

Behold, He Cometh

A Discussion of the Solemn Truth of the Unexpectedness of
Christ's Coming, a Warning Against the Temptations
and Dangers That Confront the Church Today,
and an Appeal to Make Ready to Meet
God Face to Face

by

FRANCIS D. NICHOL

Scanned and Prepared By
Maranatha Media
www.maranathamedia.com

REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION

TAKOMA PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Copyright, 1938, by
Review and Herald Publishing Association
(All Rights Reserved)

This Book
Is Affectionately Dedicated
To My Wife

Foreword

AS we turn the pages of this author's new book, we hear again the Saviour's voice, saying to us, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Every chapter calls out that message to me. There are here to be found very quiet and powerful and comforting lessons for those who are looking for the soon coming of Christ. Here are the old-time advent admonitions set to the measure of the new time. It is as though the Saviour drew us aside and spoke for this very hour, "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

We have joined the company of "them that look for Him." When the glad day comes, we must be still with the waiting ones.

"When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come,
To call Thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?"

We sing our hope and determination to be found standing with them then, even as we rejoice in the fellowship of those of like precious faith now,—

"I love to meet among them now,
Before Thy gracious throne to bow,
Though weakest of them all;
Nor can I bear the piercing thought,
To have my worthless name left out,
When Thou for them shalt call."

In this book, "Behold, He Cometh," I am admonished anew that the time of the final roll call of names

Behold, He Cometh

is close at hand. As I read, I am not, first of all, a preacher calling others to prepare; I am one of the believers, face to face with the certainty that suddenly, at some fast-hastening moment, my name must be called in that solemn service of the day of His preparation that began many years ago in the heavenly sanctuary, when "the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

"Be ready," the Saviour calls from that place of judgment. My heart answers, Make me ready; keep me ready. It has done me good to go over again in these pages the things that make for readiness in Christian experience.

For our time, especially, is the lesson of the parable of the ten virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom. When the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Others were getting ready, but were too late. How came some to be ready?—They were ready all the time; they kept ready. Be ready now—that is the lesson for us; and keep ready every day and every hour, by His grace. He who says, "Be ye also ready," is the One who is able to make us ready and keep us ready.

The difference between sins confessed and forgiven, and sins unconfessed and unforgiven, makes all the difference—an eternity of difference—in that day.

"Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that great day;
O wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!"

W. A. SPICER.

Author's Preface

THE first reason for writing this book is the conviction that not only is the day of the Lord near and hastening greatly, but the end is nearer than most of us realize. This thought is developed in the opening chapters. Too often have we passed by the scriptures that warn of the unexpectedness of the advent, leaving such texts to unbelievers. But the warning is primarily to the church, with all that such a warning implies.

The author also believes that in these last days we are confronted with new temptations more subtle than any in past ages. These temptations are discussed in some detail because in being made aware of them we may most surely be placed on our guard.

It is no light thing that we should be awaiting the return of our Lord. Too often we affirm our belief in the advent without sensing that it means we are expecting the day soon to come when we shall meet God face to face. What is required of us in order that we may look, unafraid, upon the face of God? The author believes that it requires a certain very clearly defined course of holy living, a complete separation from the world, a growth in grace day by day. Therefore this book not only warns of the unexpectedness of the advent and of the temptations that confront us today, but seeks to offer suggestions on living successfully the Christian life.

Behold, He Cometh

Throughout our history we have trained ourselves to scan the distant horizon constantly to discern the signs that show the Saviour's coming near. And we should be even more diligent in discerning the signs today. But we need also to be looking within our own hearts to see if we are ready for the great and awful day of the Lord. The author sends this book forth, not with the desire that any one should be less attentive to the conditions about him in the world which fulfill prophecy, but with the hope and prayer that the reader may more fully sense the need of a far-reaching and complete preparation of heart to meet God. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

F. D. N.

*Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.,
April 15, 1938.*

Contents

IN AN HOUR THAT YE THINK NOT - - - -	15
IN AN HOUR THAT YE THINK NOT—CONCLUDED - -	31
THE MAGNITUDE AND AWFULNESS OF THE ADVENT -	43
ARE YOU READY TO STAND BEFORE GOD'S JUDGMENT BAR?	53
DO YOU LIVE AS IF IN GOD'S PRESENCE? - - - -	63
THE PRICE OF HOLINESS—SEPARATION - - - -	71
SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD AS TO MARRIAGE, BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS, DRESS - - - -	83
SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD AS TO DIET, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION - - - -	93
TEMPTATIONS PECULIAR TO OUR DAY—THE MOVIES -	103
TEMPTATIONS PECULIAR TO OUR DAY—RADIO, STYLES, SPEED AND TENSION - - - -	113
TEMPTATIONS PECULIAR TO OUR DAY—AUTOMOBILE, MODERN LITERATURE, TREND TOWARD THE CITIES -	125
THE DANGER OF SPECULATING ON UNFULFILLED PROPHECY - - - -	137
THE DANGER OF WANING CONFIDENCE AND DECEPTION -	147
THE DECEPTION OF APOSTASY - - - -	155
AIDS TO MAINTAINING FAITH IN THE ADVENT MOVEMENT	167
PRAYER—AN AID TO GROWTH IN GRACE - - - -	175
BIBLE STUDY—AN AID TO GROWTH IN GRACE - - -	185
ATTENDANCE AT DIVINE SERVICES—AN AID TO GROWTH IN GRACE - - - -	195

Behold, He Cometh

LIBERALITY—AN AID TO GROWTH IN GRACE	- - -	205
MISSIONARY WORK—AN AID TO GROWTH IN GRACE	-	215
DO YOU WORK FOR GOD AS IF YOU BELIEVED THE END NEAR?	- - - - -	225
DO YOU LIVE AS IF YOU BELIEVED THE END IS AT HAND?		235
ARE YOU HAPPY OR FEARFUL AS YOU FACE THE FUTURE?		245

*In an Hour That
Ye Think Not*

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

IF you are a normal Seventh-day Adventist, you find great spiritual satisfaction in the fact that it is possible to know when Christ's coming is near, even at the door. But there is also an element of unexpectedness in the advent. No man knoweth the day or the hour of our Lord's return. More than that, you can actually be put off your guard so that you remain in a state of unreadiness, as a result of certain viewpoints you may hold. Let us illustrate what we mean:

There is always the danger of falling into the attitude of mind that your membership in a movement raised up of God in these last days, will in itself protect you against being overtaken by the advent as by a thief in the night. Probably no Adventist would give open expression to such a view. Indeed, if it were presented to him in this formal fashion, he would repudiate the idea. But after all, our lives are very largely colored, if not altogether controlled, by feelings and thoughts, attitudes and viewpoints, that run deep in our lives and that may never come to the surface for close scrutiny.

Or perhaps you may have felt that even though your membership in the church is not in itself a full assurance of your being ready for the advent, the

Behold, He Cometh

miraculous outpouring of God's Spirit which is to come before the end, will certainly arouse you to a full consciousness of the nearness of the end, and enable you to make ready.

Again, you may be like many others in the church who have given almost exclusive attention to the texts which assure us, for example, that we are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief in the night. You have rested assured that these Scriptures settle fully for us the whole matter, and that without any possible doubt you will be waiting and rejoicing to meet our Lord when He comes.

Or again, you may be one of those church members who have done a little speculating on unfulfilled prophecy, with the result that you are really putting off the day of the Lord. To illustrate, you may have been reading about the exceedingly calamitous conditions that are to develop, and of an oppressive religious law that is to go forth. Then you have looked about you in the world and declared that while all is not well in our troubled earth, nevertheless, with the most careful kind of reasoning, the only proper conclusion is that it will take quite a while for conditions to shape themselves for the fulfillment of these last signs. This, of course, is but another way of saying that quite a time must elapse—with an emphasis on the *must*—before our Lord can return.

Finally, you may have read Christ's declaration concerning the preaching of the gospel in all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end comes, and then you have looked out over the earth,

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

have seen the magnitude of the task still to be accomplished, and have concluded that the day of the Lord must be a considerable distance in the future.

We believe that in all this reasoning there are very grave fallacies. Let us examine them:

First, this vague idea that membership in the advent body is a kind of insurance against being surprised by the last great day. We would be the last to minimize the importance of belonging to the movement, of definitely allying ourselves with the cause that God has blessed and enlarged through the years. Nevertheless, we are certain that church membership in itself is no protection against our being surprised by the return of our Lord. The ancient Jewish church affords a tragic illustration of how a people could be set apart in the world as God's own, could know the prophecies by heart, and still not be ready for the advent of the Lord. When Jesus came as a babe in Bethlehem, He was rejected by those who expected Him to come.

Of equal mistakenness is the feeling that the pouring out of God's Spirit in the latter rain will of itself be such a miraculous display of God's power that we cannot fail to be aroused by it and thus placed in readiness for the advent. The servant of the Lord declares: "Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it."—*Review and Herald, March 2, 1897.*

It was possible for the ancient Jews to witness

the most remarkable manifestations of the working of God's Spirit through Christ, and yet not sense that indeed they were witnessing a display of God's power. There must be clearness of spiritual eyesight if spiritual things are to be discerned.

