, to bid you reform your lives, and cease your rebellion against the God of the universe. Take the word of God, and see if you are in harmony with it. Is your character such as will bear the search of the heavenly investigation?" *The Review and Herald*, June 22, 1911.

Wednesday

4 AN ANCHOR AMID THE WINDS OF DOCTRINE

- a. How can we stand firm for Christ in an age when people tend to question God and His wisdom? Isaiah 29:13-16; 30:8-11.

Note: "Never was there a time when the Lord would manifest His great grace unto His chosen ones more fully than in these last days when His law is made void." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 96.

"The Lord calls upon every teacher, every minister, everyone who has received the light of His truth to mark well his spiritual standing. They have had great light, and if they would secure eternal life, they must no longer make finite men their dependence but build upon the sure foundation." *Ibid.*, 384.

- b. What is to be our safeguard in times of religious delusion?
Isaiah 8:19, 20.

Note: “There is no concord between Christ and Belial. The nonresurrection of the wicked and their peculiar views of the age to come are gross errors which Satan has worked in among the last-day heresies to serve his own purpose to ruin souls. These errors can have no harmony with the message of heavenly origin.

“Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good. ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits’ (Matthew 7:16). Fanaticism and noise have been considered special evidences of faith. Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a powerful and happy time. They work for this and get up an excitement of feeling. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial. When the happy flight of feeling is gone, they sink lower than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source. The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 411, 412.

Thursday

5 STAYING FAR AWAY FROM ERROR

- a. Today, as “New Age” spiritualistic philosophy and religion seem to prosper and run rampant, what must we keep in mind? Isaiah 47:10–15.

“To every word and action of our lives, the holy, sin-hating God stands as a witness.”

Note: “All should feel the necessity of keeping the moral nature braced by constant watchfulness. Like faithful sentinels, they should guard the citadel of the soul, never feeling that they may relax their vigilance for a moment. In earnest prayer and living faith is their only safety.” *Counsels on Health*, 411.

“In earthly affairs, the servant who seeks most carefully to fulfill the requirements of his office, and to carry out the will of his master, is most highly valued. A gentlemen once wished to employ a trusty coachman. Several men came in answer to his advertisement. He asked each one how near he could drive to the edge of a certain precipice without upsetting the carriage. One and another replied that he could go within a very perilous distance; but at last one answered that he would keep as far as possible from such a dangerous undertaking. He was employed to fill the position. Shall a man be more appreciative of a good servant than is our Heavenly Father? Our anxiety should not be to see how far we can depart from the commandments of the Lord, and presume on the mercy of the Lawgiver, and still flatter our souls that we are within the bounds of God’s forbearance; but our care should be to keep as far as possible from transgression. We should be determined to be on the side of Christ and our Heavenly Father, and run no risks by heady presumption. ...

“Today, while the last message is being heralded to bring God’s servants in harmony with every precept of His law, there will be scoffers and unbelievers; but every soul must stand in his own integrity. As Noah was faithful in warning the antediluvian world, so we must be faithful to the great trust that God has given us. Although there are scoffers and traducers on every side, we must not shrink from presenting the truth of heaven to this generation.” *The Review and Herald*, June 22, 1911.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 While spiritual Babylon seems to flourish, what should we remember?
- 2 What steps can I take to simplify my lifestyle and be less worldly-minded?
- 3 What evidence in Isaiah connects vegetarianism with God’s remnant?
- 4 How does Heaven refute a key tenet of the Charismatic movement?
- 5 Explain the safest policy when error abounds on every hand.

Guidance for the Meek

Key Text

“Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 430–439, 508–516; *The Sanctified Life*, 80–93.

Introduction

“Man is not left to become the sport of Satan’s temptations. ... An Eye that never slumbers or sleeps is guarding the camp of Israel. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels are ministering to the needs of the children of men. Voices inspired by God are crying, This is the way, walk ye in it.” *My Life Today*, 88.

Sunday

1 GOD’S CARE

- a. With what beautiful illustration does Isaiah depict God’s continual care for His vineyard—and how is this to touch our heart as His children? Isaiah 27:2, 3; Psalm 112:5–7.

Note: “It is true the world is dark. Opposition may wax strong. The trifler and scorner may grow bolder and harder in their iniquity. Yet, for all this, we will not be moved. We have not run as uncertain. No, no. My heart is fixed, trusting in God. We have a whole Saviour. We can rejoice in His rich fullness.” *Reflecting Christ*, 351.

“If we would only see and appreciate the Lord’s goodness and love and His unceasing care for us, how changed this world would be. If we would seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, the principles of righteousness would guide our lives, and self-seeking would find no place in our hearts. The desire to do our own will would be submerged into the desire to do the will of God. We need to cherish a constant realization of God’s love and goodness. We need to remember that He holds us accountable for the use that we make of the gifts that He has bestowed on us.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, 327.

Monday

2 SOBER VIGILANCE NEEDED

- a. What has been shown to be blinding the eyes of the majority today, including the eyes of many professed Christians? Isaiah 29:9–12.

Note: “I have been shown that the false shepherds were drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. The truth of God is sealed up to them; they cannot read it.” *Early Writings*, 123.

- b. How does this condition affect many that profess present truth while rejecting parts of it—and what warning accompanies this realization? Isaiah 29:13–16.

Note: “The different parties of professed Advent believers have each a little truth, but God has given all these truths to His children who are being prepared for the day of God. He has also given them truths that none of these parties know, neither will they understand. Things which are sealed up to them, the Lord has opened to those who will see and are ready to understand. If God has any new light to communicate, He will let His chosen and beloved understand it, without their going to have their minds enlightened by hearing those who are in darkness and error.

