



the  
**REFORMATION**  
*herald*

Vol. 55, No. 6

THE Pilgrimage  
OF THE *Remnant*

Week of Prayer, December 5–14, 2014

# the REFORMATION *herald*

Volume 55, Number 6

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of Prayer  
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## Pondering the Pilgrimage

Another year has nearly passed—and with it an important anniversary. This marks the 100th year since the crisis of 1914, when faithful pilgrims refused to violate the Ten Commandments, even in the face of world war.

What has happened since then? What has characterized our journey? Are we still the heaven-bound pilgrims that our forefathers were? Is our current generation marked by greater consecration and devotion to the cause of reformation—to build the old waste places, repair the breach(es) made in God's moral law, and stand for the present truth at whatever cost?

These are solemn questions for us to ponder during this Week of Prayer, a time for us to search our heart and renew our covenant with the Lord—deeply considering all that is implied in our desire to be among the final remnant to meet Him in peace.

Please try to share these readings with others also, perhaps with a personal visit to believers who may be isolated or homebound—and let us keep in mind the following dates:

**Prayer with fasting:** Sabbath, December 13  
**Offering for missions:** Sunday, December 14

May the Saviour rejuvenate our experience during this Week of Prayer! May we truly be fully imbued with His Holy Spirit to follow this pilgrimage to completion, genuinely living the life of the remnant.

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# Pilgrimage

*W*hat is a pilgrimage? It's more than just a journey. It normally implies an arduous, painstaking, self-denying walk with a sacred goal in mind. The apostle John speaks of the experience of those who are impressed to be preparing for the heavenly Canaan: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 5:18–20).

As those who await the second coming of Christ during this final hour of human probation, our experience in these last days involves knowing Christ—and cooperating with His Spirit in a work of purification. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3). The Lord does not promise an easy path—but He does promise a sure one.

For 100 years God has asked us to share His light with our world. He asked us to be His hands, His feet, and His voice in sharing His love in a world that is self-destructing.

How have we met our responsibility? We have manifested the strengths and weaknesses of human nature. Some moments we have relied on God and asked Him for grace. We have distributed thousands of copies of the Spirit of Prophecy volumes in countries where that meant risking death. We have shared the gospel with cannibal tribes in India and in Brazil. We have told of God's love when it was convenient and when it was not.

But we are also humans. We have done nothing when God required us to do something. We have been timid when God asked us to be brave. We have argued with each other when God asked us to argue on His behalf in the world. We have disagreed with each other when God asked us to disagree with sin.

Through a century of triumphs and mistakes, victories and failure, God has protected us from abandoning the truths He gave us. When sin has tempted us, inviting us to weaken the demands of God, sacrifice His law, and weaken any expectation of Him completing His work in us, we have stood firm, even to the point of sacrificing our life rather than sacrifice God's word. When temptations came to us to modify the faith once delivered to the saints to accommodate human reasoning and human selfishness, God has given us the strength to say "no." In our commitment to the seventh-day Sabbath and to pacifism, in our marriage commitments and our dress, in exclusivity of the communion services and in our loyalty to the work of God's prophet, and in many other important issues, we have been urged to abandon God and accept human standards instead. Over and over again, God has given the grace to say "no."

May God forgive us where we have failed Him and give us grace to share His truths with the world around us by action, and where necessary, by words also.

Indeed, we are on a pilgrimage and have not yet arrived. But here and now, through God's mercy, we still have an opportunity to make our calling and election sure. Very few will tread the narrow path to enter into the strait gate with the humble Nazarene. Let us keep our eyes fixed on our Saviour and determine to be among that remnant that will do so! "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness" (Romans 9:27, 28). *R*

# Calling Remnant

## A realistic calling

What God promises, He is able at any time to perform. And the work He gives His people to do, He is able to accomplish by them. If we live a life of perfect obedience, His promises will be fulfilled to us.

God requires His people to shine as lights in the world. It is not merely the ministers who are required to do this, but every disciple of Christ. Their conversation should be heavenly. . . .

The Spirit, wisdom, and goodness of God, as revealed in His word, should be exemplified by the disciples of Christ. God's requirements of His people are in accordance with the grace and truth given them. All His righteous demands must be fully met. Accountable beings

must walk in the light that shines upon them. If they fail to do this, their light becomes darkness, and the degree of darkness is according to the abundance of light possessed.

It is not for lack of knowledge that God's people are now perishing. They will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, that has not been cherished, and which they have neglected, or refused to be led by, will condemn them. What more could have been done for God's vineyard than has been done? Light, precious light, shines upon His people; but the light will not save them, unless they consent to be saved by it.<sup>1</sup>

Patient continuance in well-doing—this is to be our motto. We are to put forth persevering effort, advancing step by step until the race is run, the victory gained. . . .

Press forward unitedly to the help of the Lord, all of one heart and one mind. Depend not on human wisdom. Look beyond human beings to the One appointed by God to carry our griefs and sorrows. Taking God at His word, move forward with steadfast, persevering faith.<sup>2</sup>

God calls upon His people to act. It is an individual work of confessing and forsaking sins and returning unto the Lord that is needed. One cannot do this work for another. . . . Many have for years made no advancement

in knowledge and true holiness. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are going back to the darkness and bondage of Egypt. Their minds are not exercised unto godliness and true holiness.

Will the Israel of God awake? Will all who profess godliness seek to put away every wrong, to confess to God every secret sin, and afflict the soul before Him? Will they, with great humility, investigate the motives of every action, and know that the eye of God reads all, searches out every hidden thing? . . . Great privileges belong to the people of God. Great light has been given them, that they may attain to their high calling.<sup>3</sup>

### For the new year . . .

Are there those whom we have wronged who will testify against us in the day of God? If so, the record has passed up to heaven, and we shall meet it again. We are to work for the great Taskmaster's eye, whether our painstaking efforts are seen and appreciated by men or not. No man, woman, nor child can acceptably serve God with neglectful, haphazard, sham work, whether it be secular or religious service. The true Christian will have an eye single to the glory of God in all things, encouraging His purposes and strengthening His principles with this thought, "I do this for Christ."

If all who profess to be servants of Christ are faithful in that which is least, they will be faithful in much. If there are debts yet unpaid, make special efforts to pay them. If you have run up accounts at the provision store or with the dry goods merchant, settle them if you possibly can. If you cannot, go to those to whom you are indebted and frankly tell them the impossibility of meeting these demands; renew your note, and assure them you will cancel the debt as soon as you can. Then deny yourselves of everything you can do without, and be very economical in your expenditures, until your promises are fulfilled. Do not indulge yourselves in the use of other men's money for the sake of gratifying appetite or a love of display. You may thus remove a stumbling block whereby many were

## ***Go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. If you committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender.***

hindered from believing the truth; and your good will not be evil spoken of. Will not our brethren make diligent efforts to correct this slack, haphazard way of doing business? The old year is fast passing; it is nearly gone. Make the most of the few days remaining.

The Chinese New Year commences in February and lasts one week. They have a custom of settling all quarrels between themselves and all outstanding debts; and if there are any who are unable to pay their debts, they are forgiven them. Thus the new year is commenced with all difficulties and accounts settled. This is a heathen custom that the Christian world would do well to imitate. God's law requires all this of us, and more—we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is, we are to deal with our neighbors in everything just as we would wish them to deal with us. If we wish them to act fairly and justly toward us, then we should act fairly and justly toward them. We are simply to do as we would be done by.

In every matter of deal between men, the conduct of each is a fair transcript of his character. If a man is upright in the sight of God, his dealings will be upright in the sight of his fellow men. His integrity is not a matter of doubt; it shines forth as purest gold refined by fire. Has he money for which he has no immediate use? He does not take advantage of the necessities of his poorer brother to require more than a fair compensation. He will not require exorbitant interest because he can take advantage of the situation. A truly honest man will never take advantage of the distress of another to add to his own store; for in the end it would be a great loss. As far

as principle is concerned, it would be just as criminal in the sight of God as for him to enter his neighbor's house and steal so much gold or silver. The customs and maxims of the world are not to be our criterion, unless by the word of God we can prove them to be right. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). It is not the greatness or insignificance of an action that makes it honest or dishonest. God requires that in all our transactions we pursue the straight line of duty.

If we have but little time, let us improve that little earnestly. The Bible assures us that we are in the great day of atonement. The typical day of atonement was a day when all Israel afflicted their souls before God, confessed their sins, and came before the Lord with contrition of soul, remorse for their sins, genuine repentance, and living faith in the atoning sacrifice.

If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters—if envy, malice, bitterness, evil surmisings, have existed, **confess these sins, not in a general way, but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender.** Take them by the hand, let your heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and say, "Will you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want to make right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against me in the books of heaven. I must have a clean record." Who, think you, would withstand such a movement as this? There is too much coldness and indif-

ference—too much of the “I don’t care” spirit—exercised among the professed followers of Christ. All should feel a care for one another, jealously guarding each other’s interests. “Love one another” (John 13:34). Then we should stand a strong wall against Satan’s devices. Amid opposition and persecution we would not join the vindictive ones, not unite with the followers of the great rebel, whose special work is to accuse the brethren, to defame and cast stain upon their characters.

Let the remnant of this year be improved in destroying every fiber of the root of bitterness, burying them in the grave with the old year. **Begin the new year with more tender regard, with deeper love, for every member of the Lord’s family.** Press together. “United, we stand; divided, we fall.” Take a higher, nobler stand than you ever have before.

Many appear to be steadfast in the truth, firm, decided on every point of our faith; yet there is a great lack in them—the tenderness and love which marked the character of the great Pattern. If a brother errs from the truth, if he falls into temptation, they make no effort to restore him in meekness, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. They seem to regard it as their special work to climb upon the judgment seat and condemn and disfellowship. They do not obey God’s word, which says, “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness” (Galatians 6:1). The spirit of this passage is altogether too rare in our churches. It is the lack of it that shuts out the Spirit of God from the heart, from the home, from the church. Shall we not henceforth practice the Bible plan of restoring erring ones in the spirit of meekness? Shall we not have the spirit of Jesus, and work as He worked?

Keep back that disposition to crowd out a brother, even if you think him unworthy, even if he has hindered your work by manifesting a spirit of independence and willfulness. Remember that he is God’s property. Err always on the side of mercy and tenderness. Treat with respect and deference even your most bitter

enemies, who would injure you if they could. Let not a word escape your lips that would give them opportunity to justify their course in the least degree. Give no occasion to any man to blaspheme the name of God or speak disrespectfully of our faith for anything you have done. We need to be wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove.

The old year is in its death struggle; let all wrath, malice, and bitterness die with it. Through hearty confession, let your sins go beforehand to judgment. Devote the remaining moments of the swift passing year to humiliation of self rather than trying to humiliate your brethren. With the new year, commence the work of lifting them up—commence it even in the waning moments of the old year. Go to work anew, brethren and sisters—go to work earnestly, unselfishly, lovingly, striving to lift up the hands that hang down, to strengthen the feeble knees, remove the heavy burdens from every soul. Let the oppressed go free and break every yoke. Bring to your homes the poor that are cast out. [Isaiah 58:8–11 quoted.]

Brethren in every church, will you follow the conditions God has specified, and prove the Lord, and see if He will fulfill His promises? I believe He will. I have not the shadow of a doubt of it. He will do just as He has said He would, and the exceedingly broad promises of rich blessings will be realized if we but comply with the conditions. Your heads may be hard and sound, but let not this hardness steal into your hearts. If you will fall on the Rock and be broken, then your self-righteousness will no longer exist. There will be instead soft, impressible hearts, kind, tender, true hearts, like that of Jesus, who was ever touched with human woe. You will weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. Try it, brethren; God’s way is always best. You have tried your own way very perseveringly, and it does not work for the prosperity, union, and upbuilding of the church. Therefore let us no longer think our own plan the right one, climbing upon the judgment seat; but let us in the Spirit of God bear the testimony He has given us to bear, receiving the

melting love of God in our hearts while we speak plain truths to tear away the veil of deception from the eyes of those in error, giving instead the earnest, sincere, genuine love of Jesus.

**This work of confession must be done sooner or later. Shall it not be done in the dying hours of the old year?** Shall we not put away our sins by confession, and let them go beforehand to judgment? Shall we not strive now as we never have before, that we may commence the new year with a clean record? Shall we not individually take hold of this long neglected work, humbling our souls before God, that “pardon”—blessed pardon—may be written opposite our names? Shall we not be truly Christians—Christlike?