But even more dangerous is the error of concentrating on one group of texts that deal with the advent, failing to take home to our own individual hearts the meaning of other and equally inspired declarations concerning the return of our Lord. In fact, there are some texts that we are prone to give away to the Gentiles round about us. God intended that those texts should really first of all be appropriated by our own hearts. Indeed, most of the texts of Scripture are intended for those within the church, rather than for the unbelieving world.

And what are some of these texts that are addressed to us within the church, that speak of the danger of our being taken by surprise? One of the most striking is the declaration of our Lord at the conclusion of His portrayal of the signs of the end: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke 21:33-35.

The warning here is to "yourselves," and not to the unbelieving world. It was not needful for Christ to say that there was danger that the day of the Lord would come upon the world unawares. That is taken for granted in the sweeping declaration, "For

as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." The warning is to "yourselves," lest that day likewise come upon you "as a snare." Christ's whole prophetic portrayal of the events that will take place at the end of the Christian Era, ends on this warning note, "Take heed to yourselves."

The suddenness, the unexpectedness, involved in the advent, is vividly portrayed in the Master's statement concerning the times of Lot and of Noah: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30.

We often discover in this only one parallel between these ancient times and the last days; namely, that these last days are to be filled with iniquity even as were the times of Lot and Noah. But there is a further, and we believe an even more obvious, parallel that the Master seeks to present, and that is the parallel of suddenness and unexpectedness. At one moment the antediluvians were drinking, marrying wives, eating; the next moment destruction was rained upon them. At one moment in Sodom they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building;

Behold, He Cometh

the next moment fiery destruction broke upon them. Then follows immediately the declaration, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

This passage is a commentary on Christ's statement, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke 21:35. And while this arresting parallel between ancient times and our last days need have a terrifying effect on only unbelievers, nevertheless the very fact that the final day will come as suddenly as destruction came upon the antediluvians and the Sodomites, only gives further point to Christ's warning, "Take heed to yourselves."

Continuing our consideration of texts we sometimes overlook, we turn to the words of Paul in the fifth chapter of his first epistle to the Thessalonians. Here is a passage that has been the center of discussion between Adventists and other churchmen. Whenever we present the doctrine of the nearness of the end, and claim that we can know something definite about it, critics are wont to quote these opening sentences in the chapter:

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. 5:1-3.

With something of a triumphant air, our critics have said in substance this: "See, the apostle Paul declares that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

in the night; therefore why claim that we can know so definitely about it?"

Our reply has always been that they have failed to read down as far as they should in the passage, and we then proceed to read the fourth verse: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." Having quoted this further statement of Paul's, we rest satisfied that we shall of a surety not be overtaken by that day as by a thief in the night.

But neither our critics nor we have read quite as far as we should in order to reach the climax of Paul's reasoning in this passage. Paul was a very logical man, and had a way of coming to a very definite point in a discussion. If we fail to read through until we come to the "wherefore" or the "therefore" which introduces the conclusion, we are likely to miss the real thought he is endeavoring to present. Reading on, we come to his conclusion, in the sixth verse: "Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

Now it is evident that Paul is striving to make clear to the Thessalonians that while the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night to the unbelieving world, and while it is not necessary that we be thus overtaken, nevertheless, if we are to be free from this danger, we must not "sleep, as do others." Or we might restate it this way: Though we are children of light, that in itself will not protect us, nor will belonging to the company who have been taken out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, ensure us against sur-

Behold, He Cometh

prise. There is something that we personally must be actively doing. We must be awake, we must be watching, and we must be sober.

Even more subtle is the error of reasoning that a considerable period of time must yet elapse before world conditions can fulfill certain prophecies, and that therefore the day of the Lord is not as near as might otherwise be believed. There are several mistakes in such reasoning.

First, it is a mistake to conclude, from studying the prophecies, that the conditions in our world for some period before the end must be so dreadfully calamitous and chaotic as to be altogether different from the state of affairs in any previous time. It is true that the Bible does predict times of trouble, and of calamity, and of distress in the last days. Yet there are equally plain predictions that despite the troubles of the last time, there will be a sufficient measure of calm and routine carrying on of business over the world to make things appear to be going on as of yore. It is when men cry, Peace and safety, that sudden destruction comes upon them, the apostle Paul declares. Peter tells us that in the last days scoffers will inquire, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2 Peter 3:4.

These scoffers would not be out boldly proclaiming their skepticism unless there were some measure of outward calm and routine to the activities of life. It is in this connection that we think again of the statement of Christ concerning the times of Lot and

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

Noah, in which He declared that everything appeared to be the same as in the days before Noah's or Lot's warning voice was raised.

We think also of the comment of the Spirit of prophecy on the destruction of Sodom: "The bright rays of the morning seemed to speak only prosperity and peace to the cities of the plain. The stir of active life began in the streets; men were going their various ways, intent on the business or the pleasures of the day. The sons-in-law of Lot were making merry at the fears and warnings of the weak-minded old man. Suddenly and unexpectedly as would be a thunder peal from an unclouded sky, the tempest broke."—*"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 162.*

Couple with this the inspired statement concerning the very last hours of earth's history. "Come when it may, the day of God will come unawares to the ungodly. When life is going on in its unvarying round; when men are absorbed in pleasure, in business, in traffic, in money-making; when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security,—then, as the midnight thief steals within the unguarded dwelling, so shall sudden destruction come upon the careless and ungodly."—*"The Great Controversy," p. 38.*

Note the remarkable parallel between these two passages. Both describe the appearance of things going on the same as when the fathers fell asleep, and then sudden destruction coming. Note further that the final sudden destruction will come not only upon the ungodly, but also "upon the careless," which

Behold, He Cometh

evidently must describe those in the church who are not in readiness.

But some one may ask, "Is it not true that the Bible very explicitly pictures most troublesome times in these very days in which we are living? Therefore, how do these quotations from the Spirit of prophecy fit with this picture from the Bible prophets?" The answer, we believe, is not hard to find. And that introduces us to the second mistake in connection with the tendency to put off the Lord's coming because we think world conditions in general have not yet developed as the prophets foretold they would before the end. There is something about human nature that makes us very adaptable. For a moment we can be shocked by a terrible scene or by terrible news, but after a little we become accustomed to it. We lose the sense of shock; we take it as a matter of course.

Therein lies the explanation, we feel, for this apparent contradiction between the picture of a troubled world and the appearance that things are going on the same as when the fathers fell asleep. We can witness today the most astounding happenings in our world, and yet find ourselves taking them as a matter of course. We read of plans for another world war so dreadful that it will mean the blotting out of civilization, and yet we fold up the morning paper and go on to our work with scarcely a quickening of the heartbeat. We read of the most amazing inventions that are revolutionizing the habits of the world, and we consider them quite the order of the day, simply matter-of-fact happenings. Yet a short generation ago any one of the numerous matters that

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

are now taking the front pages of our papers, would have startled men to the depths of their souls.

The third mistake is the failure to take properly into account that most remarkable characteristic of our day, the speed with which things occur. Overnight there can take place in our times, changes as astounding as formerly would have called for centuries of development. It is in our day that we have witnessed the sudden change of the form of government in different nations, with an entirely new philosophy of the state in its relation to men and economic conditions.

Not the least impressive of the lessons that we ought to have learned from the World War, is the suddenness with which it happened. In the spring of 1914 all things seemed to be going along the same as when the fathers fell asleep. Then suddenly one morning we awakened to the realization that the whole world was aflame. Might not the next world struggle begin as suddenly, or even more so? And the upheaval that would take place after even a brief period of such world conflict could conceivably set the stage for the fulfillment of almost any prediction.

This is not an attempt to prophesy, but to show the folly of those who would proceed to delay the Lord's coming by what amounts to prophesying; namely, by their endeavoring to tell just how long a time must elapse before certain things can take place in the world.

But what justifies any of us in feeling that because world happenings in the past have taken a certain period of time to come to fruition, therefore such

happenings in the future must take an equal length of time? The scoffers in the last days are those who declare that all things continue as they were since the fathers fell asleep. In other words, they proclaim that there is uniformity in the operation of things in our world, so that we can estimate the future by what has happened in the past. But just such reasoning as that must logically rule out the phenomenon of the second advent itself. No long course of events in our world would of itself bring the climax of the second advent, and the destruction of our world. That great event must necessarily require the intervention of God. Therefore, when we think of the world happenings that are to set the stage for the final climax, we must always include in our thinking the supernatural intervention of God in world affairs. That means that we cannot measure time as the skeptics would measure it. We must allow for the quickening of pace in our last days in harmony with the inspired declaration that a "short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Rom. 9:28.