“I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings; for it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good. If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings

of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.

“I saw that we have no time to throw away in listening to fables. Our minds should not be thus diverted, but should be occupied with the present truth.” *Early Writings*, 124, 125.

Tuesday

3 PROPHECIES REGARDING CERTAIN CLASSES

- a. What prophecy is given regarding the meek of the Lord in contrast to those who indulge a critical spirit against their brethren and sisters? Isaiah 29:18–21.

Note: “He who supposed himself secure in the love and friendship of his brother, finds himself mistrusted and his motives misjudged. ...

“Floating rumors are frequently the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, ‘Report, and we will report it’ (Jeremiah 20:10). These tale-bearers are doing the devil’s work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticize their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. The door of the mind should be closed against ‘they say’ or ‘I have heard.’ Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil-surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and, after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? While we cannot love and fellowship those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master—a love that thinketh no evil and is not easily provoked.” *The Review and Herald*, June 3, 1884.

- b. What encouraging prophecy is given for these last days with regard to earnest Jewish people who are honestly seeking God? Isaiah 29:22–24.
-
-



Floating rumors are frequently the destroyers of unity among brethren.

Note: “Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save. As His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed. [Isaiah 29:22–24 quoted.]” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 381.

Wednesday

4 GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING TOWARD US ALL

- a. How was Isaiah bidden to address candidly the carnal tendency of God’s professed people—and how does this apply to us today? Isaiah 30:8–16.
-
-
-

Note: “We want to impress upon you the necessity of cleansing yourselves from every stain of sin. The church that Christ presents before the throne of His glory is without ‘spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing’ (Ephesians 5:27). Do you want to be among those who have washed their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb? then, ‘cease to do evil; learn to do well’ (Isaiah 1:16, 17); walk in the commandments and ordinances of your God blameless. You are not to ask whether

it suits your convenience to keep the truth of heaven. You are to take up your cross and follow Jesus, cost what it may. You will find that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. When you broke His law and incurred the penalty of death, God did not spare his only begotten Son, that you might be brought from the path of transgression into the way of life and holiness; and will you neglect so great salvation, and refuse to comply with the conditions of eternal life?" *The Review and Herald*, June 22, 1911.

"Make up your mind that from henceforth your feet shall go in the path of obedience. The darkness that binds you like a thick cloud, will part asunder, and heavenly light will shine upon all those who will have the truth at any cost.

"The Lord understands all about your trials; and however impossible it may seem to live for God, you will find that the way will appear. When your faith has been tested, as the Lord opened the Red Sea so the waters will divide, and His providence will make a path for your feet. It is safe to serve God. It may not be to your worldly advantage to keep God's ways; but the transgressor will be at an eternal loss. ...

"Our fathers have transgressed, and we have followed in their footsteps; but God has opened the book of the law, and backslidden Israel hear the commandments of the Lord. Their transgression stands revealed, and the wrath of God will be upon every soul that does not repent and reform as the light shines upon his pathway. ...

"We must repent of the past evil of our doings, and seek God with all our hearts. We must believe that God means just what He says, and make no compromise with evil in any way. We should greatly humble ourselves before God, and consider any loss preferable to the loss of His favor." *Ibid.*, June 29, 1911.

b. How has God manifested His great patience with us? Isaiah 30:18, 19.

Thursday

5 HEEDING THE STILL, SMALL VOICE

a. How does sincerity in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13), help us stay in safe paths? Isaiah 30:20, 21.

Note: "The master mind in the confederacy of evil is ever working to keep out of sight the words of God and to bring into full view the opinions of men. He means that we shall not hear the voice of God saying: 'This is the way, walk ye in it' (Isaiah 30:21). Through educational processes he is doing all in his power to obscure heaven's light." *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 305.

"The Lord desires all to understand that their prosperity is hid with Him in Christ; that it is dependent on their humility and meekness, their wholehearted obedience and devotion." *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 212.

"In offering the prayer that Christ has given [in Matthew 6:13], we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing. We shall wait for His hand to lead us; we shall listen to His voice, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it' (Isaiah 30:21).

"It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 117, 118.

b. As we turn from our idols, what is God's promise to us? Isaiah 30:22–26.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 In showering His blessings upon us, what does God want us to consider?
- 2 Why should we think twice before running to visit other denominations?
- 3 Why is it impossible for a truly meek person to gossip?
- 4 What is the preference of carnally-minded people who profess religion?
- 5 How only will God answer our prayers for guidance?

December 10 – 16

Compassion for the Penitent

Key Text

“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 42–44, 119–125, 421–424.

Introduction

“Nothing is more essential to communion with God than the most profound humility.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 50.

Sunday

1 A REALITY CHECK

- a. In order to come closer to God, what do we need to realize? Isaiah 59:1, 2.

Note: “The sin which is indulged to the greatest extent, and which separates us from God and produces so many contagious spiritual disorders, is selfishness. There can be no returning to the Lord except by self-denial. Of ourselves we can do nothing; but, through God strengthening us, we can live to do good to others, and in this way shun the evil of selfishness. We need not go to heathen lands to manifest our desire to devote all to God in a useful, unselfish life. We should do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate and with whom we do business. Right in the common walks of life is where self is to be denied and kept in subordination. Paul could say: ‘I die daily’ (1 Corinthians 15:31). It is the daily dying to self in the little transactions of life that makes us overcomers. We should forget self in the desire to do good to others. With many there is a decided lack of love for others. Instead of

faithfully performing their duty, they seek rather their own pleasure.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 132.

“We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 158.

Monday

2 COMING CLOSER TO GOD

- a. How important is humility in the eyes of God? Isaiah 57:14–17.