Try it in every church. Have special meetings when you can—meetings of humiliation, of afflicting the soul—meetings where the rubbish shall be cleared away from the door of the heart, that the blessed Saviour may enter. What a wonderful time the dying of the old year and the birth of the new might be! If we individually try to do what we can on our part, God is faithful that hath promised, and He will fulfill on His part abundantly more than you can ask or even think. Let no more moments be wasted. Let us now arise and make earnest efforts to cherish the subduing love of Jesus. We need to be melted over, that the dross may be removed. We need to learn in Christ’s school meekness and lowliness of heart, drawing closer and closer to Jesus.

The prevalent evils in our homes are fault-finding and censure, placing the worst construction upon words and motives. This is discouraging to the children, frequently causing them to give up their efforts to do right. If words of commendation were spoken, when they could be justly, it would show them that their efforts were appreciated and teach them justice. If mistakes and defects are continually pointed out, often impatiently, and sometimes in the white heat of anger; if no kindly notice is taken of any improvement or progress, the children become disheartened. They feel that they are treated mercilessly, that they

are left to struggle along without appreciation or encouragement. Shall not this state of things be changed? It must if parents want their children to enjoy religion.

The same difficulties exist in the church. Many have fainted and become discouraged in the great struggle of life whom one word of kindly cheer and courage would have strengthened to overcome. Never, never become heartless, cold, unsympathizing, and censorious. Never lose an opportunity to say words that encourage and inspire hope. We cannot tell how far-reaching may be our tender words of kindness, our Christlike efforts to lighten some burden. My brethren and sisters, come to your high calling.

Jesus, precious Jesus! How dear the name! how soul-inspiring! Jesus never suppressed one syllable of the truth; but He uttered it always in love.... His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. He never made truth cruel but manifested a wonderful tenderness for humanity. Every soul was precious in His eyes. He always bore Himself with divine dignity; yet He bowed with the tenderest compassion and regard to every member of the family of God. He saw in all, fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.

Oh, how many fail in acting out their own peculiar temperament! They arouse in others a spirit of antagonism, and the worst feelings of opposition and enmity. Why should anyone show disrespect to one who differs with him in doctrine? Agree with everyone on every subject you can. Admit it when he is right; for the acknowledgment will greatly help to draw him nearer to you. He will then have no occasion to think you consider your own opinions infallible, or that you look upon him with contempt.

As workers for Christ, we want sanctified tact. Study to be skillful when there are no rules to meet the case. Win hearts, not repulse them.... All harshness, all denunciation and criticism, must be put away. As brethren let us love one another, then we shall not scatter abroad but gather with Christ

## ***Never lose an opportunity to say words that encourage and inspire hope. We cannot tell how far-reaching may be our tender words of kindness, our Christlike efforts to lighten some burden.***

The evil tendencies of mankind are hard to overcome. The battles are tedious. Every soul in the strife knows how severe, how bitter, are these contests. Everything about growth in grace is difficult, because the standard and maxims of the world are constantly interposed between the soul and God's holy standard. The Lord would have us elevated, ennobled, purified, by carrying out the principles underlying His great moral standard, which will test every character in the great day of final reckoning....

The precious hours are passing. My soul is drawn out in deep, earnest, anxious interest in your behalf. As an ambassador of Christ, I implore you to commence your work intelligently. Pick up the raveling ends, and bind them off for time and for eternity. It is not too late yet for wrongs to be righted; and while Jesus, our Mediator, is pleading in our behalf, let us do our part of the work. Love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself. Let us confess and forsake our sins that we may find pardon. Let those who have robbed God in tithes and offerings now come before Him and make restitution. The question is asked, "Will a man rob God?" as though it was not a possible thing for one to do so great a crime; but if God has ever spoken through me, there has been grievous robbery from Him in tithes and offerings.

Brethren, [2014] is almost gone. Improve its few remaining moments in making restitution for wrongs. Make thorough work for eternity. Every act, every word, must stand the test of the Judgment. Set your hearts in order. Set

your house in order. Make thorough work while Jesus is ministering in the sanctuary. Let not these appeals be given in vain. God's treasury has been robbed of thousands of dollars, and this neglect stands registered against you in the books of heaven.

Let there be meetings in every church; and let ample opportunity be given to all to humble themselves before God and confess their sins, that they may receive the peace of pardon. When we will bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that descended on the day of Pentecost will fall on us. We shall be strong in Christ's strength and be filled with the fullness of God. Then the new year will be welcomed by us all as the commencement of a year a higher, better principles. We shall give ourselves to Christ, making an unreserved consecration of all our property, all our capacities, to His service. We shall make good our profession of faith; we shall serve God by serving those who need our help. Then we shall let our light shine forth in good works. God help you to commence the new year with a clean, unspotted record. May you live pure, holy lives, that, whether young or old, they may be beautiful and happy, because Christ is reflected in your characters.<sup>4</sup> *R*

### *References*

<sup>1</sup> *The Review and Herald*, August 23, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *Australasian Union Conference Recorder*, June 15, 1902.

<sup>3</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 123, 124.

<sup>4</sup> *The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1884.  
[Emphasis supplied.]

# Mission of the Remnant

By A. Finaru

Soon after the fall of communism in Romania a group of young men and women came to my door, selling books. It was customary for middle-class citizens to make a living by selling different items from house to house. But the conviction with which these youth spoke and the enthusiasm they manifested made me believe that they were not there to make a living. Soon enough, I found out that they were stimulated by a desire to make the best out of the religious freedom just granted—liberty that had been so much desired by two previous generations before them. They were different from me and from any other youth I had known in my 18 years of life. It was a group of purpose-driven youth, a PEOPLE WITH A MISSION, determined to fulfill the great commission given them by Jesus Christ Himself (Matthew 28:20, 21). Now, after having been part of God's church for twenty years, I look back and think, I wish it would be like that everywhere; I wish it would be like that all the time!

## God's purpose for the remnant

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world."<sup>1</sup>

Ever since the Fall of Adam and the initiation of the sacrificial service, a provision has been made to reverse the effect of disobedience. "The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift."<sup>2</sup>

Today "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). The remnant is bidden to take action, for time is short.

"The Lord has given His church a special work of personal service to do. God could have sent angels to work for the reformation of man, but He did not do this. Humanity must touch humanity."<sup>3</sup>

## The mission of reconciliation

"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,

and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:18–20).

We live in a world of broken relationships: marriages scarred by bitterness, distance and hurt, friends who have a falling out; parents and children who are hostile toward each other. Reconciliation implies the reuniting of those who are estranged so that the state of hostility is gone, enmity is removed, and peace is established.

Even though God is very much interested in our horizontal relationships—the inter-human relationships—the Scripture quoted above speaks of the vertical relationship, the reconciliation between God and humanity, for it is only when that is right that our relationships among each other can be right.



The remnant has been given the mission to help our fellow humans understand that God has not given up on them. “But,” the Lord explains, “your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you” (Isaiah 59:2).

The possibility of reconciliation must be published. It must be made known. The remnant has been commissioned to trumpet the news, to publish it in the streets, so that the citizens of this world could again open the shutters of their hearts and feel secure in the embrace of their Creator.

### The mission of restoration

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored.”<sup>4</sup>

We are to rebuild, repair, restore (Isaiah 58:12.) Marriage and the Sabbath are two institutions that were created at the beginning, for the glory of God and for the blessing of humanity. The two play an important role in the process of restoring the image of God in humanity—and this is why Satan is constantly devising subtle means to undermine their validity.

**Marriage:** In today’s chaotic world, the sanctity of marriage is all but lost. Marriage, as an institution, is being rejected as unnecessary and out of date, and its original format and purpose are perverted. The sacred establishment of marriage is under attack by Satan, because it is the foundation upon which the family and society are founded. By precept and example, the remnant people of God are called to restore the original purpose of marriage, an institution for life between one man and one woman.

**Sabbath:** In the time of the end, “the Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part.”<sup>5</sup> When the majority chooses to worship what is created (including man-made institutions) rather than the Creator, we should remind our fellow humans of the memorial of creation, of the sign between God and humanity: the Sabbath. Bible prophecy indicates that Satan will use both political and ecclesiastical power

to impose the observance of the first-day of the week in place of the seventh. Knowing that his time is short, the devil is at work day and night to deceive, if possible, even the elect. May God’s remnant people, through the power of the Holy Spirit, rise above Satan’s deceptive power and warn the world while mercy still lingers. We are living in the time of the end, when every divine institution is to be restored.

### The mission of healing

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

“During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. . . . Wherever He went, the tidings of His mercy preceded Him.”<sup>6</sup>

As we come closer to the end, the world will experience more suffering and, therefore, greater will be the need for a correct representation of Jesus’ methods of work. Those that compose the remnant should seek to gain knowledge in health lines so that they can meet the immediate needs of the people, especially in new missionary fields, for “medical missionary work is the pioneer work of the gospel.”<sup>7</sup>

### The mission of evangelism

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible teaches that God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the holy angels are actively involved in the work of redeeming the fallen. God’s representatives on earth are invited—not to be idle—but to join with the heavenly intelligences to become actively involved as well. Christ declares: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). In one of His parables, “The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

Ellen White, God’s last-day messenger, clearly describes how the work of the great gospel commission can be accomplished:

“This [gospel work] can best be done by personal efforts, by bringing the truth into [the houses of] their [relatives and acquaintances], praying

with them, and opening to them the Scriptures.”<sup>8</sup>

“It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

“Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to his ability.”<sup>10</sup>

As we consider the three-and-a-half instructive years Jesus spent with His disciples, and the years following His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, we identify **five systematic evangelistic steps** we can take to successfully fulfill the work God has given us.

#### Step 1. “Let your light so shine”

Our efforts will be rewarded with lasting results when our own lives are consistent with the message we preach, and our churches are ready to welcome new visitors.

On the day of my baptism, I received an unexpected gift. I was given a train ticket to leave later that same day to a neighboring country so that I could attend a missionary seminar for lay people. There couldn’t have been anything more exciting for me than to have an opportunity to learn how to work for the salvation of lost humanity. I gladly went. In the three-week seminar, I learned how to introduce a spiritual subject into a secular conversation, how to make a missionary contact, how to connect a few Bible verses together for short sermons, and the like. I was expecting to be able to turn the world upside down with the knowledge I had gained and went straight to work once I returned home. Each time, just before I stepped out of the house, I would go over my missionary seminar notes so I could witness to those with whom I would come in contact. But it seemed as if the people I met were not interested in what Jesus did when He was on earth almost two thousand years ago. They wanted to know what Jesus can do now. They wanted to know what He did for me. Then I understood why the apostle Paul said “For so hath the Lord commanded us,

saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47, emphasis added).

For many years the life of Jesus has been presented from the pulpit, on television programs, and through radio stations. But it seems like the more Jesus is presented, there is less of Jesus' character in the world. The more enthusiastic the presentation that is made, the weaker is the effect on the audience. God's people are called to not only make a difference but to be different in the world! Not only to present but to represent the life of Jesus! The world is more interested in what we are than in what we can do or say, for what we are speaks louder than what we say.

Before the apostles could share the light of God's word, they had to become the light they were to share to the world. The New Testament Christian church grew, largely because each member experienced a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. The Lord's promise of spiritual revival had a dramatic effect on the life of the disciples. (Acts 1:8; 4:31, 33.)

The book of Acts tells the story of a handful of men and women who did not leave the world the same way they found it. These were ordinary people whom God enabled to do extraordinary things. Everywhere they went, they were ridiculed, opposed, persecuted, and physically assaulted for their beliefs. Some were even put to death. Yet within a period of about thirty or forty years, this original group of one hundred and twenty people and their converts came to be known as those who "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Can that happen again? The answer is yes, it can. But it starts with you. It starts with me. Our own life will have to be turned upside down first.

"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work."<sup>11</sup>

Revival and reformation in the life of those individuals who compose the remnant is the first step toward successful soul winning. Reaching

out to those in need is a natural outward reaction to what has been accomplished in the heart.

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver."<sup>12</sup>

"No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart."<sup>13</sup>

### Step 2. Training

I have met many new converts that enthusiastically accepted the gospel message and had a natural desire to share with others what the Lord had done for them, but they gave up as soon as they failed to do so successfully. They needed to be trained for service.