The Spirit of prophecy is very emphatic as to the quickening of pace in the last days, and of the unexpectedness, therefore, of great happenings and the final climax. Here are two short quotations which illustrate:

"Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning."—*"Special Testimonies," Series A, No. 6, p. 59.*

"Plagues and judgments are already falling upon

the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones."—*"Testimonies," Vol. IX, p. 11.*

As we have already stated, it is a rather startling fact that our very present day is marked with the most astounding quickening of pace. The past is no measure of the future. A short time ago there was published a large three-volume work by a group of university professors on the subject of the social and other changes that have taken place in the world in the Christian Era. We quote two sentences from the preface to the opening volume. These sentences come as the climax of a description of the unexpected and quite contradictory things that have been taking place in the last twenty-five years:

"If anybody had seriously predicted in 1913 a small fraction of what has actually taken place since, he would have been branded then as mad. And yet what then appeared to be absolutely impossible has indeed happened."—*"Social and Cultural Dynamics," Pitirim A. Sorokin, Vol. I, p. ix, Preface.*

The servant of the Lord has something very definite to say about the danger of putting off the advent through wrong views of prophecy. "The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the

Behold, He Cometh

Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. The fearful warning of the prophecy is addressed to every soul. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one's interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand."—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 108.

The startling fact of the suddenness with which great events now take place, provides the final and complete proof that we are altogether unjustified in putting off the advent because the stage is apparently not yet set for the fulfillment of certain prophecies.

*In an Hour That
Ye Think Not—Concluded*

In An Hour That Ye Think Not— Concluded

“He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” Rom. 9:28.

CLOSELY related to the mistaken view of the nearness of the advent discussed in the preceding chapter, is the attitude that some are tempted to take as they read Christ's declaration that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matt. 24:14. That is a wide, sweeping statement. It covers all the earth. The devil, whose business it has always been to cast doubt on the word of God, seeks through such a statement as this to cause some in the church to feel that surely the day of the Lord must be a great distance away, because the task yet to be accomplished is so great.

But let us look into this matter carefully. Our warning message may be viewed as consisting of two main parts: first, a presentation to the world of the inspired picture of present conditions and coming events; and second, an appeal to men to make ready for the day of the Lord. Now certainly unless men believe the first half of our message, they will see no point in accepting the second half. There was a time not many years ago when, superficially speaking, the

Behold, He Cometh

world seemed sufficiently calm and prosperous, and the popular ministry was predicting increasingly ideal conditions, so that it was often very difficult for us to convince men that all was not well with the world.

But today all this has changed. It is not very hard to persuade men that something is the matter with our old earth, something very much the matter. Nor is it difficult to persuade them to believe that the future holds even worse troubles and calamities for us. Indeed, we can use the statements of the most eminent of world leaders to paint a picture as gloomy and as annihilating as any painted for us by the Bible prophets. In other words, the first half of our warning message is being preached for us today on every side, by statesmen, newspaper writers, and almost all who are commentators on world affairs.

This is a phenomenon of our present time, a fact which has a bearing on the presentation of our message. We believe that it is one way whereby the Lord is setting the stage to bring all men finally to a definite decision, one way or the other, for eternity. The very fact that men's hearts are today failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth, enables us to give very much greater momentum to the preaching of the second half of our message—telling men how to make ready for the day of the Lord.

There is another force at work in our world that has a bearing on this question of the world-wide preaching of the gospel. We refer to the remarkable increase of knowledge in our day. We are likely to

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

look at this phenomenon in the narrow sense; namely, that knowledge has been increased by the Lord in our day simply to provide a remarkable sign of the times. Most certainly it is intended of God to be such a sign, but the Lord always has a deep purpose in everything He does in our world. With this thought in mind, let us look into this matter of the increase of knowledge.

The most distinctive feature, we believe, that characterizes the extension of our knowledge of nature's laws, is the elimination of time and space as controlling forces in our world. Until our very present days, the element of time dominated all of men's plans. It took just so long to travel a certain distance. The passing centuries hardly quickened the pace in any way. But now our world is a very small world. Men go around the earth in a few days. We think nothing of traveling the broad distance of a continent three thousand miles wide. China and Japan, with their terrifying war, seem very near to all the rest of us today. The speed of travel, the telegraph, the radio, and countless other inventions have all worked to eliminate time and space from our reckoning. In other ways also time has been quite eliminated. Formerly, for example, it was a slow, laborious procedure to print an edition of a book or of a paper. Now the presses can roll them off at an incredible speed.

One of the chief results, therefore, of the quickening of pace in our world, by inventions and discoveries, is the much more rapid dissemination of news over the world. We are neighbor to every other

people today. What happens in India this morning we read in our noon edition of the papers over the world. If the ruler of some nation makes an important speech, it is not at all unusual to have an international radio hookup, so that the people of the world can hear the message that the king or emperor or president, or whoever he may be, desires to give.

Now certainly these remarkable facts have a direct bearing on the question of the preaching of the gospel. Shall we be so lacking in faith as to doubt that when the Ruler of heaven and earth decides that all men must come to a final decision, He can use all these marvelous agencies for the giving of a final decisive appeal to men? Far be it from us to enter the dangerous realm of prophesying, or attempting to say just how God will finally make His appeal to all men's hearts. We insist only that in view of the facts here presented, there is no ground for doubt that the Lord can do a short work in the earth.

Now let us carry this reasoning a bit further. We not only have this marvelous increase of knowledge which helps us to see how quickly a final appeal can be made to men's hearts, but we also have a vast amount of Adventist literature scattered over the world. Here is a silent force constantly working for the fulfillment of that statement by Christ in Matthew 24:14, concerning the preaching of the gospel in all the world. It works so silently that sometimes we do not take it as fully into our reckoning as we should.

Throughout the whole history of this denomination there have been pouring from our presses, in

ever-increasing volume, leaflets, tracts, papers, booklets, and large books, dealing with the truths for these times. A few years ago we gathered together the best figures available concerning the total volume of pieces of literature circulated during the history of this movement. Confessedly, such an estimate cannot claim a high degree of accuracy. The error, however, is on the conservative side. We estimated that approximately 2,000,000,000 pieces of literature have been printed and distributed during our history. Doubtless many of these pieces of literature have long ago been destroyed, but we are equally certain that vast amounts are still found on library shelves in the homes of men and women over the whole earth. We are constantly impressed with this fact as our missionaries and other workers make their contacts here and there. Indeed, the Spirit of prophecy has given us the heartening assurance that a great amount of this literature has not been destroyed, that these seeds of truth are lying in many homes, waiting only the final outpouring of God's Spirit to spring forth into life.

Here is the picture presented in the Spirit of prophecy:

"Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of

Behold, He Cometh

men. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

"The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

In the light of this passage we can very clearly see that the world-wide preaching of the gospel will be brought to a speedy climax by the miraculous working of God's Spirit in a manner quite out of the ordinary. We should remember always, when we are tempted to put off the day of the Lord, that the temptation comes from the enemy of all souls, and that the strength of that temptation lies in the tendency of the human heart to forget that God can arise and do great things when the fullness of time comes for the carrying out of His divine plans.

We are living very much nearer the end than most of us seem to believe. The great signs to which

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

the pioneers of this movement looked forward by faith, we witness fulfilled about us today. Even the most incredible predictions, that tested the faith of the pioneers to the limit, that tested indeed the faith of some of us a short score of years ago, have now come to pass. The events which fulfilled them are matters of current record. We witness a world hurrying on at an amazing pace. We witness the most unexpected events happening almost overnight. It is far easier today than ever before to understand how literal are the declarations in the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy concerning the suddenness and unexpectedness of the last events, and of the advent itself.

And by the same token we should be able to see today that Christ's warning to us must be taken most literally, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:34.

This is no time to be saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming." Every sign in the world about us gives the lie to such a skeptical declaration. *Something* is coming upon our world,—that all statesmen and world commentators believe,—something disastrous and overwhelming. How tragic if we, the people of God who are commissioned to tell men the meaning of coming events, should find ourselves in such a day as this, hesitant and uncertain, doubting whether we have followed the sure word of prophecy.

We have not followed cunningly devised fables. We have more reason than ever before to believe that

Behold, He Cometh

we have preached the truth to men. The mere passage of time since the pioneers began their preaching, has not provided any reason for doubt, even though time has been extended longer than we thought for. The reason is that the passing years have only intensified the evidence and painted a still sharper picture in confirmation of the prophecies.

It is high time that we awake out of sleep. Drowsy, routine living of the Christian life will not prepare us for the suddenness of the last great event, the coming of our Lord. We are commanded to watch. We are commanded to pray always in relation to this solemn truth. We are warned against the "cares of this life." Here are exhortations and warnings that belong peculiarly to us. How easy it is to allow the cares of this life so to consume our hours and our energy that we do not have time for meditation and prayer, or for the study of the prophecies of God in relation to events about us. How easy it is to become rather reconciled to the world in which we live, and to feel that after all it is not such a very bad world. How easy it is to be drawn into the amusements and the whirl of activities that fill the waking hours of the multitudes. Christ warned against the danger of "surfeiting, and drunkenness." These words include a great deal more than might at first appear from the text. We can be drunk with the pleasures of the world, with its various activities, as well as with strong drink. Our senses can be benumbed by too-close fellowship with those who are of the world, even as they can be benumbed by liquor.