Note: “If ever a people needed to walk in humility before God, it is His church, His chosen ones in this generation. We all need to bewail the dullness of our intellectual faculties, the lack of appreciation of our privileges and opportunities. We have nothing whereof to boast.” *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 63.

“All self-exaltation must be seen and put away. Truth and righteousness alone will stand the test for this time. We need to have the Spirit of God daily with us, that we may be kept from all evil thoughts and unwise actions, from lifting the soul unto vanity.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, 65.

“The Lord is opening the way for the spread of the Gospel, but we are not ready. Daily we need to be softened and refined by the Holy Spirit’s power. Even our thoughts are to be brought into subjection to Christ. Unconsecrated self is to be crucified.” *The Signs of the Times*, October 24, 1900.

- b. What does God want to do for us through His word? Isaiah 57:18, 19.

Note: “Center your faith so deeply and securely in Jesus Christ that no circumstance of any kind will jostle your faith. Let your life be hid with Christ in God.

“Do not waste your thoughts in dwelling upon the defective characters of others. This will not cure your defects of character. By dwelling upon the wrongs of others, you will be changed into the same image. Whenever you are tempted to talk of others’ follies, or blame them for injuries they have

done to you, consider that they have wounded the heart of Christ in the person of His saints. Then take your Bible, and open it before God, and plead with Him for the healing balm of His peace.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, 24, 25.

“The Word makes the proud humble, the perverse meek and contrite, the disobedient obedient. The sinful habits natural to man are interwoven with the daily practice. But the Word cuts away the fleshly lusts. It is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the mind. It divides the joints and marrow, cutting away the lusts of the flesh, making men willing to suffer for their Lord.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 928.

Tuesday

3 KEEPING ETERNITY IN VIEW

- a. In contrast to the comfort for the meek and contrite, what verdict comes to those who reject God’s appeals? Isaiah 57:20, 21. How can we avoid this condition?

Note: “Are you willing to cast down the idols you have cherished? Are you willing to let Jesus enter the heart to cleanse it from all that defiles? Are you at all times and under all circumstances obtaining the mastery over yourself? Can you say, ‘For me to live is Christ’ (Philippians 1:21), I am His? Whatever I have, of time, or strength, or influence, all is His? Are you representing Him by your forbearance, your patience, your unselfishness?” *The Signs of the Times*, April 9, 1902.

“O for that devotion and humility of heart that will lead God’s people to do those things that Christ has commanded, and still in all humility and truth say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done only that which it was our duty to do! But many, many are swelling with pride and importance, who in God’s estimation are lukewarm. Self-gratification is revealed because of a few things accomplished. Where do we hear the testimony of hearts that are broken in repentance and confession before God? Where do we see professed believers wearing the yoke of Christ? How little time is given to fervent prayer, the result of which would be the possession of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.” *The Review and Herald*, September 16, 1909.

“It is not your profession, but your course of action, that will determine whether or not you are Christians. We are nearing the judgment, and we should strive to spend the little time that intervenes between the present and the coming of Christ, in an intelligent manner. We should seek to have the

mind filled with valuable knowledge, not with wood, hay, and stubble. By wise cultivation our ability should increase, that we may have growing power to understand the sacred teachings of Christ. We are to become teachers of the mysteries of the gospel.” *Ibid.*, April 19, 1892.

- b. What should we always keep in mind in view of eternity? Romans 14:10.

Note: “We are living on the verge of the eternal world. The cases of all are being tried in the heavenly courts, and it is high time to put away sin and to work earnestly to save as many as possible.” *Reflecting Christ*, 121.

Wednesday

4 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTION

- a. What does Christ identify as evidence that we are becoming imbued with a greater portion of His Holy Spirit—the promised Comforter? John 16:8.

Note: “The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. But do not be discouraged. This is evidence that Satan’s delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you, and your indifference and unconcern are passing away.

“No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not see and realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by grace will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ. The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our own sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon. Jesus will accept us; for His word is pledged.” *The Review and Herald*, February 17, 1885.

- b. Explain the contrast between this humility and the opposite attitude frequently manifested in the world—and too often even in the church—and what are the consequences of the latter? James 3:13, 14.



Note: “What is lying against the truth? It is claiming to believe the truth while the spirit, the words, the deportment, represent not Christ but Satan. To surmise evil, to be impatient and unforgiving, is lying against the truth, but love, patience, and long forbearance are in accordance with the principles of truth.” *That I May Know Him*, 185.

“Many are cherishing an unholy desire for the supremacy. Many love to be flattered and are jealously watching for slights or neglect. There is a hard, unforgiving spirit. There is envy, strife, emulation. ...

“Few receive the grace of Christ with self-abasement, with a deep and permanent sense of their unworthiness. They cannot bear the manifestations of the power of God, for this would encourage in them self-esteem, pride, and envy. This is why the Lord can do so little for us now.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 50, 51.

Thursday

5 HUMBLE BEFORE OTHERS

- a. How do those who are Spirit-filled react to those who are faulty and erring? Galatians 6:1–3.

Note: “‘Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us’ (Luke 11:4). We cannot repeat this prayer from the heart, and dare be unforgiving; for we ask the Lord to forgive our trespasses against Him as we forgive those who trespass against us. Very few realize the true import of this prayer. If those who are unforgiving comprehended the depth of its meaning, they would not dare repeat it, and ask God to deal with them as they deal with their fellow mortals.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, December 7, 1899.

“When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and

The sin which is indulged to the greatest extent, and which separates us from God and produces so many contagious spiritual disorders, is selfishness.

felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God’s promise will never fail in one jot or tittle. But when the work of others is discounted, that the workers may show their own superiority, they prove that their own work does not bear the signature it should. God cannot bless them.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 175.