Our Lord encourages His disciples to follow Him: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

The twelve disciples were trained by the world's greatest Teacher. Jesus spent three and a half years teaching them. In the book of Acts we read that they learned and applied His lessons. They went onward in Jesus' name, meeting the needs of men, women, and children, and preparing them for the kingdom of God. As the disciples participated in Christ's training program with both theoretical instruction and field experience, they gradually became effective witnesses that Christ could use to change the world.

Today, "many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged. Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath School classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted."<sup>14</sup>

A worker who has been trained and educated for the work can accomplish more than the workers who have not been trained. In order for every church member to be engaged in some line of

service for the Master, we need to form training centers in our local churches.

"In our churches let companies be formed for service. . . . The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who cannot err."<sup>15</sup>

As church members are trained for service, and as they form small groups to reach out to their community in Bible-based ministries, the church will experience both spiritual and numerical growth.

### Step 3. Community outreach

Our churches will progress if we meet the physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of the people through a planned process of community outreach. Christ's ministry was people-focused. (Matthew 4:23.) The Saviour lovingly met the people's needs. As their heart opened, He shared with them the eternal principles of His kingdom. Following the Master's example, the early Christian church did the same; they met the needs of the people in Jesus' name, demonstrating concern for all their physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs.

When Peter and John found a lame man at the temple gate, Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"<sup>16</sup>

The world is diverse, with a variety of needs. The remnant church needs to provide a variety of programs to meet the varied needs of the people.

In His spiritual teachings, Jesus often referred to the natural laws of the harvest. One of the most basic agricultural principles is, "If you want to have a harvest, you have to sow the seed." No farmer should expect God to work a miracle and germinate seed that he has not sown.

God can only bless the visits that we make, the literature we distribute, the

Bible studies we give, the evangelistic seminars we conduct. It is presumptuous to believe we can have a great harvest without adequate effort in sowing the seed of God's word.

#### Step 4. Harvesting

The apostolic church placed a high priority on evangelism. The early believers confidently shared God's word, anticipating the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

We read that "they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

When the gospel seed has been sown, we should look forward to reaping results. God promises to grant a harvest from public evangelism. The disciples were powerful evangelists. Thousands responded to the sermon of Peter. Luke describes the growth of the church by saying that "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

"Most startling messages will be borne by men of God's appointment, messages of a character to warn the people, to arouse them. . . . We must also have, in our cities, consecrated evangelists through whom a message is to be borne so decidedly as to startle the hearers."<sup>17</sup>

Wherever I am privileged to travel, I meet pastors, church leaders, and lay people—especially youth—accepting the challenge and seizing the opportunity to share Christ's truth through public evangelism. There is an increasing interest on the part of lay people in preaching the word. They have sensed God's call. Utilizing the many resources available, they are proclaiming God's word with power, and many are moved by the Holy Spirit to make decisions to join the remnant.

#### Step 5. Integration and follow-up work

Churches grow spiritually and numerically when new converts are

## ***The early Christian church . . . met the needs of the people in Jesus' name, demonstrating concern for all their physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs.***

integrated and taught to witness. We need to follow up with the interest generated by public evangelism as an ongoing part of the church's effective outreach.

Unfortunately this fifth step, which was a significant part of the disciples' evangelistic strategy, is what I see lacking in our work in many places. In the apostles' time there was follow-up work done. When people accepted Christ, understood His word and were baptized, they were integrated into a nurturing body of believers. (Acts 2:42.)

"When men and women accept the truth, we are not to go away and leave them and have no further burden for them. They are to be looked after."<sup>18</sup> Jesus said to Peter: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15). Our love for Jesus should lead us to have a deep concern for the spiritual growth of new believers and to never "forget" their needs.

One of the most effective methods of helping new believers grow in Christ is to teach them how to share their faith. As new believers develop their own personal devotional life through prayer and Bible study, they will become actively involved in witnessing.

"After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. . . . These newly converted ones need nursing—watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey to Satan's most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with."<sup>19</sup>

#### Conclusion

Dear fellow members of God's church, it is impossible to cover, in a few words, every aspect of the mission entrusted to us in the closing hours of planet earth's history. The responsibility is too fearful and the mission is too sacred to be explained briefly in humble human vocabulary. But I am confident that, beyond the few lines that compose this article, we will find the time to examine our Christian walk so far and ask ourselves whether we are living up to the potential with which God has empowered us. Let us make sure that there is nothing we are holding back when it comes to appreciating the value of a soul. May we "remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul."<sup>20</sup> *R*

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.
- <sup>2</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 21.
- <sup>3</sup> *This Day With God*, p. 330.
- <sup>4</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.
- <sup>5</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 352.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 19.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Review and Herald*, December 8, 1885.
- <sup>9</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 111.
- <sup>11</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 121.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.
- <sup>13</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 78.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 149.
- <sup>15</sup> *Evangelism*, p. 115.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.
- <sup>17</sup> *Evangelism*, p. 168.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351.
- <sup>20</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 196.

# The Remnant— History and Lessons

By P. Chapman

## **“I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people”**

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us and His teachings in our past history.”<sup>1</sup>

To place in a proper perspective God’s remnant people as they are found throughout the history of the world, we first need to understand the covenant of grace relationship that God has established between Himself and His people. We can best express it in the words: “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” God says of those who have entered into this relationship, “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. . . . For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:10, 12).

This covenant relationship of grace was founded on God’s infinite love for sinners. God so loved us, that He covenanted to give “his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Under this covenant, God extends His mercy to us through Jesus, the promised Redeemer; He forgives our sins and saves us through “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5); and by the Holy Spirit, He “shed[s] abroad” His love in the heart of every believer (Romans 5:5). This love manifests itself in “the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). Under the covenant of grace, obedience to His will has always been a marked characteristic of God’s remnant people. That’s why Jesus could say to His disciples, “If [ye] love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

## **Lessons from ancient Israel**

In fulfillment of His covenant promise to Abraham, God raised up the nation of Israel. He chose them, in order that they might “reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God’s will.”<sup>2</sup> In reminding them of their covenant obligations, Moses recognized the heart relationship that forms the foundation of all true obedience: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Deuteronomy 6:5, 6). It is no coincidence then, that when the love of God waned in their hearts, His covenant people ended up in disobedience to Him.

For centuries the children of Israel experienced cycles of faithfulness, apostasy, judgment, revival, and reformation. During those cycles of apostasy, it was hard to distinguish just who were God's covenant-keeping people. So great was the apostasy of Israel during the time of King Ahab, that Elijah felt that he was the only faithful one left (1 Kings 19:14). It seemed to him as if the whole nation had turned to serve other gods. However, in God's response to Elijah, the Lord assured His troubled servant, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal" (verse 18). Even in those times of deepest apostasy God reserved to Himself a faithful remnant.

### A remnant shall be saved

"Although the Lord gave Israel the greatest evidences of His favor, and upon condition of obedience, the rich promise that they should be to Him a peculiar people, a royal nation, yet because of their unbelief and disobedience He could not fulfill the promise."<sup>3</sup>

For this reason Jesus declared to the Jewish leaders of His day: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43). Seven hundred years before, God had inspired the prophet Isaiah to write of a people who, though never before counted as part of Israel, would be recognized as God's people. Referring to this prophecy, the apostle Paul declared: "Esaias is very bold, and saith, **I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.** But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Romans 10:20, 21, emphasis supplied).

The call of the Gentiles was also prophesied by Hosea, "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (2:23; Paul in Romans 9:25 quotes this as a prophecy fulfilled in his own lifetime).

Under the preaching of the apostles, a multitude of Gentiles accepted the gospel message and were,

by faith, grafted into the rootstock, partaking of the covenant blessings. (Romans 11:16, 17.)

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminded the Gentile converts of their high calling in this new covenant relationship. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, **I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**" As such, they were called to separate from fellowship with idolaters. Thus, they would be assured of the covenant blessing, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (6:16-18, emphasis supplied).

"The condition of being received into the Lord's family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences. . . . As believers in the truth we are to be distinct in practice from sin and sinners."<sup>4</sup>

"Notwithstanding Israel's failure as a nation, there remained among them a goodly remnant of such as should be saved."<sup>5</sup>

Before Jesus completed His ministry to the Jewish nation, He took the first step "in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to carry on His work on the earth."<sup>6</sup> "He ordained twelve" (Mark 3:14). To those faithful disciples, though materially poor and few in number, Jesus later said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

Through the blessings of the gospel, this faithful remnant, together with the believing Jews and Gentiles that united with them, constituted God's covenant people of the Christian dispensation.

### Losing the first love

Sadly, as the apostolic age waned, so did that first love experienced by those early believers (Revelation 2:4, 5).

Symbolized in Revelation 6:1, 2 as "a white horse" with Christ as its founder, going "forth conquering, and to conquer," it seems hard to imagine how this early church could so soon lose her love and zeal. While Christ appealed to her to repent, the vast majority allowed their faith to grow cold. The

mystery of iniquity, already at work in Paul's day, steadily corrupted the purity of the faith once delivered to the saints. The color of the horses changed to red, then black, then pale, aptly illustrating the continual decline in spirituality as each successive generation of Christ's professed church fell further and further into apostasy.

Despite this great "falling away" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) of the professed church, God always had faithful people ready to stand in defense of truth and righteousness. In each successive generation, faithful souls have constituted Christ's true church.

### The remnant of Sardis and Philadelphia

Following the historical periods of Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos, as Christ led the remnant of Sardis through the short but eventful period of Philadelphia, two major trials came to His faithful people. Under the figure of the angel of Revelation 14:6, 7, God sent a message to the world, announcing the hour of His judgment, with a call to fear and worship Him, focusing on the year 1844. Based on the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary as prophesied it was in the book of Daniel (8:14), the message "was designed to separate the professed people of God from the corrupting influences of the world and to arouse them to see their true condition of worldliness and backsliding."<sup>7</sup>

Though those who accepted the Advent message in North America had come from different denominations, "their denominational barriers were hurled to the ground; conflicting creeds were shivered to atoms; . . . pride and conformity to the world were swept away; wrongs were made right; hearts were united in the sweetest fellowship, and love and joy reigned supreme."<sup>8</sup>

This blessed state of unity and brotherly love among the faithful few was aptly depicted by the name given to the church of this period: Philadelphia—"brotherly love."

But Jesus did not appear in person as they had thought He would. After the time passed when they first expected Christ to come, many gave up

their hope in the soon return of Christ. Despite this discouragement, a minority still remained steadfast. Being denied the privilege of speaking of their hope in their home churches, "in the summer of 1844 about fifty thousand withdrew from the churches."<sup>9</sup> The second angel's message of Revelation 14:8, announcing "the fall of Babylon," was then applicable to those Protestant churches that had rejected the message of the first angel.

A mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic period was corrected, and the Philadelphian believers united once more in the proclamation of Christ's soon coming. "Like a tidal wave the movement swept over the land. From city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places it went, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. . . . Believers saw their doubt and perplexity removed, and hope and courage animated their hearts. . . . A preparation to meet the Lord was the burden of agonizing spirits. There was persevering prayer and unreserved consecration to God."<sup>10</sup>

However, as October 22, 1844, passed, without any sign of their blessed hope—the glorious appearing of Jesus in the clouds of heaven to take them home—the Second Advent movement suffered a bitter disappointment. Many of those who had separated from their former churches in 1844 now gave up their faith entirely.

### Laodicea and the remnant

Yet Christ had not forsaken His faithful people. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Jesus led a small remnant of Philadelphia into the period of Laodicea, and into the light of the wonderful yet solemn truth of His ministry in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. In the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, Christ's final work of ministration for His covenant people had commenced. In this work Christ is determining whose names shall be retained in His book of life (Revelation 3:5). As history has shown, not all who have professed faith in Him have remained true to their covenant vow. In the judgment of "the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17), it will be

determined who is accounted worthy of the promised inheritance under His covenant blessings. This is the final work that Christ will perform before He returns to claim His people as His own.<sup>11</sup> (See also Daniel 8:14; Hebrews 8:1-4; Revelation 3:7, 8; 11:19.)

As God's faithful remnant entered this seventh and final period of the church, the light on the sanctuary brought with it the light on God's law contained therein (Revelation 11:19). The fourth commandment, so long dented by the vast majority of the fallen churches, was now seen in clearer light as a perpetual covenant (Exodus 31:16, 17).