Making ready for the day of the Lord is no light

In an Hour That Ye Think Not

business. It is not something we can care for incidentally. If we are to be ready for the return of our Lord, we must in our lives give new meaning to His exhortations to watch and to pray and to be sober.

*The Magnitude
and Awfulness
of the Advent*

The Magnitude and Awfulness of the Advent

“Every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?” Rev. 6:15-17.

DESCRIBING the end of the world, the apostle Peter declares: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” 2 Peter 3:9-11.

Our church membership may be roughly divided into four groups as regards the second advent. The first group consists of those who, because the Lord has not come as soon as they thought He ought to come, have begun to doubt the fact of His coming, have begun to question very seriously whether or not the Lord will ever come. That group need to remember that though the Lord is long-suffering and

waits for men, nevertheless "the day of the Lord *will* come." It is a certain, definite, unqualified declaration. No matter what there may be to cause the Lord to wait in patience and in long-suffering, God's great day finally will come. Nothing will stop it; nothing can prevent it. It is irresistible and sure and certain. "The day of the Lord *will* come." This is the answer to all those who, speculating in their own minds, and making their own deductions, conclude that, because the Lord did not come as soon as they thought He ought to come, He will doubtless not come at all.

Then there is the second group. When asked with regard to the coming of the Lord, they say: "Of a surety I believe it. I don't doubt for a moment that the Lord is going to come. I have never questioned the hope of the coming." But that group do not sense His coming as something near at hand and hasting greatly. The second advent is an abstract thing to them. They say, "Yes, I believe the day of the Lord will come," but when you inquire into their attitude and their expectations, you find that they have no realization, no thought, of the *nearness* of it.

Then there is the third group. They believe not only in the fact of the second advent of the Lord, but also in the *nearness* of that event. There are many devout in the church who, day by day, think upon the signs and events of the soon coming of Jesus Christ, who search earth and sea and sky for signs of the fulfillment of God's promise to come again and take us home to Himself.

But there is also a fourth group. They not only

sense the nearness of Christ's coming, but also have a real conception of the *magnitude* of that event, of all that is involved in it. Too few of us, we fear, are in this group. *Yet we must all enter it if we would be ready for that final day.* The whole subject of the advent is too vague in the minds of most of us, even though we believe Jesus' coming is near.

The grave danger that confronts us in connection with all spiritual truths is that we shall think of them merely as so many doctrines, as so many abstractions, instead of sensing them as stern, solid realities that are to confront us. That danger presents itself in its most intense sense in connection with the doctrine of the second advent. We discuss this doctrine so frequently that to many of us it has become commonplace, at least to the degree that we do not meditate as we should upon the magnitude of it.

If we truly sensed just what will take place at the second coming of our Lord, it would take away from us that smug spiritual self-satisfaction that is likely to permeate the large majority of us who think that somehow because we are Seventh-day Adventists all will be well with us at Christ's appearing.

The second advent has first of all a physical magnitude inconceivable to the mind of man. As a sort of prelude to the great event itself, there come the seven last plagues,—those terrible scenes, those dread actualities that will finally occur right on this earth. Grievous sores, water turned to blood, great darkness upon the seat of the beast, a terrible earthquake, fearful hail, the sun scorching men with fire,—all these are but a preface to the awful event itself. If we

should conjure up in our minds all the most fearful catastrophes that we can recall, whether earthquakes, fires, pestilences, or famines, we would obtain but a faint suggestion of what is soon to take place right here on this earth and before our eyes.

Think of that dreadful catastrophe that occurred years ago in San Francisco—fire and earthquake. Think of Vesuvius pouring out its stream of death upon men and women. Think of all the dreadful things that have occurred. Add them together, multiply them to the greatest degree possible, and you have something that pales into insignificance in comparison with what will take place when God finally arises to shake terribly the earth.

Some time ago we read a story written by a scientist regarding what would take place if an earthquake shook New York City, and all the inhabitants of those great skyscrapers suddenly stampeded and rushed out. It was estimated that they would be three deep down there in those narrow streets, and the large majority, even if they escaped from the buildings, would be trampled to death. The Scripture says that the great cities of the nations will fall when the final dreadful earthquake takes place.

The second coming of Christ is so real and so definite that it means the shattering and shaking of the earth beneath our very feet. As the tragedy of sin draws to a close, the inanimate earth is convulsed. For six thousand years this earth has had to bear up under the burden of sinful, blasphemous men who have defiled it and defamed the name of Him who created it.

There is only one event in the history of man that can even faintly compare with this; and that is the deluge,—that fearful flood of water that rushed over the whole earth, sweeping everything before it, and causing even Satan himself to shudder for fear his own destruction was at hand! But the flood was as nothing compared with what will take place at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The flood was a physical manifestation. At the second advent, not only will the cities fall and the earth shudder under our feet, but there will also be a moral and spiritual manifestation, the like of which has never been witnessed before in all the six thousand years of earth's history.

At the second coming of Christ the veil that has separated us from the invisible spiritual world is to be removed. The veil that has kept our physical eyes from observing the dreadful controversy that has raged between the forces of good and evil, will be parted. This whole earth in those last closing hours will be given over to the powers of evil. That has never occurred before in the history of the earth. When God's Spirit is finally withdrawn from the earth, evil spirits will have full control.

No one can adequately visualize what will occur on this earth when Satan is finally given control. Evil angels will work supernatural wonders. They will go forth to the kings of the earth to gather them for the last terrible battle, and as a climax, Satan himself will impersonate Jesus Christ! Think of it—Satan incarnate! The eyes of men and women will actually look upon the face of him who has been the

Behold, He Cometh

leader in this fearful rebellion through all the history of mankind. That is what is to take place in connection with the second advent of Jesus Christ. Yet that is but a prelude, for man is not only to look upon the face of Satan himself, but to look upon the face of God.

It is impossible for any of us to realize even faintly what is comprehended in the statement that we shall look upon the face of God Himself. The heavens will part, and as all the world gazes upward, every eye will look upon the face of Jesus Christ, and upon the faces of countless thousands of angels. That sight in the heavens will cause men far more terror than the sights that will have been confronting them on the earth, dreadful as those sights will have been. For it is when evil men gaze upon the face of God that the scripture is fulfilled which says: "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:15-17.

To hide them from what? Not from earthquakes, not from the terrible things on the earth. They are even hoping that the rocks and mountains will fall upon them, because they want to be hid from *the face of God*. All the great men, all the brave men, all the men who have faced battle, who have braved

The Magnitude and Awfulness of the Advent

the most terrible things that this world can present,—those men fall in terror simply at the sight of God. How awful, then, is that event! The reason they fall is that the terrors of conscience take hold upon them—the terrors of an accusing conscience before God. The guilty man realizes that he is guilty, hopelessly guilty, and that nothing is hid from the eye of God—*nothing*.

"The Great Controversy," describing that dreadful event, says that from time to time the dark clouds in the heavens were parted, and the sun came out for a little while in all its brilliance, as if it were the accusing eye of God searching out men and women everywhere. Nothing is hid from the brightness of God, a brilliance so great, so blinding, that it finally consumes men.

There are a few faint comparisons in the history of the world. There have been a few occasions when the brilliance of God has broken forth to a certain extent. At times an angel has come down with great power. Think of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane when all the rabble fell back, as if they were dead, because of one momentary flash of glory. Then at the tomb of Christ, when one angel came down, all the hardened Roman soldiery fell back as dead. Afterward they quaked so at the very memory of it that they could scarcely make their way to the city to tell their story. If one lone angel, reflecting power and light from the presence of God, could make all the Roman soldiery fall back as dead, what will it be when God Himself and all the innumerable hosts of heaven stand fully revealed?

Behold, He Cometh

We have another illustration. At Mt. Sinai God came down as a consuming fire on the top of the mountain. But even that was very circumscribed. No man saw the face of God then. But limited as was that scene, the people were terror stricken, and pleaded with Moses, You speak with us, and tell us the words of God, "but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Of the million or two people present around that mountain, God found only one man, Moses, to whom He could say, "Come up to Me into the mount." And the record is that Moses gat him up into the mount, and the top of the mount was like a consuming fire. Moses lived in such close association with God that, unafraid, he walked up the side of that mountain into the consuming cloud, and talked with God.

Are we ready to go up into the mountain? If we had been back there with Moses, could it have been said of us as it was of Moses, that we gat us up into the mountain, that we were not terror stricken at the sight, that we were so conscious of walking with God and communing with Him day by day, that we longed for closer fellowship and closer communion with Him? Or, to put it in another way, are you, who are reading this book, ready to look upon the face of God? *Are* you? There are going to be some who *will* look upon the face of God, and will not flee in terror. There are some who are going to lift up their heads and look upon the face of God, and rejoice that their redemption draweth nigh. We repeat, *Are you* ready to look upon the face of God?