“Before giving us the baptism of the Holy Spirit, our heavenly Father will try us, to see if we can live without dishonoring Him. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Do not think, my children, that you have received all the spiritual help you need. And do not think that you can have great spiritual blessings without complying with the conditions God Himself has laid down. James and John thought that for the asking, they could have the highest place in the kingdom of God. Oh, how far short they fell of understanding the situation! They did not realize that before they could share Christ’s glory, they must wear His yoke and daily learn His meekness and lowliness.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, 178.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Through what key can the promises to the overcomers be granted to me?
- 2 What changes occur in us through wholehearted study of God’s word?
- 3 In view of the brief probationary time left, what should be our focus?
- 4 How may we be in danger of lying against the truth?
- 5 What practical steps can I take towards receiving the latter rain?

December 17–23

A Message for Today

Key Text

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 24–37; vol. 5, 298–302.

Introduction

“I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel’s message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 265.

Sunday

1 TO WHOM IS THIS MESSAGE ADDRESSED?

- a. What must we carefully keep in mind when seeking to promote the message of Isaiah, chapter 58? Isaiah 58:1.

Note: “[Isaiah 58:1 quoted.] This message must be given; but while it must be given, we should be careful not to thrust and crowd and condemn those who have not the light that we have. We should not go out of our way to make hard thrusts at the Catholics. Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf. Those who have had great privileges and opportunities, and who have failed to improve their physical, mental, and moral powers, but who have lived to please themselves and have refused to bear their responsibility, are in greater danger and in greater condemnation before God than those who are in error upon doctrinal points, yet who seek to live to do good to others. Do not censure others; do not condemn them.

“If we allow selfish considerations, false reasoning, and false excuses to bring us into a perverse state of mind and heart, so that we shall not know the ways and will of God, we shall be far more guilty than the open sinner. We need to be very cautious in order that we may not condemn those who, before God, are less guilty than ourselves.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 243, 244.

Monday

2 THE WARNING OFTEN SILENCED

- a. What is often the reaction faced by earnest believers seeking to “cry aloud, spare not” (Isaiah 58:1)? John 3:19–21; compare Numbers 16:1–4. What was the Lord’s messenger shown concerning the state of God’s professed people?

Note: “Many were cherishing idols in their hearts and were practicing iniquity which separated them from God and caused them to be bodies of darkness. I saw but few who stood in the light, having discernment and spirituality to discover these stumbling blocks and remove them out of the way. ...

“Some who occupy the position of watchmen to warn the people of danger have given up their watch and recline at ease. They are unfaithful sentinels. They remain inactive, while their wily foe enters the fort and works successfully by their side to tear down what God has commanded to be built up. They see that Satan is deceiving the inexperienced and unsuspecting; yet they take it all quietly, as though they had no special interest, as though these things did not concern them. They apprehend no special danger; they see no cause to raise an alarm. To them everything seems to be going well, and they see no necessity of raising the faithful, trumpet notes of warning which they hear borne by the plain testimonies, to show the people their transgressions and the house of Israel their sins. These reproofs and warnings disturb the quiet of these sleepy, ease-loving sentinels, and they are not pleased. They say in heart, if not in words: ‘This is all uncalled for. It is too severe, too harsh. These men are unnecessarily disturbed and excited, and seem unwilling to give us any rest or quietude. “Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them” (Numbers 16:3). They are not willing that we should have any comfort, peace, or happiness. It is active labor, toil, and unceasing vigilance alone which will satisfy these unreasonable, hard-to-be-suited watchmen. Why don’t they prophesy smooth things, and cry: Peace, peace? Then everything would move on smoothly.’ ...

“The people have not erected graven images, yet their sin is no less in the sight of God. They worship mammon. They love worldly gain. Some will make any sacrifice of conscience to obtain their object. God’s professed people are selfish and self-caring. They love the things of this world, and have fellowship with the works of darkness. They have pleasure in unrighteousness. They have not love toward God nor love for

their neighbors. They are idolaters and are worse, far worse, in the sight of God than the heathen, graven-image worshipers who have no knowledge of a better way.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 440, 441.

Tuesday

3 THE TRUMPET MUTED

- a. What factors make the task difficult for all who would seek to give the warning trumpet a distinctive sound? Isaiah 58:2; Ezekiel 2:1–7.

Note: “It is not the wicked world, but those whom the Lord designates as ‘my people,’ that are to be reprov’d for their transgressions. He declares further: ‘Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God’ (Isaiah 58:1, 2). Here is brought to view a class who think themselves righteous and appear to manifest great interest in the service of God; but the stern and solemn rebuke of the Searcher of hearts proves them to be trampling upon the divine precepts.” *The Great Controversy*, 452.

“The Lord says of these people: ‘They seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness’ (Isaiah 58:2). Here is a people who are self-deceived, self-righteous, self-complacent, and the minister is commanded to cry aloud and show them their transgressions. In all ages this work has been done for God’s people, and it is needed now more than ever before. ...

“God always has men to whom He entrusts His message. His Spirit moves upon their hearts and constrains them to speak. Stimulated by holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they enter upon the performance of their duty without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord has given them. But the servant of God is soon made aware that he has risked something. He finds himself and his message made the subject of criticism. His manners, his life, his property, are all inspected and commented upon. His message is picked to pieces and rejected in the most illiberal and unsanctified spirit, as men in their finite judgment see fit. Has that message done the work that God designed it should accomplish? No; it has signally failed because the hearts of the hearers were unsanctified.