As the covenant people of God, the remnant church now saw clearly that they were being tested on the Sabbath truth. The servant of the Lord wrote, "I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God's dear, waiting saints."<sup>12</sup>

### A crisis in Laodicea

Looking down to the period of the church's final conflict, John wrote, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

While God's remnant people can certainly expect great opposition from the enemies of Christ's cause, the servant of the Lord warns, "We have far more to fear from within than from without."<sup>13</sup> Satan's attacks are manifested chiefly within the remnant's own ranks. So alluring were his temptations, that many of those who were once zealous became indifferent to the cause of Christ.

In 1852, only eight years after 1844, the Lord's servant was moved to write, "Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are becoming conformed to this world and seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God. They are cold and formal."<sup>14</sup>

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. . . . Because thou

sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:15, 17).

"The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded."<sup>15</sup>

If this state of spiritual indifference would continue without genuine repentance, then those who remained in that condition would be spewed out of Christ's mouth (Revelation 3:16). This figure "means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you."<sup>16</sup>

When this straight testimony was first applied to those who were proclaiming the third angel's message, many thought it would accomplish its work quickly. It stirred the people of God everywhere. However, as time passed, it lost its effect in the hearts of the believers. Seven years later, the Lord's messenger wrote, "I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months. It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel."<sup>17</sup>

Over the next 23 years, the church of Laodicea increased greatly in numbers and material prosperity. However, the Lord's servant was compelled to write:

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

"The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt.

Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. **Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. . . . The testimonies are unread and unappreciated.**<sup>18</sup> This once zealous remnant, filled with the love of Jesus, was now retreating far from Him.

Six years later, in July of 1888, the following testimony appeared: "The facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God speak more loudly than their profession, and make it evident that **some power has cut the cable that anchored them to the Eternal Rock, and that they are drifting away to sea, without chart or compass.**"<sup>19</sup>

### A most precious message

Because many had lost sight of Christ as their leader, in 1888 during the General Conference at Minneapolis, "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the **whole world**. It presented **justification through faith in the Surety**; it invited the people to **receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.** . . . All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. **It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.**"<sup>20</sup> "The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth."<sup>21</sup>

Sadly, by 1903, the condition of the church made it evident that this message was never fully received. "It is a solemn and terrible truth

that many who have been zealous in proclaiming the third angel's message are now becoming listless and indifferent! . . . Instead of leading the world to render **obedience to God's law**, the church is uniting more and more closely with the world in **transgression. Daily the church is becoming converted to the world.**"<sup>22</sup>

### Separation in Laodicea

Eleven years later, World War I burst upon Europe. When the leadership of the professed people of God in Europe committed the church to the support of the war effort—including the bearing of arms and doing so on the Sabbath when it was needed—they manifested that they had not been building on the solid rock. Having been so heavily influenced by the spirit of the world, they lost sight of their high calling as God's covenant people. Those who protested were disfellowshipped.

Well over 2,000 conscientious objectors were separated from the Adventist Church in Germany alone. Similar actions by the professed people of God took place in other countries of Europe. Many of these faithful souls suffered imprisonment and death for the stand they took.

At the conclusion of the war, the faithful few, scattered across 16 countries of Europe, gathered together in the hope of reconciliation with their former brethren. Like the faithful in other ages of the church, "to secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God."<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the leadership of the church, blinded to their spiritual condition, refused to take action against those who had violated God's law.

The separation, though painful, became permanent. Thus the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was born.

### The repairers and restorers

Today, under the movement symbolized by that other angel of Revelation 18:1–4, "God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers" are making it manifest "that the law of God

is the foundation of all enduring reform. . . . In clear, distinct lines they are [presenting] the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are [cooperating] with Him in building up the waste places. They are [being] repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in."<sup>24</sup>

Dear reader, "that which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today. He has 'let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen,' even to His covenant-keeping people, who must faithfully 'render Him the fruits in their seasons' (Matthew 21:41). Never has the Lord been without true representatives on this earth who have made His interests their own. These witnesses for God are numbered among the spiritual Israel, and to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people."<sup>25</sup>


"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). ❧

### References

- <sup>1</sup> *Life Sketches*, p. 196.
- <sup>2</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 14.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, March 27, 1884.
- <sup>4</sup> *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 57.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 376.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 379.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 400, 401.
- <sup>11</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 254.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- <sup>13</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 122.
- <sup>14</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 107.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>16</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 408.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 186.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 217. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>19</sup> *The Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>20</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>21</sup> *The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892.
- <sup>22</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 118, 119. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>23</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 45.
- <sup>24</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 713, 714.

# Challenges Remnant

By M. D. Stroia

 "remnant" is a small, surviving group. Initially there must have been a much larger group, but the size has diminished until the "surviving" remnant becomes a very small number. The difference between the heroic, surviving "remnant" group on the one hand, and the initially large group on the other hand, can be so great that the spiritual or even the physical life is at stake. At first all might look alike so that no one could tell them apart (just like the 10 virgins in the parable), yet, eventually, they are found at opposite poles.

## Discerning the remnant

From a biblical perspective the best known verse referring to a remnant is found in Revelation 12:17, where we read that "the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (which is the Spirit of Prophecy, as noted in Revelation 19:10).

This suggests that the initial majority ("the woman" mentioned earlier in the

same chapter) has lost at least one of these two characteristics and therefore has become spiritually dead.

## Discerning the dragon's tactics

The cunning dragon mentioned in this verse fights desperately, because he knows that he is running out of time and that his end is near. He is fighting a lost cause in a battle he cannot win; yet, he is doing his utmost to drag with him as many as possible to the same ruin: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12).

The Bible compares his attitude to that of a lion seeking prey: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Although he is trying to destroy everyone, his favorite victims—the object of his special targeting and assaults—are "the very elect," whom he is trying to deceive by any possible means (Matthew 24:24).

I remember when a tiger escaped from the zoo near where I lived, and

everyone in the area was warned to stay indoors. The people could be exposed to great danger if they dared to step out of their homes without protection! This is true also in a spiritual sense for everyone, generally speaking—especially for the remnant who are to equip themselves with the whole armor of God. (See Ephesians 6:10–17.)

The strength of the remnant is not their own. It comes from the One who affirmed, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18), after defeating the devil on his own ground.

## What happened to the majority?

Why did only a small remnant survive? What made the difference between the two groups? It must have to do with "the commandments of God" and "the testimony of Jesus," and the way the remnant related to them. It was these that separated them.

While some kept the commandments and the testimony of Jesus for a certain length of time, they abandoned them once the principles conflicted with their worldly interests. Perhaps even their physical survival was at stake. These persons are symbolized by



## *Perhaps the biggest issue we face is rendering obedience with the right motivation and attitude, with a will that is fully submerged in the will of God.*

the seed that fell on the rock in the parable told by Jesus. They once received the word with joy—but they had no root, and when temptation came they fell away (Luke 8:13). But the remnant survived spiritually by clinging to the principles of God’s law steadfastly unto the end. God has never been without at least a small group of faithful followers who have remained steadfast in spite of the widespread apostasy. These are standard bearers, holding up the flame of truth. “I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Romans 11:4, 5). This remnant stands in the strength that God gives them.

The servant of the Lord was shown that “not all . . . would be ensnared by the enemy’s devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Facing the “lion” of temptation**

It doesn’t matter how large the initial group was, or how many began running in the Christian race; it is not so important to know how many got lost along the way. The most important thing is to be one of those who manage to finish the Christian life victoriously and be found among the saved: “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations” (Revelation 2:26). “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:38, 39).

We are repeatedly exposed to various temptations and trials along the Christian pathway. Some of these, with God’s help, we may be able to overcome quite easily, because they do not stir up any response within us. Others prove themselves to be real challenges

in our spiritual life—they stir up a sensitive chord in our heart, address some weak points or tendencies in our character. It is then that temptation becomes a real challenge—a moment when the individual has to make a painful choice:

Yield to temptation and (maybe) enjoy “the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25), followed by the burden of guilt, remorse, and the pricks of conscience; or deny one’s own temporary pleasures or interests and do what is right regardless of the cost of self-denial (“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin”) but enjoy long-term inner peace and a clear conscience (Hebrews 12:4).

### **What is really motivating us?**

In the parable of the prodigal son, we have the example of the elder brother who denied himself and rendered obedience to his father’s will. “Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment” (Luke 15:29). He was feeling frustrated about his experience, which didn’t really bring him any genuine satisfaction or fulfillment. It seems that the only real difference between him and his brother was that he did not dare to do what his brother had done. He had been obedient to his father and had been serving him just because he did not want to take risks and he feared the consequences. But he did not experience happiness by serving his father and living in harmony with his father’s will. This kind of shallow obedience, although honorable in the eyes of people, cannot be regarded as a spiritual achievement. God does not accept anything but heartfelt willingness.

An entirely different kind of obedience was shown in the experience of our Saviour, who could rightly say: “The prince of this world cometh, and he hath nothing in me” (John 14:30). There was not a hook which Satan could use to entice Jesus; there was no positive response whatsoever in Christ’s soul to any of the devil’s temptations.

Jesus did not obey His Father against His own will or pleasure. His obedience to the Father was in full harmony with His own will; it was an expression of His own will. This attitude was perfectly illustrated in His life’s experience on this earth, just as had been foretold centuries before: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8, emphasis supplied).

### **The service of love**

The righteous prophet Daniel understood the fundamental principle that an outward obedience is not sufficient, unless it is motivated by an inner willingness and joy to do the will of God. For this reason, before daring to give any advice at all to King Nebuchadnezzar, he emphasized the fact that obedience is valuable only if it comes out of a happy, willing heart: “Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility” (Daniel 4:27).

According to Strong’s concordance, the actual meaning of the word “acceptable” which appears in this verse, in the original language “sh<sup>e</sup>phar” is “to be beautiful,” “be acceptable,” “please,” + “think good.” This meaning appears also in the translation of this Bible verse in other languages. It was

only after Nebuchadnezzar would be pleased with the counsel, “think good” of it and like it, that his obedience would have any value at all.

“But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love.”<sup>2</sup>

When the first psalm describes the characteristics of the man who is blessed by God, it states that “his delight is in the law of the Lord” (verse 2). This person finds pleasure in doing God’s will; his or her will is not in conflict with God’s law. God’s will as expressed in His law and the individual’s will are in perfect harmony with each another. The same thought is found in Psalm 112:1, “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.”

If we contemplate the various challenges we individually face, we will count among those challenges various strong temptations that must be resisted. Perhaps the biggest issue we face is rendering obedience with the right motivation and attitude, with a will that is fully submerged in the will of God—loving what He loves and hating what He hates. Meeting this challenge is possible only by the new birth.

The new birth is not a change in the outward behavior. It is a radical change in thinking that changes our identity. The depth of the soul is altered through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**“A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are.”<sup>3</sup>**

Those who bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) “will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in

His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. **The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate.”<sup>4</sup>**

### **A question of the heart**

Since God is just, He gives equal opportunities to all—the Holy Spirit works in every human being, striving to bring about this new kind of experience. Why then will some be saved while others will be lost? What makes this difference? The answer is quite simple: God has endowed all with free will. Only by our consent and cooperation can the Holy Spirit change us. Therefore our submissive willingness to His bidding must be constant.

We must keep in mind God’s love and wisdom—and that in choosing His way, in the long run we will be happy. Theoretically, this sounds good and seems pretty reasonable. But when we try to put this truth into practice in our everyday life, we find that the choice often requires a struggle. The Bible calls this struggle “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). But if we choose our own way, we will actually get farther and farther away from happiness.

During this struggle, we need to frequently remind ourselves about God’s boundless love and His infinite wisdom and power, so that we can remember to trust the Unseen and make our choices in life accordingly. The more we study God’s word, the more we will recognize the beauty of His character and the marvels of His plans. That increased recognition of Him will make it much easier for us to understand and identify with His plan for us. By following God’s plan, we

will actually be fulfilling our own will, which has become similar to His.

The opposite is to be like Balaam. He obeyed God’s plan but did so grudgingly, out of frustration, feeling that the will of God prevented him from acquiring wealth and happiness. This kind of obedience was of no value to him!

If we have been thinking like Balaam—missing out on the genuine new birth experience or coming short of it—it’s high time to awaken and to be restored to the kind of relationship with God that will enable us to pass safely through the extreme trials ahead.