***Are You Ready to
Stand Before God's
Judgment Bar?***

Are You Ready to Stand Before God's Judgment Bar?

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10.

IN that great day when God is revealed, no one will bring forth the hackneyed excuse: "Well, I am as good as the rest of the people in the church." It will not be of any use then to be simply as good as the rest. It will not give any consolation or any relief at that moment to sense that though *you* cannot look upon the face of God, neither can others. We marvel that it brings any satisfaction even now to mumble out the words, "I am as good as the rest of the folks in the church." God knows nothing about such standards, such relative ideas of holiness. Heaven knows only one standard, and that is the standard of righteousness and purity that will enable men and women to look upon the face of God when He comes.

We ought to do less looking at one another, less looking to this side or that, and more looking up toward heaven, ready to gaze unafraid upon the face of God. When we really sense what will confront us in the day that Christ is revealed in all His glory, we shall lose all our smug satisfaction. We shall no longer compare ourselves one with another, because in that hour man will be as nothing, and man's

standards will be as nothing before God. Every man will stand in the presence of God as if there were not another man on the face of the earth. Are *you* ready to look upon the face of God? *Are you?*

Now there is a subtle danger that presents itself because of our being members of the church. We have shed the worst outbreaking vices. There is an absence of the outward manifestations of vice and iniquity and waywardness. We are thus in very great danger of thinking that we are quite holy, quite free from iniquity—as touching the law, blameless. There is danger of forgetting that in the last great day our standing before God will be determined not simply by whether we have shed the outward manifestations of sin, but by whether we have purged the soul of evil desires and emotions.

Our standing before God will bear a very real relation to the victory we have obtained over the so-called little sins. We say “so-called,” for when the great light from God bursts upon this world, we shall discover that there are no little sins. The brilliance from God’s throne has a tremendous and appalling magnifying power that will make a little sin stand out and enlarge itself until it envelops us and swallows us up in condemnation! The man or woman who believes that Christ is soon coming has no time to look about him critically to see how the other members of the church are living. Instead, we need to turn our attention upon our own hearts, and look within to be sure that *we* shall be able to stand when the Son of man is revealed.

But there is another question that should be asked:

Are you personally ready for the verdict to be pronounced, “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”? Are *you* ready for that verdict that knows no revocation, that verdict that knows no reversal, once it has gone forth from the omnipotent God?

“The day of the Lord *will* come.” The close of probation *will* come. The end of this world *will* come. There is a certainty to it, there is a surety to it, there is a finality to it, that admits of no doubt. There is an end to the long-suffering of God. There is an end to the forbearance of God. There is an end to this earth with all its iniquity. Then he that is unjust, will be unjust still; and he that is holy, thank God, will be holy still. Never through all eternity will that decision be reversed. Are you *ready* for that verdict. *Are you?*

Can we conceive in our minds of a time when there will be no more confessing of sin, no more forgiveness of sins? Today, how simple is the means for obtaining release from sin! If we have made blunders, if we have stumbled in the way, we can fall to our knees, knowing that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. But do we truly realize that the day is soon coming when there will be no more confessing of sins, when men will fall down on their knees in terror and despair, but will receive no forgiveness of sins before God? Not that God is hard, not that He is waiting for an opportunity to bring damnation upon men, but simply

that men through their own hardness of heart and their constant following in the ways of iniquity have so steeled their hearts against the pleadings of the Spirit that nothing would avail by continuing probation's hour.

And this danger of driving away the Spirit is just as real for Seventh-day Adventists as for anybody else in the world. It is possible for us to cherish some little sins within our hearts, that will finally drive away the Spirit of God just as surely as if we should commit the worst outbreaking sin.

Peter says that "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

That word "scarcely" has an almost paralyzing effect upon one's heart. "If the righteous *scarcely* be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Is it not possible that we sometimes take this matter of salvation altogether too lightly? We act at times as if there were not very much involved in this matter of a change of life, and a preparation of heart to live with God. We need to get a larger realization of what is involved in the divine work of changing us and making us ready to live with God.

As we study into this subject, another question demands an answer: Are you ready to have every secret thing of your life brought to light? *Are you?* There is nothing hid that shall not be revealed in that day. Everything will come to light, save that

which is blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ. All our deeds, all our acts, everything about us through all our life, will stand open and revealed before God in that last dread hour. Of the youth who read this page, we ask: Are *you* ready to have every secret act and deed and thought of your life stand out in panorama before God? Fathers and mothers, are *you* ready to have every act, every thought, every plan of your heart, stand revealed? There are going to be some in that day who, having availed themselves of the blood of Jesus Christ, will stand forth there with only the good revealed! But there will be multitudes who will stand before God with every secret thing, evil and vile, revealed to the universe.

We went to the Census Bureau once, and the guide took us down into the vault where they keep all the old records. Those records run back to the very first census in 1790. We saw there the records of one family after another. The records of a century and a half ago stood out plainly before us. The ink had not faded. Every one was listed, and every now and then we saw in the margin a special notation about this individual or that, placed there by some enumerator, in those early censuses. We remember one such marginal note. It told how a woman there listed was the widow of a certain general of George Washington's staff, which general had been detailed to capture the traitor, Arnold. There it was for all future generations to gaze upon,—the record of this woman, her relationship to this general and his relationship to this other man, a traitor. After all these years the record still stands for any one to read.

Behold, He Cometh

When we went down aisle after aisle and saw those ponderous tomes, hundreds and hundreds of them, with the names and records of all in this wide land of ours, just faintly we began to sense what it means that God has kept a record of every man, every woman, and every child upon this earth. And the record has been kept with an unerring, unswerving accuracy.

We went at another time to the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. They took us through one of their bureaus where they keep the records of all the criminals apprehended in the United States. There are millions of fingerprint records. Some of them, of course, are duplicates; a criminal may have his fingerprints taken several times in different cities. But each time the card carries a new notation of crime. There is filing case after filing case, room after room—millions of these records of men. We asked: "Can you really tell who's who through all these records?"

They smiled at our ignorance, and brought out a great list of cards that had come in to them just that day. They showed us some of those cards, and said, "Within forty-eight hours we shall send back a report on every one of these cards to the different police offices of the country, and tell them whether or not the men whose fingerprints are marked down on those cards, have any record here at our headquarters."

We said, "Show us how you do it." "It's very simple," they said; "show us your hand." They marked out all the little lines and whorls and pyra-

Are You Ready?

mids, and other markings that are found on one's finger tips. "Those markings are distinctive for every individual," they explained, "there are no two alike." In other words, we carry our signature right on our very finger tips. Everything we touch, every act we perform, as it were, is marked indelibly with a signature that is not duplicated by any one else. The criminal problem is not one of identification, but of prosecution.

As we looked upon those rows and rows of files where they keep millions of cards, and saw with what unerring accuracy they check up on this man and that, dimly we sensed how God, who assigns to every man a recording angel, can confront us with an unerring record.

Heaven has no problem either of identification or of prosecution, for there are unerring accuracy and unerring justice in all the movements of God. The long-suffering of God does not vitiate, does not neutralize, and does not hold back forever the divine justice. It is high time we sensed more fully some of the sterner qualities that belong to religion, in order to have a more definite realization of the awfulness of sin. Now is the time that God is long-suffering. That time is going to close in the very near future.

But we must go further with our inquiry. Have you, by the grace of God, developed a moral fiber that will enable you to stand when persecution breaks upon the earth? There is soon to come a time of trouble the like of which has never been in the history of the world. Have you, by the grace of

Behold, He Cometh

God, developed moral qualities that will enable you to stand firm if you are ridiculed for your faith, or cast into a dungeon, or put under torture? Or are you faithful and good simply because no particular test has been placed upon you? Which is it?

There is a question that troubles us greatly at times. We have asked this question of our own heart: Is my goodness, my propriety, my walking circumspectly, due simply to the good environment—the helpful brethren and the counsels and the prayers of those round about me? Or is my walking in the right way due to an indwelling power from God that personally directs my steps? Sometimes we say, “How strange and terrible that Brother Blank suddenly fell from the ways of righteousness when he moved away from everybody, to another city!” The truth is that he had the seeds of weakness in him before he ever moved away. He had been kept moving along in right paths simply because he had little temptation, while he was with good associates, to turn to one side or the other.

If today we stand for right principles only because we are supported by God-fearing associates, we are preparing the way for a tragic fall when such associates are no longer about us.

***Do You Live
as if in God's
Presence?***

Do You Live as if in God's Presence?

"As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand."

1 Kings 18:15.

*"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?
who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"*

Isa. 33:14.

IN the book of Ezekiel is found a symbolic account of men going forth with swords, and of a man with a writer's inkhorn in his hand sealing certain ones so that they would not be destroyed by the executioners. The distinguishing characteristic of those sealed was that they sighed and cried for the abominations that were done in the land. To make Ezekiel's solemn symbolism have present-day meaning, we would ask these questions: Do you sigh, or are you quite at home in this present world? Do you cry at the sights of evil that present themselves, or do you laugh? Do you really *hate* iniquity?