“If the minister’s face is not flint, if he has not indomitable faith and courage, if his heart is not made strong by constant communion with God, he will begin to shape his testimony



Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf.

to please the unsanctified ears and hearts of those he is addressing. In endeavoring to avoid the criticism to which he is exposed, he separates from God and loses the sense of divine favor, and his testimony becomes tame and lifeless. He finds that his courage and faith are gone and his labors powerless.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 299.

Wednesday

4 FOR WHOM AM I REALLY MOURNING?

- a. How are God’s professed people in Isaiah 58 expecting Him to respond to their service toward Him—and what does He answer? Isaiah 58:3; Malachi 3:14, 15. What factors should we consider today about our own attitude in this regard—both toward God and toward others?

Note: “[Isaiah 58:1–3 quoted.]

“The prophet presents before us a people who are finding fault with the Lord because He does not give them all that they selfishly desire. The Lord in His answer to their complaints shows that they do not deserve all that they require at His hands; for they have not dealt righteously.” *The General Conference Bulletin*, May 31, 1909.

“The fasts observed by these worshipers [in Isaiah 58] are a mere pretense, a mockery of humility. They retain all their objectionable traits of character. Their hearts are not cleansed from defilement. They have not received the softening showers of the grace of God. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit, destitute of the sweetness of its influence. They manifest no repentance, no faith that works by love. They are unjust and selfish in their dealing with their fellow men, mercilessly oppressing those whom they regard as their inferiors. Yet they complain because God does not exalt them above all others because of their righteousness.” *The Review and Herald*, June 25, 1901.

“The people whom the prophet [Isaiah] is commanded to warn ... have a form of godliness, and regard themselves as entitled to special favor and blessing, because they make a high profession and keep up a round of religious service. This nourishes their self-complacency, and they feel as the young man felt who came to Christ, claiming to have kept all the commandments, and asked, ‘What lack I yet’ (Matthew 19:20)? ... This young man flattered himself that he was keeping all the commandments of God; but was he?—No. He did not love God supremely; for he loved his wealth, which was given him only in trust, more than he loved God; and he did not love his neighbors as himself; for he was not willing to distribute his riches among them. He loved his property more than he loved the souls for whom Christ was ready to sacrifice his own life.” *Ibid.*, October 13, 1891.

“We need to beware of self-pity. Never indulge the feeling that you are not esteemed as you should be, that your efforts are not appreciated, that your work is too difficult. Let the memory of what Christ has endured for us silence every murmuring thought. We are treated better than was our Lord.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 476.

Thursday

5 THE MOTIVE BEHIND THE ACTION

- a. In Isaiah 58, what was the real motive behind the fasting of God’s people? Isaiah 58:4. How must we avoid the spirit of this practice? Luke 7:33–35.

“The people have not erected graven images, yet their sin is no less in the sight of God. They worship mammon.”

Note: “The world’s Redeemer cannot honor the fasts observed by the Jewish nation. They fast in pride and self-righteousness, while Christ eats in humility with publicans and sinners.

“Since the fall, the work of Satan has been to accuse, and those who refuse the light which God sends, pursue the same course today. They lay open to others those things which they consider an offense. Thus it was with the Pharisees. When they found something of which they could accuse the disciples, they did not speak to those whom they thought to be in error. They spoke to Christ of the things which they thought to be so grievous in His disciples. When they thought that Christ offended, they accused Him to the disciples. It was their work to alienate hearts.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, 1088.

“When our prayers are offered in self-confidence, when we fail to watch, and bring our actions into harmony with our prayers, we are not accounted worshipers in the sight of heaven. We are destitute of the faith that works by love and purifies the soul; for genuine faith will lead the possessor to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and crucify selfishness, self-love, impatience, and self-righteousness. Those who would truly follow Christ must daily learn lessons in meekness and lowliness of heart, that they may speak guardedly, manifest courtesy and kindness, have tender hearts, and bring sympathy and sunshine into the home. All strife, all debate, all smiting with the tongue and the fist of wickedness, must be put away. The overbearing will must be subdued, and gentleness and a disposition to be easily entreated must be cultivated.” *The Review and Herald*, June 5, 1894.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What Bible principle determines our level of accountability toward God?
- 2 Why does a straight testimony reproving sin meet with opposition?
- 3 If we are serious about eternity, how will we feel about principles?
- 4 What was wrong with the fasting of the Jews in Isaiah 58?
- 5 Whether with fasting or not, what kinds of attitudes hinder prayer?

December 24 – 30

A Mission for Today

Key Text

“They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Isaiah 58:12).

Study Help: *Welfare Ministry*, 29–41.

Introduction

“God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform. ... They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.” *Prophets and Kings*, 678.

Sunday

1 SIGNS OF AN ARTIFICIAL RELIGION

- a. How can we avoid false humility? Isaiah 58:5; Philippians 2:3, 14, 15.

Note: “Let no one think that to bow the head as a bulrush will take the place of true humility. Such humility is a sham; for where meekness does not exist in the heart, it will not be manifested in the life. Those who are merely professors of truth and not doers of the word, will break down the family altar, and stir up strife and contention in the home, and there will be dearth of holy and beneficent actions that flow from faith in Christ. The most convincing evidence of the power of the gospel to the world is its effect on the lives of those who believe it. He who is a true Christian will represent Christ, and will cease from all murmuring or complaining of God, or of his fellow-men. ...

“Those who are merely surface Christians are no blessing to themselves or others, although they fast and spread sackcloth and ashes under them. The old habits return; quick temper, suspicion, jealousy, judgment of others—all manifest that they are not controlled by the grace of Christ. ... When they fail to manifest a Christlike action, they throw the blame and responsibility upon the circumstances which surround them or the people with whom they are brought in contact. Instead

of examining themselves to see wherein their inconsistency lies, they bemoan their case, and think that their difficulties are the results of other’s misdeeds.” *The Review and Herald*, June 5, 1894.