### **An appeal to us all**

The messenger of the Lord declares: **“What shall I say to arouse the remnant people of God? I was shown that dreadful scenes are before us; Satan and his angels are bringing all their powers to bear upon God’s people. He knows that if they sleep a little longer he is sure of them, for their destruction is certain.”<sup>5</sup>**

**“Will ye shun the seven last plagues? Will ye go to glory and enjoy all that God has prepared for those who love Him and are willing to suffer for His sake? If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh. . . . Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory!”<sup>6</sup>**

**“When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life.”<sup>7</sup>**

It is not God’s will for us to produce an outwardly righteous life as the Pharisees tried to do. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). The entire being, including our thoughts and feelings, must all be brought into obedience to the Lord: **“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”** (2 Corinthians 10:5, emphasis supplied).

***We need to remind ourselves about God’s boundless love and His infinite wisdom and power, so that we can remember to trust the Unseen.***

It is then, and only then, that Jesus will be able to come and claim us as His own, because **“when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”** (1 John 3:2, emphasis supplied). This goal can be achieved when only we have the mind of Christ: **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 2:5, emphasis supplied). Such an experience is what is meant by **“Christ in you, the hope of glory”** (Colossians 1:27).

When this condition is fulfilled, when we have the mind of Christ and think His thoughts, share His values and have feelings and attitude in harmony with Him, then the fruit of the Spirit will be perfectly revealed in our life. **“The righteousness of the law”** will be **“fulfilled in us”** because we **“walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (Romans 8:4).

It is the principle of love—the very foundation of God’s law and the expression of His character—that motivates the Christian’s actions and behavior, pervading all the aspects of life. It is thus that **“the righteousness of the law”** is fulfilled in all respects. **“Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny.”**<sup>8</sup>

The practical aspects of our faith will thus be manifest in many areas of our life, including:

#### **Joy in God’s Law and Sabbathkeeping:**

**“The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration that is to be wrought in the closing days of this earth’s history. . . . 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 and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they**

are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.”<sup>9</sup>

#### **Fostering a close-knit family**

**“The first work of Christians is to be united in the family.”**<sup>10</sup>

**“To a large extent parents create the atmosphere of the home circle, and when there is disagreement between father and mother, the children partake of the same spirit. Make your home atmosphere fragrant with tender thoughtfulness. If you have become estranged and have failed to be Bible Christians, be converted; for the character you bear in probationary time will be the character you will have at the coming of Christ. If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society.”**<sup>11</sup>

#### **Living up to the light on health reform**

**“It is for their own good that the Lord counsels the remnant church to discard the use of flesh meats, tea, and coffee, and other harmful foods. There are plenty of other things on which we can subsist that are wholesome and good. Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view and endeavor to work steadily toward it.”**<sup>12</sup>

**“The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. . . . There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the Testimonies as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light.**

Those who claim to believe in health reform, and yet work counter to its principles in the daily life practice, are hurting their own souls and are leaving wrong impressions upon the minds of believers and unbelievers.”<sup>13</sup>

#### **Dressing in a Christlike manner**

The servant of the Lord explains: **“I saw that God’s people are on the enchanted ground, and that some have lost nearly all sense of the shortness of time and the worth of the soul. Pride has crept in among Sabbathkeepers—pride of dress and appearance. Said the angel, ‘Sabbathkeepers will have to die to self, die to pride and love of approbation.’ . . . I saw that if self-exaltation was suffered to come in, it would surely lead souls astray, and if not overcome would prove their ruin. When one begins to get lifted up in his own eyes and thinks he can do something, the Spirit of God is withdrawn, and he goes on in his own strength until he is overthrown.”**<sup>14</sup>

#### **The time is now—where shall we begin?**

**“Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”**<sup>15</sup> *R*

#### *References*

<sup>1</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 535, 536.

<sup>2</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>5</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 263. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>6</sup> *Early Writings*, pp. 66, 67. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>7</sup> *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>8</sup> *The Adventist Home*, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> *Conflict and Courage*, p. 269. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>10</sup> *The Adventist Home*, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Counsels for the Church*, p. 231. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>14</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 120. [Emphasis supplied.]

<sup>15</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 70. [Emphasis supplied.]

# Characteristics of the Remnant

By D. Sureshkumar

## God's church

God's church is a divinely appointed ministry consisting of faithful followers of God. All through the Bible, God's church is represented by a woman. In the Old Testament, the Lord often used the name "Zion" in referring to His people (Isaiah 51:16), and He declared, "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman" (Jeremiah 6:2). Likewise in the New Testament, as the bridegroom, Christ is married to His bride—the church. Paul the apostle explained to the believers under his care, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

**The Jewish church:** Israel was the chosen people portrayed as being married to God, yet often unfaithful (Jeremiah 2:11–22). In Christ's time Jesus saw His church as a barren fig tree, covered with pretentious leaves but destitute of precious fruit.

**The Christian church in the New Testament:** The true Israel of God was no longer a nation but rather a church composed of Jews and Gentiles who receive Christ as their Saviour. Christ founded His church upon the living Rock.

**The underground church during the Dark Ages:** The bishop of Rome

was declared to be the head over the mainstream church; paganism gave place to the papacy that now persecuted those who loved God. During this period of persecution, conflict, and darkness, the gracious God tenderly cared for His remnant church hidden in the wilderness.

**The Remnant church, the end-time church:** God has called His church in this day **the remnant** to stand as a light of the earth, "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). And there is no doubt that, with us or without us, the Lord will find such a church on earth when He comes. In the interest of our salvation, we certainly want to be part of this small remnant church, the *church triumphant*, for Christ and His church are inseparable. "Connection with Christ . . . involves connection with His church."<sup>1</sup>

"The church is God's agency for the proclamation of truth, empowered by Him to do a special work; and if she is loyal to Him, obedient to all His commandments, there will dwell within her the excellency of divine grace. If she will be true to her allegiance, **if she will honor the Lord God of Israel,**

**there is no power that can stand against her.**"<sup>2</sup>

The church of God is the pillar of truth. She advocates and practices the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

## The remnant

John speaks of the end times and refers to the true people of God in Revelation 12, calling them a remnant against which Satan will make war. Down through the ages, the true church has been God's faithful ones, whom Satan hates but has not able to force to compromise. Those who have remained true to God in all circumstances, including amid great persecution, are the true remnant. When everyone else compromises his or her principles, the faithful are the ones who overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony (Revelation 12:11). "And the dragon was wroth with the **woman**, and went to make war with the **remnant of her seed**, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (verse 17).

The word **remnant** is derived from the old French *remenant* "remaining," from *remanoir*, "to remain." It implies a small piece or amount; or a small number left over from a larger original piece. There are three different Greek

words used in the New Testament, *kataleimma*, *loipoy*, and *leimma*, all of which are translated “remnant.” The Greek word used by John is *loipos* (*loipoy*), which denotes that which pertains “to the part of a whole which remains or continues” and thus constitutes the rest of the original.

The Lord Jesus has chosen a people to serve Him, a remnant from the time of the fall of Adam. Only Noah’s family was faithful at the time of the Flood (Genesis. 6:1–8). Only a few Israelites refused to worship the golden calf in the wilderness (Exodus 32:25, 26). Only Elijah and 7,000 others did not bow down to Baal when Ahab led Israel into national apostasy (1 Kings 19:10–18). Only a few heeded God’s call to return from Babylon to Jerusalem in Ezra’s time (Ezra 2:1–70).

When the Bible speaks of the remnant church, it likewise refers to a small portion of God’s people who remain faithful to God at the end of time. They cling to an unadulterated belief, to the faith and doctrines of the early Christian church, while the majority around them compromise their faith.

The remnant church at the end of time consists of those individuals who, in Christ’s strength, keep the commandments of God and speak of the power of Jesus Christ in their life. They have not allowed pagan ideas, idols, and or the worldliness to be introduced into their beliefs. That is the biblical definition of the final remnant. God has always had and will always have a remnant.

### Lineage of the remnant

The Jews believed that, since they were the descendants of Abraham, they were the children of God. Roman Catholic theology teaches a similar idea: “*Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia*” (Where Peter is, that’s where the church is). But what does the Bible say? Lineal descent from a great patriarch or from an apostle of Jesus, without likeness of their character, does not make us successors of these men of God. Likeness of character is the decisive factor (Matthew 3:9; John 9:39; Romans 9:6–8; 11:22; Galatians 3:7–9).

## The remnant church at the end of time keep the commandments of God and speak of the power of Jesus Christ in their life.

“Descent from Abraham was proved, **not by name and lineage but by likeness of character. So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority but upon spiritual relationship.** A life actuated by the apostles’ spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus states the conditions on which the Lord has promised to recognize us as His people: “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21). “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31). “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). “He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

“A profession . . . is nothing in the sight of God; but true, humble, willing obedience to His requirements designates the children of His adoption.”<sup>4</sup>

“When we see men firm in principle, fearless in duty, zealous in the cause of God, yet humble and lowly, gentle and tender, patient toward all, ready to forgive, manifesting love for souls for whom Christ died, we do not need to inquire: Are they Christians? They give unmistakable evidence that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him.”<sup>5</sup>

### Characteristics of God’s people

God calls His chosen people upon the earth, “**My people.**” “The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none

shall make them afraid” (Zephaniah 3:13).

In these scriptures we find the following characteristics:

1. “They shall not do iniquity.”
2. “They speak no lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.”

Then, we have these promises:

1. They “shall feed and lie down.” and
2. “None shall make them afraid.”

God’s people are those who will purify their souls by obeying the truth as it is in Jesus. God will have a separate and **peculiar people**. Their **faith is peculiar**. Their **prospects are peculiar**. They are a visible and identifiable church. Revelation 12:17 describes their characteristics in the context of the last days of earth’s history. They are identified by three main qualities:

1. They rely on God’s grace and keep the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

2. They uphold the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17). This expression, the testimony of Jesus (*marturia Iesou*), occurs four times in the book of Revelation (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10) and is identified with the gift of prophecy (verse 10). The remnant is also characterized by having the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12), that is to say, they uphold the teachings of our Saviour Jesus Christ, based on a faith commitment.

3. Finally, the remnant has the patience of the saints (Revelation 14:12). “Patience” here means “endurance.” At a time when deception and apostasy appear to prevail, the remnant people resist the constant attacks of the enemy and remain faithful and committed to

the Saviour. The Greek word translated "hold" is *echontoon*, which means to adhere or cling to, to be closely joined to a person or thing. The book of Revelation also speaks of the reward awaiting the remnant (Revelation 2:7).

**"The woman" is a symbol of the church, and the seed of the woman is the number of believers in any generation, and "the remnant of her seed" means, of course, the last generation of the church.** Here is a positive prophecy that the last church will be characterized by this special feature; they will have the testimony of Jesus Christ. But what is the testimony of Jesus Christ? Revelation 19:10: "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." "Thus the remnant of her seed is the faithful church."

## The commandments of God

In this important and interesting period of end-time, God calls His remnant to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elias. John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ's first advent—calling the attention of people to the Ten Commandments. Likewise we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: "Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Revelation 14:7).

"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."<sup>6</sup>

"He who loves and observes the Sabbath, and maintains the purity of the marriage institution, thereby proves himself the friend of man and the friend of God. **He who by precept or example lessens the obligation of these sacred institutions is the enemy of both God and man.**"<sup>7</sup>

## The seal of God

The Sabbath is identified with the sealing message of Revelation 7, for the Sabbath is God's seal, His own sign (Ezekiel 20:12, 20). As the character of God, revealed in His law, is imprinted upon the heart of the remnant, they are sanctified in the truth (Isaiah 8:16; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17; Psalm 119:142). When this condition

is fully met, then Sabbathkeeping is truly a sign of sanctification as well as a sign of distinction. It identifies us as worshippers of the true God and distinguishes us from the children of disobedience (Exodus 31:16–18; Ezekiel 9:4–6). The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty at the close of human probation.

The commandment-keeping people of God are those who will have in their foreheads the seal of the living God (Revelation 14:1, 12; 7:2–4). "In obeying the fourth commandment in spirit and truth, men will obey all the precepts of the Decalogue."<sup>8</sup>

## The faith of Jesus

The remnant are also characterized by having the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12), that is to say, embracing the teachings of Jesus based on a faith commitment to Him.

"Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus."<sup>9</sup>

## Faith that works

"Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way."<sup>10</sup>

**"Through faith we receive the grace of God;** but faith is not our Saviour. It earns nothing. It is the hand by which we lay hold upon Christ and appropriate His merits."<sup>11</sup>

"[Faith] is the act of the soul by which the whole man is given over to the guardianship and control of Jesus Christ."<sup>12</sup>

**"The faith that justifies** always produces first true repentance, and then good works, which are the fruit of that faith."<sup>13</sup> "Genuine, saving faith is inseparable from repentance and conversion and will manifest the fruits of the Spirit. It is a continual, conscious trust in Jesus."<sup>14</sup>

"Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming. **Works without faith are dead, and faith without works is dead.** Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail in our behalf. Through faith in Him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God. **The faith we are**

**required to have is not a do-nothing faith; saving faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul.**"<sup>15</sup>

"The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. We are to feel the power of the Spirit of God in this movement. This is a wonderful, definite message; it means everything to the receiver, and it is to be proclaimed with a loud cry. We must have a true, abiding faith that this message will go forth with increasing importance till the close of time.

"There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the *Testimonies* as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. . . .

"A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. . . . There are many among us who are deficient in spirituality, and who, unless they are wholly converted, will certainly be lost. Can you afford to run the risk?"<sup>16</sup>

## They have a warning message

God is teaching, leading, and guiding His remnant, that they may teach, lead, and guide others. The remnant will also warn those who worship the beast and those who identify themselves with the image of the beast, telling them that they will face the wrath of God (Revelation 14:9–11). It is the duty of the remnant to call God's people who are still in Babylon to come out and to be part of the remnant reaffirming their commitment to the truth (Revelation 18:4). Thus the remnant and those coming out of Babylon will constitute the fullness of God's remnant before His coming. This remnant announce the judgment hour, proclaim salvation through Christ, and herald the approach of His second advent. It is a solemn duty.

## They are overcomers

"The people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart."<sup>17</sup>

Through His strength they obtain "the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (Revelation 15:2).<sup>18</sup>

They will "have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments."<sup>19</sup>

The overcomers will be pillars in God's temple and will have written in the forehead the name of God, the name of the new Jerusalem, and Jesus' new name (Revelation 3:12). The remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. "A fair miter" is set upon their heads. They will be as kings and priests unto God and follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4, 5).

## Covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness

"The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world."<sup>20</sup> "The palms signify that they have gained the victory, and the white robes that they have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ."<sup>21</sup>

"Christ, only Christ and His righteousness, will obtain for us a passport into heaven."<sup>22</sup>

The few who are part of the remnant have a sincere, earnest, affectionate longing after God. They are wholehearted in doing God's will. They do not perform mere lip service but render actual heart service. They walk humbly with God in meekness and contrition of spirit, and the Lord recognizes them and gives them the grace of His Holy Spirit, in order that they may do the work, according to their ability, which God gives them to do (Micah 6:6-8). They are laborers together with God. They claim no wisdom of their own but acknowledge

# ***The remnant do not merely make a profession, but actually keep the commandments of God from the heart, by the power and the grace that Jesus provides.***

that divine power alone can enable them (1 Corinthians 3:9).

## Conclusion

The remnant do not merely make a profession but actually keep the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; 14:12) from the heart, by the power and grace that Jesus provides. They do not join the world. They separate themselves from all worldliness (James 4:4), not seeking worldly recognition or honor (Revelation 13:15-17; chapters 14 and 15).

The remnant are faithful to God and His truth and thus to the church. "The church is the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). They take the final warning to the entire world and proclaim the message of that other angel with power.

These are believers that conquer selfishness. As a result of the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary, they no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them (2 Corinthians 5:15). The remnant are among the 144,000, which were redeemed from the earth. "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:5). "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

The remnant go through a mighty conflict before they become the church triumphant, as described in Revelation 13, 14, 15, and 17:14. They understand that belonging to the church does not mean that they belong to Christ, but belonging to Christ means that they need to belong to the church.

"The remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the

prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the spirit of prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God."<sup>23</sup>

If you have these characteristics in your life, you will be part of the remnant:

Salvation is not guaranteed through membership in any church. We are saved as individuals, not as a church. It's a great privilege and responsibility, being part of this church, because we have a sacred calling. As members of God's remnant church, we must pray with firm faith for the grace of God, for even greater, genuine faith and for a consistent life. *R*

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- <sup>2</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>3</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 466, 467. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 441.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 224, 225.
- <sup>6</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, p. 678. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>7</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1884. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>8</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 291.
- <sup>9</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 172.
- <sup>10</sup> *Education*, p. 253.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 175. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>12</sup> *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 531.
- <sup>13</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 195.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1890. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>16</sup> *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 36, 37.
- <sup>17</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 475.
- <sup>18</sup> See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 590, 591; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 648, 649.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 649.
- <sup>20</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 475.
- <sup>21</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 970. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>22</sup> *Testimonies to Southern Africa*, p. 32.
- <sup>23</sup> *Loma Linda Messages*, p. 33.

# Doctrine Remnant

*A compilation from the Bible and the  
Spirit of Prophecy, with comments*

*by D. P. Silva*

**W**hat is a doctrine? The word “doctrine” refers to **instruction or teaching.**

“The only word in the OT that RV [the Revised Version] as well as AV [the Authorized Version] renders ‘doctrine’ is the Hebrew word *leqah*= ‘instruction,’ lit. ‘what is received (Deuteronomy 32:2, Job 11:4; Proverbs 4:2, Isaiah 24:24). In the NT ‘doctrine’ stands once for *logos* (Hebrews 6:1 AV; but cf. RV), otherwise for *didache* and *didaskalia*, of which the former denotes esp. the act of teaching, the latter the thing that is taught.”<sup>1</sup>

In Matthew 7:28, 29 we have a good example of this concept. The people listened to Jesus as He delivered the Sermon on the Mount. “When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his **doctrine**: For

he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (emphasis added).

In Matthew 16, we find another illustration of the meaning of doctrine:

“When his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake

it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (verses 5 to 12, emphasis added).

Here we find two kinds of doctrine (or teachings) mentioned in the New Testament:

1. The true doctrine of Christ.
2. The fake or false doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

## **How can we discern between genuine (true) vs. counterfeit (false) doctrine?**

During the feast of the tabernacles in Jerusalem, Jesus said: “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall



know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:16, 17).

Christ's teachings came from the Father, and He gave basic instruction how to recognize any doctrine as true: "If any man will do his [the Father's] will." Here we have a very essential truth. The condition upon which we can identify true doctrine is based on our disposition—our willingness—to do God's will.

### Choosing and teaching sound doctrine

In 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, the apostle identifies what is the fountain of true doctrine: the Holy Scriptures. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." He urges the believers to "speak . . . the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

In contrast, Paul warns God's people in Ephesians chapter 4 about the danger of being swept up by "every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." For sure, those kinds of doctrines (teachings) do not come from the Father but from the father of lies (verse 14).

"The questions that most concern us are, Do I believe with saving faith on the Son of God? Is my life in harmony with the divine law? 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.' 'And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments' (John 3:36; 1 John 2:3)."<sup>2</sup>

Why does the apostle John see the need to explain how to know whether we ourselves and others would truly know Christ? Why should we take the effort to determine whether we truly know Christ? Because in the last days, perilous times will come in which professed believers have a form of outward godliness, but in reality deny the real power of Christ to enable them be overcomers (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We are warned of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming

themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13, 14).

In the time of the end, "very many will get up some test that is not given in the word of God. We have our test in the Bible—the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus' (Revelation 14:12). This is the true test, but many other tests will arise among the people. They will come in in multitudes, springing up from this one and that one. There will be a continual rising up of some foreign thing to call attention from the true test of God.

"These things make it necessary that the minister who meets these tests should have a discerning mind, that he may not give credence to any false doctrine. Voices will be heard, saying, Lo, here is Christ, when there is no Christ there at all. It is some human notion which they wish men to accept and believe.

"But the saddest thing is that principles become perverted. Not that there is no one who tries to carry out principle, but that principle has become so daubed with untempered mortar that it will need the closest investigation from the word of God to see if all is in accordance with the principles of true godliness, founded upon a 'Thus saith the Lord.'"<sup>3</sup>

"The mass of tradition taught will bear no comparison with the teachings of Him who came to show the way to heaven. Christ taught with authority. The sermon on the mount is a wonderful production, yet so simple that a child can study it without being misled. The mount of beatitudes is an emblem of the high elevation on which Christ ever stood. He spoke with an authority which was exclusively His own. Every sentence He uttered came from God. He was the Word and the Wisdom of God, and He ever presented truth with the authority of God. 'The words that I speak unto you,' He said, 'they are spirit, and they are life' (John 6:63).

"That which in the councils of heaven the Father and the Son deemed essential for the salvation of man was defined from eternity by infinite

truths which finite beings cannot fail to comprehend. Revelations have been made for their instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may glorify his own life and the lives of his fellow men, not only by the possession of truth, but by communicating it. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears' (1 Timothy 3:16-4:3).

"Jesus brought into His teaching none of the science of men. His teaching is full of grand, ennobling, saving truth, to which man's highest ambitions and proudest inventions can bear no comparison; and yet things of minor consequence engross the minds of men. The great plan of the redemption of a fallen race was wrought out in the life of Christ in human flesh. This scheme of restoring the moral image of God in debased humanity entered into every purpose of the life and character of Christ. His majesty could not mingle with human science, which will disconnect from the great source of all wisdom in a day. The topic of human science never escaped His hallowed lips. By believing in and doing the words of God, He was severing the human family from Satan's chariot-car. He was alive to the terrible ruin hanging over the human race, and He came to save souls by His own righteousness, bringing to the world definite assurance of hope and complete relief."<sup>4</sup>

"We need more of the working of the Infinite and far less trust in human agencies. We are to prepare a people to stand in the day of God's preparation; we are to call men's attention to the cross of Calvary, to make clear the reason why Christ made His great sacrifice. We are

to show men that it is possible for them to come back to their allegiance to God and to their obedience to His commandments. When the sinner looks upon Christ as the propitiation for his sins, let men step aside. Let them declare to the sinner that Christ 'is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 John 2:2). Encourage him to seek wisdom from God; for through earnest prayer he will learn the way of the Lord more perfectly than if instructed by some human counselor. He will see that it was the transgression of the law that caused the death of the Son of the infinite God, and he will hate the sins that wounded Jesus. As he looks upon Christ as a compassionate, tender High Priest, his heart will be preserved in contrition."<sup>5</sup>

### The commandments of God

"What are the commandments of God? They are the ten holy precepts, the royal law, the holy law of God, which is the standard of character, which every soul present must meet in the judgment, notwithstanding it may be proclaimed from the pulpits of the day that God has no law. Now who believes it?"<sup>6</sup>

"When God's temple in heaven is opened, what a triumphant time that will be for all who have been faithful and true! In the temple will be seen the ark of the testament in which were placed the two tables of stone, on which are written God's law. These tables of stone will be brought forth from their hiding place, and on them will be seen the Ten Commandments engraved by the finger of God. These tables of stone now lying in the ark of the testament will be a convincing testimony to the truth and binding claims of God's law."<sup>7</sup>

"Our duty to obey this [moral] law is to be the burden of this last message of mercy to the world. God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God and states plainly the whole duty of man.

"The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the

universe. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15). Here is the sum and substance of the law of God. The terms of salvation for every son and daughter of Adam are here outlined.

"The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai's mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, 'This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.' There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live.

"In the ten commandments God has laid down the laws of His kingdom. Any violation of the laws of nature is a violation of the law of God.

"The Lord has given His holy commandments to be a wall of protection around His created beings, and those who will keep themselves from the defilement of appetite and passion may become partakers of the divine nature. Their perceptions will be clear. They will know how to preserve every faculty in health, so that it may be presented to God in service. The Lord can use them: for they understand the words of the great apostle, 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service' (Romans 12:1).

"The love of Jesus in the soul will banish all hatred, selfishness, and envy; for the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. There is health in obedience to God's law. The affections of the obedient are drawn out after God. Looking unto the Lord Jesus, we may encourage and serve one another. The love of Christ is shed abroad in our souls, and there is no dissension and strife among us."<sup>8</sup>

### The faith of Jesus

"The faith of Jesus has been overlooked and treated in an indifferent, careless manner. It has not occupied the prominent position in which it was revealed to John. Faith in Christ as the sinner's only hope has been largely left out, not only of the discourses given

but of the religious experience of very many who claim to believe the third angel's message. . . .