Does it cause you any great shock to see or hear something evil? Is there anything in your nature that recoils against it, or do you feel that you are moving along in your element when your eyes see these sights and your ears hear these sounds or when you read the details of this crime or that? Does the thought of the horror and evil and corruption of the world bring forth from your inmost soul a sighing and a longing to be moved out of the world? Does it? If it does, there is a mark to be placed upon

Behold, He Cometh

you, for you do not belong to this world. If there is nothing in your being that recoils against the evils of the world, there will be nothing in you that will respond to the holy atmosphere of heaven, for these things work by opposites.

■ We need to give more serious consideration to the command of God to come out of the world. We preach this command to those not of our faith, and we think that once they are physically inside the church, the command stops. True, the work ought to be completed by them, but as an actual matter of experience, we know that there is a great deal of the world within a great many inside the church. The question therefore is: Have you really come out altogether? Are you different in every way from the world, on every question that affects moral and spiritual standards? Is there anything different in your speech, in your dress, in your habits of life, that would draw a very clear, sharp line between you and the world?

It seems a very great trial to many to be different from the world now. They say it makes them stand out sharply from everybody else. They are sensitive about it. Some apparently would rather blend with the world, fitting in with things as they are, than to stand out different, and pure, and unique, and even odd, if necessary. Doubtless it is a trial to be odd. But in the last day, the terrible day of chaos and catastrophe, when it will be hard to distinguish friend from foe, it will bring a feeling of great satisfaction to the soul to know that our dress, our speech, and everything about us is so different from

Do You Live as if in God's Presence?

those of the world that the gathering angels will have no difficulty whatever in finding us!

■ We can imagine the Saviour's pointing to these people the world calls odd, and declaring to the gathering angels: "Those are the ones who do not belong to the world. Look at them; there is nothing about them that fits with the world. Listen to their speech; it does not belong to this world. Look at their dress; it does not countenance the lax standards of this world. Their habits are not those of this world. Angels, go forth and gather them out; I have a better world for them."

In the terrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew there was one thing that protected men from destruction, and that was a white handkerchief tied around the arm. On that horrible night any man could move about safely through the streets as long as that unique distinguishing mark was upon him. Thank God, it is possible for us, by His grace, to bear the cross of uniqueness and peculiarity now, if necessary, in order to walk safely and calmly in the presence of the destroying angels at the last great day!

The ultimate objective in the plan of salvation is to transport us bodily, literally, out of this world, away from evil associations, into another world and into associations with holy beings. Do we really sense that? That is the ultimate end of the plan of salvation, to place us in a new environment, where all is happiness and holiness. If we do really sense that, then we would ask: Do you feel that you are ready to associate with holy beings? Are your thoughts such that they would be in tune with the thoughts

Behold, He Cometh

of heavenly beings? If so, then you are ready for the ultimate goal that God has in mind in the plan of salvation.

■ The question might be asked in a little different form: Do you today live in the presence of God, so that when you literally come into His presence you will feel at home? *Do* you? There is a thrill in reading the words of Elijah to Obadiah: "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand." Elijah walked ever as if in the presence of God. That was why he was ready to be lifted out of this world, translated, to live in the presence of God.

"Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." If we are to go through to the full with the plan of salvation, we must sense that it means to live day by day as if in the presence of God, conscious that God is with us, conscious that His angels are with us, although our physical eyes see them not.

Do you meditate often upon the glorious promises that God has given us in His Book, of how "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"? 1 Cor. 2:9. Do you think upon those promises enough so that a holy discontent fills your soul? Those who are ready to meet God will be those who have so meditated upon these glorious promises that they are discontented with the things of this world.

These are only a few of the questions that we may very properly ask our own hearts, as we think of the tremendous events involved in the second advent of Jesus Christ. When we are studying this subject

Do You Live as if in God's Presence?

of the second advent, and searching land and sea and sky for signs of His coming, we ought to take part of the time to turn our eyes within, and search our own hearts to find whether there is evidence *there* of *preparedness* for that day.

■ Perhaps some one says, "When you speak like this, it causes me uneasiness. I tremble with fear in my soul." But is it not better for us to tremble now, and to be calm when the Lord comes? Is it not better to weep over our condition now than to weep at the last day? It is far better for us to bow the knee and pray to God for help now, than to bow the knee and pray for the rocks and mountains to fall on us and hide us from the face of God when He comes. Far better is it for us in deep contrition of soul to bow ourselves before God now, and be able then to lift up our heads and rejoice because our salvation draws near. It is a question of which seems to us to be less painful—anguish of soul now or at the final day.

The prophet Joel, after depicting the dreadful scenes of world destruction, presents the long-suffering and mercy of God: "Turn ye even to Me with all your heart." God does not wish to destroy any one. The Lord is gracious and long-suffering. Who knows but He will return and leave us a blessing? Surely now is the time for us to turn our hearts completely to God, that He may turn completely to us at that last day, and lift us up out of this earth.

Could any tragedy be more terrible than that we who name the name of Seventh-day Adventists, who have spent our means and energies to prepare men for the coming of the Lord, should be forced, at that

Behold, He Cometh

last great day, to flee from His presence? To think that Jesus has gone away to prepare mansions for us, and that when He comes to take us home to those mansions, He may find some of us fleeing in terror from His face! There are loved ones who have gone to their rest, cheered by our promise that we will be waiting to greet them again on the resurrection morning. Is it possible that they may rise on that great resurrection day, only to see us fleeing in terror to the rocks and mountains! But that is what is going to take place for some at the last great day.

We believe it very worth while sometimes to think upon things that are sober and serious, even tragic and terrible; for the Bible has a great deal to say about sorrow and horror and woe. The day of God draws on apace. It is nearer than any of us think. We ought to pray God to help us to sense the magnitude of this mighty event that is about to come upon us. That is what we need.

“The morning cometh, and also the night.” The night of the world is upon us. The day of God’s grace and light is about to close, and darkness and eternal destruction are about to descend upon the earth. The night cometh, and *also* the day. For those who have here walked in the presence of God, for those who have basked in the sunlight of His love, for those who have lived in the brilliance of His promise, for them the day cometh. Their path grows more and more bright as they move toward that day when they will be ushered into the brilliance of the Son of God. Is it the *night* or is it the *day* that draws on apace for you?

***The Price of Holiness—
Separation***

The Price of Holiness—Separation

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” 2 Cor. 6:17.

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Heb. 12:14.

TO our father Abraham, God declared: “I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Gen. 17:1. This command echoes down through the centuries to all the children of Abraham. In varying language the thought is expressed. God commanded the children of Israel through Moses: “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God.” Lev. 20:7. Moses re-affirmed this thought when he exhorted the Israelites: “Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” Deut. 7:6. In similar language the apostle Peter describes spiritual Israel: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9. Many similar scriptures might be quoted.

Even as Israel was called out to be the special people of God in ancient times, so are we who name the name of Christ in the Christian Era called out. Paul writes of Christ, “Who hath saved us, and called

Behold, He Cometh

us with a holy calling." 2 Tim. 1:9. Our whole manner of life, our "conversation," as the King James Version expresses it, is to be holy. Listen to the exhortation of Peter:

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:13-16.

In his second epistle, Peter describes the very time into which we are moving, the day when God will bring fiery judgments upon the earth. As a climax to this stirring description, he writes: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:11-14.

Paul appeals to us to dedicate our whole lives, our very bodies, in holiness to God: "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." Rom. 12:1.

There is to be nothing about our lives unholy, whether it be in practices that would defile the body, or thoughts and desires that would defile the soul. If we would meet God in peace, there must be holi-

The Price of Holiness—Separation

ness in every feature of our program of living. Christ declared: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Matt. 5:8.

If we would have God dwell in our hearts even while we dwell on this earth, we must be the possessors of two choice qualities, purity and humility; for the great God who dwells in the high and holy place declares that He dwells also with him "that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Isa. 57:15. There are many who feel free of any conscious desires that are impure, but who may be cursed with pride and self-esteem. The Bible standard of holy living, let it be repeated with proper emphasis, calls for both purity and humility.

The test of our readiness to dwell with God is whether God now dwells with us. When pride and self-esteem control, they so shrivel the heart that there is no room for God. What a world of troubles would be removed from our churches and our homes if we were possessed of humble and contrite hearts! And what a glorious foretaste of heaven and the fellowship of God would be ours as a result!

When our brethren and sisters see us day by day, can they say of us, as the Shunammite woman said of Elisha, "I perceive that this is a holy man of God"? 2 Kings 4:9. Others can often see in our lives defects to which we are blind. Especially can they see whether we possess humility. Would we not be dealing with a matter of primary importance in our spiritual lives if we prayed more for humility and purity, for holiness, without which no man shall see God? Indeed, ought we not to pray that our lives

day by day may be such that others will be constrained to holy living by our very example?