Monday

2 GOD’S CHOSEN FAST

- a. What kind of fast reveals the highest level of Christian piety? Isaiah 58:6.

Note: “The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter [Isaiah 58] is the work that God requires His people to do at this time.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 265.

“When we present the perfection that there is in His [God’s] requirements, in His commandments, in His law, we are presenting that which will loose the bands of wickedness, and in the place of making men fast, in the place of shackling them with sin, it will loose the bands of wickedness, and those that are oppressed by the enemy.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, 38.

“Find out what the poor and suffering are in need of, and then, in love and tenderness, help them to courage and hope and confidence by sharing with them the good things that God has given you. Thus you will be doing the very work that God means you to do. ‘Let the oppressed go free’ (Isaiah 58:6). Do not rest until you break every yoke. It is not possible for you to neglect this and yet obey God.” *Pacific Union Recorder*, July 21, 1904.

- b. What else does God’s true fast involve? Isaiah 58:7.

Note: “[Isaiah 58:6, 7 quoted.] This is the recipe that Christ has prescribed for the fainthearted, doubting, trembling soul. Let the sorrowful ones, who walk mournfully before the Lord, arise and help someone who needs help. ...

“The Lord calls upon the church to have a higher piety, a more just sense of duty, a clearer realization of their obligations to their Creator. He calls upon them to be a pure, sanctified,

working people. And the Christian help work is one means of bringing this about, for the Holy Spirit communicates with all who are doing God's service." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 266, 267.

"Remember that there is a world to save. We are to act our part, standing close by the side of Christ as His collaborators. He is the head; we are His helping hand. He designs that we, by doing medical missionary work, shall undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free. Let us not close our eyes to the misery around us or our ears to the cries of distress which are continually ascending. Christ is the greatest missionary the world has ever known. He came to uplift and cheer the sorrowing and distressed, and in this work we are to cooperate with Him." *Welfare Ministry*, 118.

Tuesday

3 OVERHAULING OUR SPEECH HABITS

- a. What abundant promise comes to all who, by faith, pursue the joy of practical service to others in need? Isaiah 58:8.

Note: "[Isaiah 58:8 quoted.] ...

"... As the members of our churches individually take up their appointed work, they will be surrounded with an entirely different atmosphere. A blessing and a power will attend their labors. They will experience a higher culture of mind and heart. The selfishness that has bound up their souls will be overcome. Their faith will be a living principle." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 267, 268.

- b. Why must we completely overcome the unchristian habit of "the putting forth of the finger"? Isaiah 58:9, 10; Matthew 7:1-5.

Note: "The very ones who are blind to their own faults are often quick to note the faults of others, quick to criticise [sic] their words, and condemn them for something they have or have not done. ...

"Every unkind criticism of others, every word of self-esteem, is 'the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity' (Isaiah

58:9). The lifting up of self in pride, as if you were faultless, the magnifying of the faults of others, is an offense to God. ... We have no right to withdraw our confidence from a brother because some evil report comes to our ears, some accusation is made or supposition is suggested that he has done wrong. Frequently the evil report that is brought to us is made by those who are at enmity with God, those who are joining the enemy in his work of accusing the brethren. Those who are unmindful of the Saviour's words, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear' (Luke 8:18), allow their unsanctified ears to hear wrong, their perverted senses to imagine wrong, and their evil tongues to report wrong.

"Many who are accusers of the brethren will not come out openly and talk with those who they think are in error, but will go to others, and, under the mask of friendship for the erring, will cast reflections upon them. Sometimes these accusers will openly agree with those whom they covertly seek to injure. They will state as facts, accusations which are only suppositions, and fail to give those whom they accuse a definite statement of what they suppose to be their errors, so that they give them no chance to answer the charges against them." *The Review and Herald*, May 7, 1895.

Wednesday

4 BUILDING INSTEAD OF DESTROYING

- a. What change will come into our experience as we gain the victory over "the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity"? Isaiah 58:10, 11.

Note: "Those who might do good service in advancing the cause of Christ, but who use their talents and influence to tear down instead of to build up, will feel the wrath of God. They will experience what Christ suffered in saving men from the penalty of the broken law. The value of man and the measure of his accountability can be known only by the cross of Calvary." *The Watchman*, March 31, 1908.

"Doing good is an excellent remedy for disease. Those who engage in the work are invited to call upon God, and He has pledged Himself to answer them. Their soul shall be satisfied in drought, and they shall be like a watered garden, whose waters fail not.

"Wake up, brethren and sisters. Do not be afraid of good works. 'Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not' (Galatians 6:9). Do not wait to be told your duty. Open your eyes and see who are around

you; make yourselves acquainted with the helpless, afflicted, and needy. Hide not yourselves from them, and seek not to shut out their needs. Who gives the proofs mentioned in James, of possessing pure religion, untainted with selfishness or corruption? Who are anxious to do all in their power to aid in the great plan of salvation?" *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 29.

- b. Describe our assigned mission and the promise accompanying it. Isaiah 58:12, 13, *first part*.

Note: "God's people have a special work to do in repairing the breach that has been made in His law; and the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work becomes. All who love God will show that they bear His sign by keeping His commandments. They are the restorers of paths to dwell in. ... [Isaiah 58:13, 14 quoted.] Thus genuine medical missionary work is bound up inseparably with the keeping of God's commandments, of which the Sabbath is especially mentioned, since it is the great memorial of God's creative work. Its observance is bound up with the work of restoring the moral image of God in man. This is the ministry which God's people are to carry forward at this time." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 265, 266.