"The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness.

"The faith of Jesus! It is talked of but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.

"The only safety for the Israelites was blood upon the doorposts. God said, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you' (Exodus 12:13). All other devices for safety would be without avail. Nothing but the blood on the doorposts would bar the way that the angel of death should not enter. There is salvation for the sinner in the blood of Jesus Christ alone, which cleanseth us from all sin. The man with a cultivated intellect may have vast stores of knowledge, he may engage in theological speculations, he may be great and honored of men and be considered the repository of knowledge, but unless he has a saving knowledge of Christ crucified for him and by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, he is lost. Christ 'was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5). 'Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ,' will be our only hope for time and our song throughout eternity."<sup>9</sup>

What, then, are to be the doctrines of God's church today? God has not authorized His church to create her own doctrines. She must teach only doctrines with a sure foundation in the

Scriptures, in full harmony with the teachings of Christ.

Revelation 12:17 and 14:12 give us a basic statement of the essential doctrines to characterize the final church. John describes God's people as those that "keep the **commandments of God**, and have the **testimony of Jesus Christ**." "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the **commandments of God**, and the **faith of Jesus** (emphasis added)."

"The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes **the cleansing of the sanctuary** transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth, [also] **the first and second angels' messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, 'The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.'** One of the landmarks under this message was **the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment** flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. **The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark.** I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks."<sup>10</sup>

Here we find the most important doctrines of the remnant church:

- t The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.
- t The three angels' messages.
- t The commandments of God.
- t The faith of Jesus.
- t The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.
- t The nonimmortality of the wicked.

These distinctive beliefs are clearly founded on the doctrines of God and His Word, the sinful nature of humans, the plan of salvation, the existence and work of the angels, the importance and work of the church, and other important teachings of the Bible.

And, in addition to the fourth commandment, other truths are found in the Decalogue, such as noncombatancy (4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> commandments), health reform (6<sup>th</sup> commandment), education reform (5<sup>th</sup> commandment), and

Christian marriage for life (as also mentioned in Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:3–6; Romans 7:1–3) (7<sup>th</sup> commandment). These and other teachings are all principles based on the Ten Commandments, the holy law of God.

The apostle reminds us: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (1 Timothy 1:9–11).

In his fervent, final appeal, Paul writes: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and **doctrine**. For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1–5, emphasis supplied).

### **As Christ's followers—those who are to reflect His image fully—what shall we teach?**

Before His ascension to heaven, Christ gave to us the gospel commission in trust:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

"In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work but gave them their message. Teach the

people, He said, 'to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach. 'The law and the prophets,' with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ's name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom.

"The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power. Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; when they repent, He imparts to them His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy. He would have His servants bear testimony to the fact that through His grace men may possess Christlikeness of character, and may rejoice in the assurance of His great love. He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until the human race are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges as His sons and daughters."<sup>11</sup> *R*

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- <sup>2</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 396.
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- <sup>4</sup> *Special Testimonies on Education*, pp. 6–8.
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- <sup>6</sup> *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 266.
- <sup>7</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 972.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 1104, 1105.
- <sup>9</sup> *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 168–173.
- <sup>10</sup> *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 30, 31. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>11</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

# Love Your Enemies

**P**acifism is growing in popularity. On February 15, 2003, the largest anti-war rally on record took place in 600 cities worldwide with over 5 million people participating. With various political or social agendas in mind, many groups around the world demand nonviolence and pacifism as solutions to all of society's ills. In the United States this became common after the anti-Vietnam war protests of the 1960s. Decades earlier, Mahatma Gandhi had introduced the world to the fact that groups can successfully overturn mighty powers through peaceful means.

Yet long before antiwar or pacifist movements became popular or were seen as a way to accomplish revolutionary changes in society, the Man of Galilee introduced a radical principle—not merely for political gain nor to liberate one society from another—but as a fundamental principle instilled in the core of the human being. Jesus said: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Ancient Roman imperialism was known for such horrifying atrocities

that prophecy could only describe that fourth beast as one who was “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it” (Daniel 7:7). In the midst of the most terrifying system of government that Satan could devise to remove all personal liberties in any form possible, the apostle Paul could state: “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink” (Romans 12:20). What a radical position for him to have taken as a citizen of that oppressive regime which provoked constant revolts and caused fugitives to seek a place where those despotic hands could not reach. Even the apostle who penned these words met the Roman executioners’ ax for daring to live contrary to its principles of imperialism. How is it possible for peoples to exist in this wicked world with such a radical teaching?

## Messianic principles

While the Jewish nation was looking for a temporal Messiah to demolish the power of the despotic Romans, Jesus came in such an unexpected way that the Hebrew people could not tolerate “this” kind of Messiah. Can you imagine the message referred to previously that He gave in the Sermon

on the Mount? “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:43, 44). What was the reason for such a radical message? “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same” (Verses 45, 46). This message is so unnatural that one would think such a characteristic to be more godly than human. This is why Jesus finished the chapter comparing the human with the divine: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Verse 48).

“The manifestation of hatred never breaks down the malice of our enemies. But love and kindness beget love and kindness in return. Although God faithfully rewards virtue and punishes guilt, yet He does not withhold His blessings from the wicked, although they daily dishonor His name. He allows the sunshine and the showers to fall upon the just and the unjust, bring-

ing alike worldly prosperity to both. If a holy God exercises such forbearance and benevolence toward the rebellious and the idolatrous, how necessary it is that erring man should manifest a like spirit toward his fellow men. Instead of cursing those who injure him, it is his duty to seek to win them from their evil ways by a kindness similar to that with which Christ treated them who persecuted Him. . . . The children of God should represent the spirit that rules in Heaven. Their principles of action should not be of the same character with the narrow, selfish spirit of the world. Perfection alone can meet the standard of Heaven."<sup>1</sup> Instead of talking about the bravery of war, the Lord declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Instead of fighting for one's rights, He said, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52). This was in the context of Peter cutting off the High Priest's servant's ear in defense of the beloved Master. Instead of congratulating him for his courage, Jesus approached the enemy and "touched his ear, and healed him" (Luke 22:51). What kind of a Messiah heals those whom you hurt and gives the victory back to the oppressor?

Why did this surreal Messiah act like this? He explains that it is because "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). The way He thinks is different from the way we would normally think. Why? "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

This new kingdom is not founded upon the mastery of one nation over another, or of one class over the other, or even the master above the slave. These unique principles of government were shown in the life of this humble Galilean teacher: "Ye know

that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25–28). Can you imagine a government designed for service to its citizens rather than for the citizens to serve that government? Can you imagine a religion in which the leaders are real ministers to their congregants rather than having the members to serve their pastors? This is the real essence of genuine Christianity.

If such principles were actually followed, every citizen would respect the rights of all others, because the great principle of love would be the foundation of all society. This very characteristic would identify one as a Christian, unlike remote doctrinal dissertations that seem to have no effect in the personal life. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Is this the guiding principle in our life? Are we Christians?

### The Old Testament foundation

The idea of nonviolent actions against oppression by individuals or governments is not just something that was introduced by Jesus in the New Testament. Something is a principle when it crosses all barriers of time and culture. The Messiah we worship, "Jesus Christ," is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). It is because of His unchanging nature that humanity has not been permitted to annihilate itself or be completely destroyed by a loving God. "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6). This characteristic is shown in the fact that while we were His enemies, He devised a way to save humanity. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10). This eternal love actually

recreates itself in us if we are willing to accept it. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Can you imagine a victory through death? A victory through doing good to the enemy? This is exactly what Christ came to show us by His death.

When Moses began his mission of deliverance, he did not understand this principle of divine government, causing him to have to flee from his home and family. But in the school of Christ He learned meekness—to control his passions and exercise a fatherly care over all who needed his help.<sup>2</sup> By submitting to God's leading in his life, Moses learned the kind of trust and faith in the Lord that made him God's man even under very trying circumstances. Can you imagine the people of Israel standing before the Red Sea locked in with a steep mountainous ridge on one side and a pursuing Egyptian army on the other? Evaluating that dire situation from a merely human perspective would lead Moses to realize that no engineering feat could devise a way of escape. No experience as a general of the most powerful army in the world was sufficient to prepare a nation of slaves to defend themselves in such a short time against the well-trained, well-disciplined, highly armed forces of Egypt. The only thing humanly possible to save their lives was to negotiate some kind of peace treaty that would likely return the majority into slavery. Such a treaty would likely involve promoting the leaders to be taskmasters over their own people, with limited privileges above the common man or even putting the leaders to death.

Moses learned that if a task is attempted that is humanly possible, then there is no need of God, no need of divine aid. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:13, 14). There was no preparation for war. There was only an attempt to prepare the people to trust in God alone without the use of human weapons—and without any human method of crisis

management. The entire Egyptian army was destroyed without a single act of war from the Hebrew people. How?

### Unique weaponry: Hornets, harmony

God promised the Hebrew nation: "I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send **hornets** before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee" (Exodus 23:27, 28, emphasis supplied). Can you imagine a powerful army marching against an unarmed nation that does not even have any armor ready for such an encounter? As they are ready for sword and shield to meet flesh and bones, a small hornet with a fierce sting somehow manages to come under the helmet of the most powerful of giants and injects him with the natural arrow of the Lord. How many soldiers would remain on the battlefield after being attacked by hornets?

This is why God gave specific commandments to His nation of believers regarding preparation for war. "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deuteronomy 20:1-4).

This was specifically seen in the experience of Jehoshaphat when the choir led in the front lines to meet the enemy. "And when he had consulted with the people, [the king] appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever" (2 Chronicles 20:21). And what happened when they began to

sing instead of throwing spears and arrows? "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten" (Verse 22). They never lifted a finger in acts of warfare.

So why did the Hebrews fight with physical weapons? Unbelief. (Hebrews 3:19.) "It was not [God's] purpose that [the Israelites] should gain the land by warfare but by strict obedience to His commands."<sup>3</sup> Because their protection as a nation depended on their trust in God and not in chariots or human armaments, they were commanded not to have any such weaponry in stock. Deuteronomy 17:16. Because they trusted in the power of the Creator of the universe, they were not even to live in fear for the fierce neighbors they had. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).

Can you imagine such a nation on earth today? When all the nations are spending a significant part of their budget for their defense, can you imagine no defense budget? How much good can be done to such a nation that fully trusts in the power of the Almighty to be their defense!

### The principle of love

This principle of love to our Creator and to our neighbor manifests itself through respect to all the commandments of our God—and we have to go deeper than just the superficial outward act. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). We cannot say we are Christians if we nurture hatred towards anyone that differs with us in belief, creed, views, nationality, tribe, or culture. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10). So what happens when we have enemies? "But

I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:27-31). And what is the end result of such an attitude? "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Verse 35).

This love is contagious, it is reciprocal. When it is received by an individual, it is immediately reciprocated to others. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11). **This is how the true people of God are to be recognized.** Jesus explains, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35).

Does this type of love manifest itself in neglecting reproof? No! "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:5, 6).

"While we are required to be Christ-like toward those who are our enemies, we must not, in order to have peace, cover up the faults of those we see in error. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, never purchased peace by covering iniquity, or by anything like compromise. Though His heart was constantly overflowing with love for the whole human race, He was never indulgent to their sins. He was too much their friend to remain silent while they were pursuing a course which would ruin their souls—the souls He had purchased with His own blood."<sup>4</sup> "If

we would represent Christ's character by obeying [the] requirement [to love one another], there would be a great change in evildoers. Many souls would be convicted of their sinfulness and converted through the impressions made upon them by our refusal to resent the evil actions of those controlled by satanic agencies. . . .

"Let us daily represent Christ's great love by loving our enemies as Christ loves them. If we would thus represent the grace of Christ, strong feelings of hatred would be broken down and into many hearts genuine love would be brought. Many more conversions than are now seen would follow. True, it will cost us something to do this."<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusion

As a Methodist minister in New Zealand, Alex Norman Macdonald purchased from a door-to-door canvasser the book *"Thoughts From Daniel and the Revelation"* by Uriah Smith. After reading the book, he was convinced about the Sabbath and many of the prophecies. But on one issue he was not about to let his guard down. He had already left the Church of England, because they required all their adherents to support the government in acts of warfare. As a conscientious objector, he could not make such a vow, so that was why he had joined the Methodists. Now he was glad to find that the Seventh-day Adventist believers in New Zealand also agreed with his foundation beliefs.