When the final destiny of all has been sealed, there goes forth the edict: "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." Rev. 22:11.

In that day there will be no middle class. There will be no halfway holy people; at least the Lord has no separate classification for them. They must be numbered with the "unjust" and the "filthy." There are many today who would be shocked to be considered as belonging in such evil company. They have done nothing strikingly evil or vile, it may be true. Yet they are numbered with the wicked, the corrupt, who are lost. If we were called upon to pass judgment, we might, perhaps, judge otherwise, for man looks on the outward appearance. But God, who looks on the heart, judges differently. David realized the need of holiness within when he prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51:10.

If we would be accounted holy when that irrevocable edict goes forth, not only must we be free from overt acts that are unholy, from words that are impure, but there must be fulfilled for us the prayer of David: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer." Ps. 19:14. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. We must have the same abhorrence of evil.

What a strange spectacle our world presents in an otherwise perfect universe! Of the many worlds that God has created to glorify His name and obey Him faithfully, only one has rebelled. Everywhere else in the vast expanse of God's great heavens are found perfection, purity, harmony, and peace. In this one little spot are found corruption, rebellion, bloodshed, and death. No such condition was ever witnessed before sin came into existence, and no such condition will ever occur again, when sin has run its course in this earth.

But there is something even more striking than this, more amazing to all the inhabitants of other worlds; and that is that in this little earth, apparently so completely given over to evil, are found men and women who are definitely separated from the corrupt multitude, and whose habits of life are in sharp contrast to the habits of those about them. How poor creatures on this earth, who have wallowed in the dark depths of corruption, can be lifted up to walk on the tablelands of light, and can develop, as they walk, characters that will fit them for a better world—this must indeed be the occasion for never-ceasing wonder to the heavenly hosts. For great as may be the intelligence of created beings in other worlds, none can fully understand how the power of God as revealed through the gospel, is able to work such mighty miracles.

We who walk in the ways of truth and light amid a world of corruption, are truly "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." 1 Cor. 4:9. The guiding of mighty suns and solar systems on an un-

Behold, He Cometh

deviating path through trackless space, is rightly said to reveal the glory, the handiwork, and the power of God. But His greatness is even more marvelously displayed in His guiding safely through the trackless wastes of this sinful world those believing souls who put their trust in Him.

In behalf of His disciples Christ prayed to His Father: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." John 17:15. Translation, the taking of us out of this world, may truly be considered a great miracle; but it is an even greater miracle that God, while allowing us to remain in this world, should protect us from its evil. Translation, which will literally separate us from this world, is but the climax to God's plan for us, whereby we are even now to be separate from the world in spirit and practices.

The separation of translation gives us the key to the program that God has for the lives of all those who are His children on this earth. We do not belong to this world, for it is given over to sin. We are pilgrims and strangers here. We seek a better country, a heavenly. Our thoughts, our conversation, are in heaven. Our allegiance is there.

In untangling the involved tragedy of sin, God has not seen fit, immediately upon the conversion of each man, to lift him out of this world of iniquity. Instead, He has permitted us who have become His loyal subjects to stay on this rebellious earth for a period of time. We cannot here turn aside to explore the reasons why God should have followed this plan. We are concerned with the fact that He has, and with

The Price of Holiness—Separation

the course of life that should be ours in the light of this fact. While God has left us in this evil world, He has given to us His promises of protection, in fulfillment of the prayer of Christ that His followers should be kept "from the evil." We are assured that where sin abounds, grace does much more abound; that with every temptation there is prepared a way of escape; that when we resist the devil, he will flee from us; and that in every battle we can come off more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

But if we are to claim these promises, we must follow the course that God marks out for us. For the Bible is filled, not only with the promises of God's protection for His children, but also with admonition and counsel as to the course they should follow in order that His promises may be fulfilled for them. We are not to tempt the Lord by a presumptuous course. His promises of protection apply while we walk along the highroad toward heaven. We forfeit those promises when, contrary to the plain admonitions of His word, we turn down a bypath to join with the sinful multitude below. Separation from the world is the distinctive mark of those who have given their allegiance to God.

It is this word "separation" that explains a very great deal of the Scriptures. When God called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, He commanded him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Gen. 12:1. Out from Ur of the Chaldees, that populous center of pagan worship, out from relatives, friends, and neighbors who were

given over to idolatry and who would have a strong hold upon him, Abraham was bidden to depart.

When God called the descendants of Abraham out of Egypt to establish them in the Promised Land, He gave repeated commandment through Moses that they should be separate in every way from the peoples round about them, that they should make no covenant with them nor intermarry with them, lest they be lured away into evil practices. They were to be a separate and a holy people. (See Deut. 7:2-7.)

One of the most fearful judgments of God was that upon Nadab and Abihu. It was intended to show God's strong abhorrence of the mingling of sacred and profane things. The Israelites could not fail to see in this judgment something more than the sin of these two men in respect to one particular feature of divine service, the holy fire. The lesson must have struck home to every heart that God considers that there is a wide gulf fixed between the holy things of heaven and the gross things of this earth.

One of the chief reasons why the Israelites were finally carried into captivity was that they failed to maintain a separation between themselves and the nations about them. They made trade agreements with them, compacts for defensive war, and intermarriages. Even Solomon, the wisest of Israel's kings, was led far astray by the heathen wives whom he married.

When the exiles returned from Babylon, Nehemiah and Ezra emphasized anew the need of separation from the world. And in his characteristically aggressive manner, Nehemiah employed vigorous,

direct measures in dealing with the Jews who had allied themselves with the peoples about them.

Spiritual Israel in the Christian Era, while not intended to be separated geographically as was ancient Israel, is commanded by God to walk separate from the world. In fact, this command is even more imperative in our Christian age, for we are not of one blood, or of one country, with such protection as those factors offered to the ancient Jews. We are of all races and all climes, and must move about hither and yon over the earth amid every kind of surroundings. It is to us that the promise most directly comes, that where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. Temptations and allurements are the more real for spiritual Israel, but the measure of God's grace and power in behalf of His children has been poured out sufficient to meet these greater temptations.

To the church living in the vile city of Corinth, and through them to all Christian believers, Paul wrote:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the

Behold, He Cometh

unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

There are those who think of this passage simply in the restricted sense of a warning against mixed marriages. True, this idea is included in Paul's thoughts, but he is setting forth the whole broad principle that the children of God must be separate from the world. As he states the matter tersely in the Roman epistle: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Rom. 12:2.

The call that came to our father Abraham many long centuries ago, which has been taken up and reechoed by prophets and apostles through the intervening years, sounds again in the last hours of earth's history. A final call goes forth to all who find in their hearts any longing for God, any desire for righteousness, any determination to do the will of God: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. 18:4. While this applies primarily in the religious realm, we believe that the warning properly relates to the whole life program of those who desire to be known by God as "My people."

***Separation From the
World as to Marriage,
Business Partnerships,
Dress***

Separation From the World as to Marriage, Business Partnerships, Dress

*“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:
for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteous-
ness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”
2 Cor. 6:14.*

IT is one thing to discuss the general principle of separation; it is quite another to discuss its specific application to our daily life. We grant there is always danger that in setting forth rules for the application of a divine principle, finite beings may sometimes err. The Bible itself deplores a zeal not according to knowledge, and rebukes those who are overmuch righteous with a righteousness that misses the real essence of true religion. Yet the mistakes of some who are extreme in their application should not deter us from a prayerful and resolute endeavor to apply to our daily living the divine principles revealed in the Scriptures. While ever displaying Christian charity toward others in the church who may not see eye to eye with us as to how a Bible principle is to be applied, we should maintain for our own lives a program of spiritual discipline that will bring every act and deed and thought into conformity with the divine will as God has revealed it to our hearts.

Certainly we but make mockery of religion if we give assent to the Bible principles set forth by the minister on the Sabbath day, but make no sincere

move on Sunday morning to apply those truths to the routine acts and associations of the week. For the great majority of us there is no petition that could more properly be voiced in prayer to God, than that for courage—courage to examine squarely the relation of a Bible teaching to our personal living, and courage to act upon our findings.

Coming directly now to the question of separation from the world, we may ask, In what ways should this principle be reflected in our lives? Without attempting to dogmatize on fine details, we believe there are certain quite well defined areas where this truth should make contact with our daily living.

There is scarcely any one in the church who would challenge the general statement that marriage with unbelievers is a clear violation of God's rule of separation from the world. Yet how often in specific cases is such a practice condoned, if not defended. In this matter parents have a solemn duty to impress upon their children, as they become of age, that God condemns marriage with unbelievers. It is true, of course, that finally the youth must decide the matter and be held responsible for their course. But might there not be fewer of these unscriptural unions if every parent sensed as he should the grave importance of impressing his children that God's command in respect to marriage is just as binding as any other command in the Bible.