Thursday

5 PEACE THROUGH THE PRINCE OF PEACE

- a. What should we understand about genuine Christian helpfulness as part of true Sabbath keeping? Isaiah 58:13, 14.

Note: "All heaven was represented to me as beholding and watching upon the Sabbath those who acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment and are observing the Sabbath. Angels were marking their interest in, and high regard for, this divine institution. Those who sanctified the Lord God in their hearts by a strictly devotional frame of mind, and who sought to improve the sacred hours in keeping the Sabbath to the best of their ability, and to honor God by calling the Sabbath a delight—these the angels were specially blessing with light and health, and special strength was given them. But, on the other hand, the angels were turning from those



Many who are accusers of the brethren will not come out openly and talk with those who they think are in error, but will go to others, and, under the mask of friendship for the erring, will cast reflections upon them.

who failed to appreciate the sacredness of God's sanctified day, and were removing from them their light and their strength. I saw them overshadowed with a cloud, desponding, and frequently sad. They felt a lack of the Spirit of God." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 704, 705.

"Those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings—how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction! They will realize the promise: 'Thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' (Luke 14:14)." *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 312.

"To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour." *The Desire of Ages*, 289.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Give some examples of false humility—and of true humility.
- 2 What hypocritical type of fast does God condemn?
- 3 How can I partake of the best type of fasting that God wants for me?
- 4 What human tendency of tearing down can be turned into building up?
- 5 Summarize God's glorious plan for Sabbath keepers today.

Copyright © 2016 Reformation Herald Publishing Association, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, Virginia. Reprinted by permission.

Pumpkin

The King of Squash

By Judy Hallingstad

It is pumpkin time again! And, this is the only time of the year when many think about the king of squash.

“Early American colonists chanted whenever they were overcome with appreciation for this oversize orange squash. Pumpkin was a popular food back then, and the early settlers ate a peck of it in pumpkin soup, pumpkin pie, and even pumpkin beer.

“It’s a different story now. ... If we actually eat pumpkin at all, it’s mainly in Thanksgiving and Christmas pies.

“It’s not just due to its size that pumpkin is called the king of squash. A half-cup of canned pumpkin has more than 16 milligrams of beta-carotene, 160 to 260 percent of the daily amount recommended by experts. Pumpkin is also a source of lesser-known carotenoids such as lutein and zeaxanthin.

“Carotenoids, which create the orange color of pumpkin, help protect the body by neutralizing harmful oxygen molecules known as free radicals. ‘Lutein and zeaxanthin are very potent free radical scavengers,’ says Paul Lachance, Ph.D., professor of nutrition and chairman of the department of food science at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. A diet high in antioxidants can help prevent many of the diseases associated with aging, including heart disease and cancer.

“Lutein and zeaxanthin aren’t found only in pumpkin; they are also found in the lenses of the eyes. Studies suggest that eating foods high in these compounds may help block the formation of cataracts.

The Whole Picture

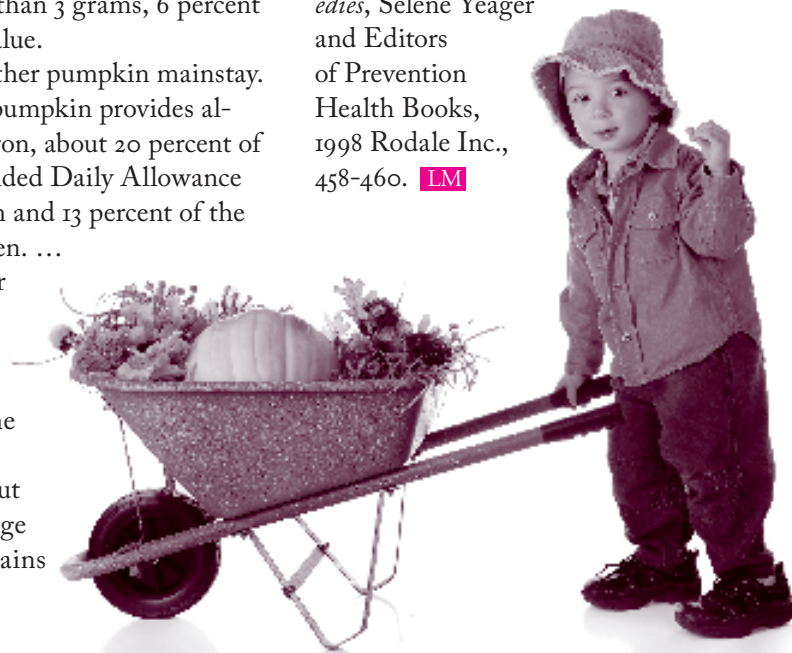
“In addition to its rich stores of beta-carotene and other phytonutrients, pumpkin contains generous amounts of fiber. For example, while 1 cup of cornflakes contains 1 gram of fiber, a half-cup of canned pumpkin contains more than 3 grams, 6 percent of the Daily Value.

“Iron is another pumpkin mainstay. A half-cup of pumpkin provides almost 2 mg of iron, about 20 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for men and 13 percent of the RDA for women. ...

“Even richer in iron than the flesh are the pumpkin’s seeds. One ounce—which consists of about 140 seeds, a huge handful—contains about 4 mg of

iron, about 40% of the RDA for men and 27% of the RDA for women. ...

“When you have a taste for a crunchy, highly nutritious snack, pumpkin seeds, in moderation, are a good choice.” Excerpts from: *The Doctors Book of Food Remedies*, Selene Yeager and Editors of Prevention Health Books, 1998 Rodale Inc., 458-460. **LM**



Recipe

Easy Pumpkin Puree

Choose the lighter colored “pie pumpkins” or “sugar pumpkins.” They are sweeter and less watery than the orange jack-o’-lantern pumpkins.