Soon afterward Alex went to study at the Adventist college in Avondale, New South Wales, in Australia. World War II broke out while Macdonald was at Avondale. During World War II, Australian Adventism faced a great dilemma as it began changing from the conscientious objection position it had always maintained—now to switch to active participation in military service. The leadership of the school announced that they would be active participants in warfare. Their choice profoundly affected Alex's entire career and his denominational affiliation.

Young Alex was very perplexed as to what he should do. The leaders convinced him that he needed to fol-

low the advice of the church leadership out of respect for religious authority. Reluctantly, he accepted their advice and registered for military service. However, he could not get himself to sign the registration papers. A couple of days later, the college president came to him, showing him that he had not signed the document. When Alex explained his position and said he would not sign, the president abruptly signed in his behalf and hurried off.

While Alex awaited with dread the call to join the war effort, in the college library he came across a book called *SDA's in Time of War* by F.M. Wilcox. It gave the history of the Adventist position regarding military service from the beginning of the church's history during the time of the American Civil War all the way through the changes made during World War I. Alex realized then that his original belief was not only the right biblical position but also the historical position of Seventh-day Adventists. He determined in his heart that if called to military service, he would be faithful to God's word.

Eventually, the government did indeed give Alex his conscription notice and called him to national service for God and Country. When he refused, he was taken before the high court of Australia. After a long interrogation, the judge began asking him some direct questions:

"Young man, what would you do if three Japanese soldiers were about to attack your mother?"

Alex replied, "I would tell the five policemen to catch them."

The judge demanded, "What five policemen?"

He replied, "What three Japanese soldiers?"

Finally the judge asked, "What would you do if you saw a Japanese soldier in front of you?"

"It all depends," said the young man. "If he were hungry, I would give him something to eat. If he were thirsty I would give him something to drink."

Finally the judge asked the Army General, "Do you want this man in your battalion?"

The General reassured the judge with a definite "NO!"

So, the judge suspended the hearing and let Alex Macdonald alone for the rest of the war.

Soon afterward this young man became more acquainted with a group he was at first fearful of—and later learned to dedicate this entire life to—the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement.

## What about us today?

What principles are guiding you in your life? We are not part of national protests for justice nor do we attend any of the anti-war rallies that influence legislative councils and the direction of nations. Rather, our work is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He instills the principles of divine love into human hearts. "The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually and must regenerate the heart."<sup>6</sup> Before we can be effective in reaching the heart of the ungodly, our own hearts need to be regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can truly manifest that godly love for the unlovable, the goodness of divine love for our enemies, and the power of a divine-human Saviour to die for our enemies. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Have you given your life to Jesus so that you can be a real reformer and hasten the coming of our Saviour? *R*

## References

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 224, 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> *The Upward Look*, p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> *Medical Ministry*, p. 254.

<sup>6</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.

# Triumph Remnant

*I*n the long years of their journey and their conflict with the forces of evil, the remnant have been sustained by God and empowered by the great promises of His Word. In the darkest moments of their experience, in times of hardship, and often under persecution, the Lord has helped and supported His children. Miraculous providences have testified of the Lord's power to support, save, and deliver the faithful. With these remarkable deliverances behind them, the remnant people have looked to the future, and by faith have awaited the great event that will mark the end of the journey of the church militant, and the beginning of their triumphant experience: "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

## Final events in the experience of the remnant

The story of the seven periods of the church from Ephesus to Laodicea reveals a great truth: Even with the descriptions of coldness and apostasy that occurred at certain times, the church recognized by God was the remnant made up of faithful souls. "From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against

His people."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, throughout the history of the Christian church, the faithful remnant are the people whom the Lord has acknowledged as His, and for whom He has special care.

It is interesting to note the final events that mark the triumph of the remnant people. These events point to the wonderful operation of God in the experience of His people. They can be highlighted in the following order:

### 1. The latter rain and the commencement of the time of trouble

"I . . . saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were



looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still' (Revelation 22:11). I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence."<sup>2</sup>

"A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.

" 'Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain' (Zechariah 10:1). Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But

***"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action."***

man's co-operation is required. God's work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst' (Matthew 18:20). The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.

"But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favorable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we

pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised."<sup>3</sup>

The Lord's messenger describes the wonderful scene of the latter rain as it is received in its fulness: "Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the Word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lighted with the heavenly influence."<sup>4</sup>

This will mark the beginning of the transition that the remnant undergo from being in the militant phase to the triumphant phase. The church appears "as the morning," "clear as the sun," and "terrible as an army with banners" (Song of Solomon 6:10). Thus, the church members who have been faithful and obedient will become the triumphant remnant.

"Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven. Souls that were scattered all through the religious bodies answered to the call, and the precious were hurried out of the doomed churches, as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before her destruction. God's people were strengthened by the excellent glory which rested upon them in rich abundance and prepared them to endure the hour of temptation. I heard everywhere a multitude of voices saying, 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus' (Revelation 14:12)."<sup>5</sup>

“ ‘At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.’ . . .

“ ‘The commencement of that time of trouble,’ here mentioned, does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel.”<sup>6</sup>

Under the power of the latter rain, the world will be enlightened with the glory of God. The knowledge of the truth will be brought to all hearts. The inhabitants of the world, from north to south and from east to west, intelligently make their final decision between the commandments of God and the commandments of humans. The mark of the beast will be pressed upon the world. (Revelation 13:14–17.)

Yet “none are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.”<sup>7</sup>

The apostate ecclesiastical powers of Revelation will influence the civil powers to violate the rights of conscience and impose their dogma. The inhabitants of the planet shall make their decision, and they that decide for the truth will join God’s remnant people and—even under the threat of the penalty of death—will remain

with the Lord. After extending the last opportunity of salvation to the world, the Lord will close the time of probation for unrepentant humanity.

## 2. The close of probation

“When the third angel’s message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received ‘the latter rain,’ ‘the refreshing from the presence of the Lord,’ and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received ‘the seal of the living God’ (Revelation 7:2). Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, ‘It is done;’ and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still’ (Revelation 22:11). Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; ‘the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven’ (Daniel 7:27), is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.”<sup>8</sup>

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before

the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven.”<sup>9</sup>

## 3. The time of trouble and the plagues

The time of trouble will be tremendous and terrible. Yet, as the prophet Daniel assures us, God’s “people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1).

The Lord will execute judgment upon this world—and horrible plagues, unmixed with mercy (Revelation 16), will begin to fall. God will shield His remnant people so that the plagues that fall on the wicked shall not affect His children. The prophet Isaiah declares, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain” (Isaiah 26:20, 21). The chambers mentioned by the prophet represent the protection of Christ and His angels in behalf of His people during the great time of trouble.<sup>10</sup>

While the saints will be under the care of God, the wicked will suffer the effects of the terrible scourges: “Solemn events before us are yet to transpire. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; vial after vial poured out one after another upon the inhabitants of the earth.”<sup>11</sup>

“The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy, and the seven last plagues are to be poured out. . . . The bolts of God’s wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors, there will be no period of respite until the end.”<sup>12</sup>

## 4. The second coming of Christ

The return of Christ in the clouds of heaven marks the end of earth’s history and the beginning of eternity for the triumphant remnant. It is the end of the world—the end for the lovers of sin who have despised the invitation of mercy and salvation.

“Light is gleaming upon the clouds above the mountaintops. Soon there will be a revealing of His glory. The

**“ ‘Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain.’ Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it.”**

Sun of Righteousness is about to shine forth. The morning and the night are both at hand—the opening of endless day to the righteous, the settling down of eternal night to the wicked.”<sup>13</sup>

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the [righteous] dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:52, 53).

In that great day the separation between the two groups of humanity will occur. The difference between the righteous and the wicked will be clearly discerned. The children of God will meet the King, and the wicked will be destined to suffer eternal damnation.

### The remnant in eternity

John the Revelator describes: “I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:1, 2).

At the coming of Christ, the remnant people of God will be taken from the four corners of the earth. In the company of Christ and the angels, the redeemed will cross galaxies, admire stars, and behold other worlds. They will contemplate wonders never before seen by human eyes as they begin to enjoy eternity.

When they reach heaven, they will be welcomed by the King into the heavenly kingdom. Jesus will declare: “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in” (Isaiah 26:2).

The Lord’s messenger describes: “I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. In the same manner the angels brought the harps, and Jesus presented them also to the saints. The commanding angels first struck the

note, and then every voice was raised in grateful, happy praise, and every hand skillfully swept over the strings of the harp, sending forth melodious music in rich and perfect strains.

“Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in. Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere. Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, ‘I beheld the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally.’”<sup>14</sup>

Human language is unable to describe the glory of the celestial kingdom. Things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have risen to the imagination of men and women are the things that God has prepared for the redeemed host. Even if we would try to imagine eternity, the reality is far beyond our finite comprehension. In the paradise of God, there will be no tears, because the Lord will wipe away every tear from their eyes. The pain that has marked the human experience will no longer be felt. “And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity” (Isaiah 33:24).

None will have any physical defects, because humanity will regain its original perfection. Death shall have no more dominion over the race. Creation will be in perfect harmony, as it was in the beginning. Animals will be in subjection and humanity at peace with one another. “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 65:25).

Besides all this, the perpetual presence of God will be with His children. The prophet of Patmos said: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God

himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Revelation 21:3). The whole universe will be free of sin, sinners, and the originator of sin. “No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation. No tempter is [in the Eden school], no possibility of wrong.”<sup>15</sup>

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

“The Lord desires to see the work of proclaiming the third angel’s message carried forward with increasing efficiency. As He has worked in all ages to give victories to His people, so in this age He longs to carry to a triumphant fulfillment His purposes for His church. He bids His believing saints to advance unitedly, going from strength to greater strength, from faith to increased assurance and confidence in the truth and righteousness of His cause.”<sup>17</sup>

At the closing of this Week of Prayer, my desire is that you may be saved and enjoy the privilege to dwell with Christ and the redeemed host throughout the endless ages of eternity. So, make today the decision to be among God’s faithful remnant people. Accept Christ as the Lord of your life and live for Him. Amen! ❧

### References

- <sup>1</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.
- <sup>2</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 71.
- <sup>3</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 508, 509.
- <sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 126.
- <sup>5</sup> *Early Writings*, pp. 278, 279.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86.
- <sup>7</sup> *Evangelism*, pp. 234, 235.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 613, 614.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490.
- <sup>10</sup> *Maranatha*, p. 270.
- <sup>11</sup> *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 426.
- <sup>12</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 182.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 632.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Story of Redemption*, p. 413.
- <sup>15</sup> *Education*, p. 302.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.
- <sup>17</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 407.

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# The Pilgrimage of the Remnant

*The chronicles of Scripture glance  
Across the sands of time  
Depicting days in which we live  
As known for too much crime.*

*As in the hour of troubled Lot,  
Great wickedness abounds.  
Iniquity is brash and bold,  
And prideful lust resounds.*

*The saddest part is that the ones  
Who claim to serve the Lord  
Are busy, busy with so much  
And Laodicean-bored.*

*The cares of life, the struggles keen  
Harass us all the while.  
Yet Heaven's eye is merciful  
And measures every trial.*

*So, still there are a few that seek  
That better, heav'nly land!  
With eyes affixed on Christ the Lord  
They form a pilgrim band.*

*This band uplifts by hands divine  
That comfort from above.  
The company that follows Christ  
Is known for Christlike love.*

*In righteousness they must be found;  
Repentance taught from youth  
Guides every growth in principle  
To stand firm in the truth.*

*Their hearts are touched by godliness;  
Their soul and spirit stirred  
By moral precepts clear and sure  
As found in God's own Word.*

*And when the crisis comes on all,  
The crowds will understand  
Those principles that were upheld  
By God's own pilgrim band.*

*These honor God with all their heart  
And thank Him for His grace.  
Now soon they'll see their Saviour dear  
And meet Him face to face.*

*Lo, vict'ry's song will then be heard—  
A glorious theme to sing  
As joyful pilgrims gaze on high  
To see their awesome King.*

*The weary tears have all been shed,  
The sly temptation braved.  
The pilgrim band will then rejoice:  
That remnant shall be saved!*

—B. Montrose