- Cut the top from the pumpkin and scrape out the stringy membranes and seeds.
- Cut the pumpkin into large pieces and place in a roasting pan.
- Pour ½ cup water into the bottom of the pan and cover with foil.
- Bake 45-60 minutes or until pumpkin is soft and easily pierced with a fork.
- Scrape the soft pulp from the skin into a food processor or blender and puree.
- Use for pie filling, puddings or cookies.

Leftover pumpkin puree may be frozen in an airtight container for up to 12 months.

Ellen G White Devotionals

During the holiday season, neighbors, friends, and family are open to receiving tokens of our love. What better opportunity is there to give a spiritual gift that can provide inspiration throughout the coming year?



PB: Paper Back
HB: Hard Back



SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD

Concentrates on a different topic each month; topics include transformed by God's grace, following the perfect pattern, choosing the best, and similar uplifting topics.
HB 381 pgs ~~\$13.95~~
\$11.85

THE UPWARD LOOK

In these excerpts from letters and manuscripts, our thoughts are lifted heavenward as we are encouraged to "follow on step by step, with our eyes fixed upon our Leader."
HB 383 pgs ~~\$14.99~~
\$12.74

THE FAITH I LIVE BY

Devoted exclusively to Bible doctrine; provides both inspiration and information. Each month's daily reading focuses on a different topic.
HB 377 pgs ~~\$17.99~~
\$14.39

THIS DAY WITH GOD

A collection of inspirational messages that Ellen White actually wrote or presented on the corresponding day of the year at some time in her ministry.
HB 383 pgs ~~\$14.99~~
\$11.99

REFLECTING CHRIST

Focuses on thoughts to help us in our quest to be Christlike. As we behold Him, we will reflect His love to others.
HB 383 pgs ~~\$15.99~~
\$12.79

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

Gems taken from periodical articles, books, letters, and unpublished manuscripts regarding the privilege of knowing God and His transforming grace.
HB 383 pgs ~~\$13.99~~
\$11.19

LIFT HIM UP

Presents the many beautiful facets of Christ's divinity, humanity, and mission—as Saviour, Creator, Bread of Life, Advocate, Coming King, and much more.
HB 383 pgs ~~\$16.99~~
\$13.59

OUR HIGH CALLING

A call to holiness and a primer in Christian virtues, taken mostly from unpublished letters and manuscripts.
PB 380 pgs ~~\$14.99~~
\$11.99

MARANATHA

Reassuring counsel about last day events; a classic among devotionals.
HB 383 pgs ~~\$17.99~~
\$14.39

CONFLICT AND COURAGE

How experiences of prophets, priests, kings, and apostles illuminate the future.
HB 383 pgs ~~\$13.99~~
\$11.19

Special prices available through February 28, 2018, or until supplies last.

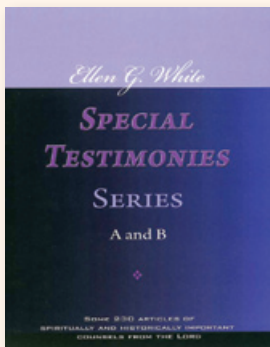
To order, call:

1-800-843-8788

Shipping and handling will be added to all orders.

Change Service Requested

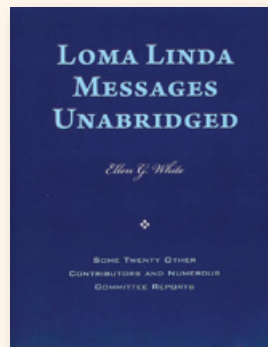
Rare Reprints of Historic SDA Resources



SPECIAL TESTIMONIES – SERIES A AND B

Approximately 230 articles of spiritually and historically important counsels from God's servant to His remnant people.

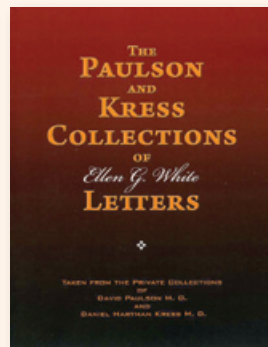
PB 288 pgs.....\$14.95



LOMA LINDA MESSAGES UNABRIDGED

"When I saw Loma Linda, I said, Thank the Lord. This is the very place we have been hoping to find." *Loma Linda Messages*, 3. Some 300 articles, letters, and committee reports regarding the founding of Loma Linda as a training center for health workers.

PB 236 pgs.....\$13.95



THE PAULSON AND KRESS COLLECTIONS OF ELLEN G. WHITE LETTERS

Taken from the private collections of David Paulson, M.D., and Daniel Kress, M.D.

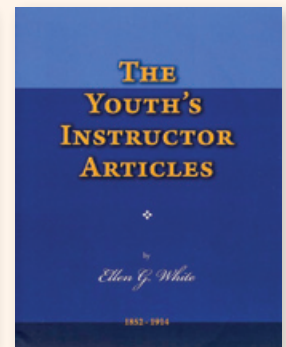
PB 248 pgs.....\$13.95



SPALDING & MAGAN'S UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT TESTIMONIES OF ELLEN G. WHITE

An invaluable collection of Spirit of Prophecy counsels given originally to a number of our pioneers, taken from the private collections of E.A. Sutherland, P.T. Magan, David Paulson, O.A. Johnson, and A.W. Spalding.

PB 202 pgs.....\$12.95



THE YOUTH'S INSTRUCTOR ARTICLES

Articles by Ellen G. White written to make a significant contribution in the preparation of God's youth for Christ's soon return.

PB 354 pgs.....\$17.95

To order, call:

1-800-843-8788

Shipping and handling will be added to all orders.