There are young people who at times endeavor to justify their plans for an unscriptural alliance by declaring that they hope in this way to win their future companion to Christ and the church. Now, winning

some one to God calls for God's aid, for it is He alone who brings repentance and conviction to hearts. But in the name of honest spiritual thinking, how can any one believe that taking a step that God condemns is following a course that will be most effective in winning some one to God? True it is that the Lord is gracious and long-suffering, and stands ready to forgive our mistakes, our violation of His laws, overruling sometimes the most distressing situations to His glory and to the salvation of many. But such victories for God as may finally result, despite violations of God's command, provide no justification for violation on the part of others. That is equivalent to making God's long-suffering and grace an occasion for sin. It is presumption—nothing else. There are ways, tried and true, to work for the salvation of unbelievers. But *marrying* them is *not* one of these ways.

Not infrequently, when persons accept the advent message, they are tied up in some close business relationship, such as a partnership, with unbelievers. The evil of this is generally evident at once, from the fact that the business concern operates on God's holy Sabbath, and that therefore to maintain partnership in such a concern would be to deny the Sabbath truth. The dispatch with which the great majority of such new believers break these connections is heartening proof of the power that this message has to change men's lives.

But at times there are those who for one reason or another do not break off such partnerships. Surely this is altogether contrary to the principle of separa-

Behold, He Cometh

tion. How can a brother hope to be a daily witness before others, of the advent truths in general and the Sabbath in particular, while retaining a partnership in a concern that violates the Sabbath? To continue such a relationship is to deny the faith.

The apostle Peter appeals to believers to be separate from the world in the matter of dress, and offers as an incentive that this difference in dress may be the occasion of winning others to God. We read:

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” 1 Peter 3:1-4.

Satan has made dress the handmaid of pride. And in this fact is found the essence of the evil of fashionable dress. It is true that there are other related evils, such as the danger to physical health which results from certain fashions, and the temptation to immorality that resides in still other modes of dress. But fashions may be free from physical harm, and they may so clothe the person as to be justly exempt from any charge of contributing to lowered moral standards, and yet be evil because they pander to vanity.

Marriage, Business Partnerships, Dress

This fact needs to be remembered, lest members in the church endeavor to defend their slavish following of various changing fashions on the ground that there is nothing unhealthful or immodest involved. There is something as blighting to the soul as immodesty, and even more disastrous than unhealthful practices, and that is a program of living that puts the constant emphasis on our selfish selves. We never get so near to the stuff of which sin is made, as when we are dealing with the pride, the vanity, the conceit, of the human heart. These have brought forth a world of iniquity since the day that Lucifer fell.

To meet the terrible results that have grown out of this fall, Christ humbled Himself, first to be born in a stable; then to move among men as a servant, with no place where He might lay His head; and finally, stripped of His meager garments by greedy soldiers, to submit to the shameful death of the cross. All about Him was pride. The chief priests were too proud to accept Him. His disciples were too concerned as to who should be chief in the kingdom to understand His rich truths for them, even in the very shadow of Gethsemane. The story of the cross is the story of the contrast between pride and humility.

How natural it is to think of ourselves, to fill up our horizon with a picture of our own importance, to lavish all our thoughts and interests on ourselves. Expending our first energies and funds upon our clothes is but one evidence of self-centered living. The matter of dress is not primarily a question of a

particular sex, but of selfishness. It simply happens that in our age the opportunities for the manifestation of pride and vanity are greater, perhaps, for women than for men. In past ages this was not always so.

The question of simplicity in dress is only obscured when brethren on the one hand make it an occasion for belaboring our sisters exclusively, and the sisters on the other hand endeavor to minimize it by declaring that the brethren should be dealing with other and more important subjects. It is possible for a man to be as vain about his appearance and dress as a woman. And it would be difficult to say to what lengths some men might go if fashion presented the temptation.

On the other hand, our sisters cannot honestly dismiss the question of dress as being unimportant. There is a divine principle involved. This fact is plain from the Scriptures. It is an aspect of the broader principle of separation from the world; separation from that which would lead us on and on in ways of vanity and pride; into paths that would fill our mind so completely with thoughts of ourselves that there would be no room for thoughts of God or of the needs of our fellow man; into avenues that would make such a large and constant drain upon our resources as to prevent our contributing to God's needy cause in sacrificial gifts as we should.

When we think of the matter in this light, we lift the whole discussion above the level of petty disputes over this or that minor feature in the realm of dress and fashion, and discern in the question a broad

and vital spiritual problem. We cannot hope to be separate from the vain, self-centered world when we slavishly follow practices that quicken our vanity. No words of extenuation or defense of fashion can blur this fact. And let the one who endeavors to defend conformity to every changing whim of fashion first ask himself the question, "Are my first thoughts on God, or on myself? on the enlarging of His kingdom, or on the beautifying of myself?" This brings us to the heart of the problem.

It may not be amiss to add, in contrast, that God does not desire us to go about garbed in a dowdy manner, uncouth and unkempt. This is an extreme which some earnest, but misguided, souls are tempted to adopt. There is no piety inherent in holding onto the styles of yesteryear. There was a time when they were fashionable. They are simply ludicrous now.

There is a golden mean in this matter of dress, as there is also in the matter of speech. Our language changes constantly. On one border are the archaic forms of a bygone day; on the other fringe, the slang. Some with a love for puritanical English, would hold onto archaic words and constructions until their language sounds quite strange to the ear, and attracts curious attention. On the other hand, some feverishly strive to add to their vocabulary every new slang term, every recently coined phrase. But good usage suggests that we do not hold on forever to styles in words that have seen their day, and that we do not rush avidly to devour every new and untried term, but that we follow a middle path. To a certain degree this suggests the path we should follow on the

Behold, He Cometh

difficult question of changing styles in dress. There is a golden mean somewhere.

We have many sisters—thank God for their living example—whose attire looks neither antiquated nor ultrafashionable. As we see them, we think neither of a bygone day nor of the latest fashion plates. Such examples are a living proof that one may be modern in the right sense of the word, modest, well dressed, and yet not a slave to fashion; a proof that one may be attired in such a way as to maintain proper self-respect and poise without pandering to vanity.

***Separation From the
World as to Diet,
Social Relationships,
Education***

Separation From the World as to Diet, Social Relationships, Education

*"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."
Rom. 12:1.*

OF the Christians newly converted from paganism Paul asked the solemn question: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3:16, 17. Later in the same epistle he made the sweeping declaration: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31. This was in keeping with his statement to the Roman church: "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." Rom. 12:1.

In what sharp contrast must such instruction have been, with the standards in pagan circles, in which gratification of the physical senses was dominant, and in which the proverb was current, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." Of some pagans Paul went so far as to declare that their "god is their belly." Phil. 3:19.

We are to be separate from all the gross practices that benumb the senses of men and separate them

from God. We cannot hope to know anything of real fellowship with God if the higher faculties of the mind are dulled by our physical practices. What we eat and how we eat it have a very direct bearing on this question of a clear mind capable of appraising spiritual things. Because various practices in the realm of diet reduce our capacity for grasping spiritual thoughts and weaken our bodies that should be wholeheartedly consecrated to God, the question of healthful living is interlocked with that of holy living. And it is in the light of this interlocking that we may safely decide the question of the sinfulness of unhealthful living.

The doctrine of health reform is at once our glory and our shame—our glory in that it has opened before us such elevated standards in an important area of living; our shame in that it has served, on various occasions, to bring the truth into a certain disrepute because of the extremes of fanatics. But the folly of a certain kind of health reformers provides no justification for discounting or evading this truth. There have been those who held fanatical views on other doctrines, too.

There is something far worse than any shame that fanatics may have created by their actions; and that is the shame that rests upon those in the church who, despite their clear knowledge of divinely revealed health principles, continue on in practices that rob them of physical health and spiritual perception. It is the shame of failing to live up to a privilege, an opportunity. And no reference to the folly of fanatics can take away this shame. The blunders of

misguided zealots—and their numbers and blunders have been exaggerated in the retelling—can never alter the fact that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that if we defile these bodies, God will destroy us. Nor do those blunders take any of the force from the already-quoted command: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” It is time that we restudied and applied with new faithfulness and sincerity, the principles of healthful living revealed in the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy.

The principle of separation from the world confronts many of our believers in a very real way when they are called upon to decide what social affairs are proper to attend, and what pleasures are spiritually lawful to engage in. Generally speaking, our people are not isolated in little communities where an independent, self-contained social life may be carried on. Instead, they are spread thinly over wide areas, placed here and there in neighborhoods and communities. The wholehearted, sweeping way in which converts generally break with their former social connections is a gratifying evidence of the power of the gospel. There is no better proof that the social relationships of the world, by and large, are foreign to the principles we should maintain, than that those in their first love, who can see most sharply the contrast between worldly standards and Christian standards, should so definitely sense the need of breaking away from the former social relationships and pleasures.

This is not to say that there are no social gather-

ings of those not of our faith which it would be right to attend. There are such gatherings. There are high-minded men and women who are living up to all the principles of righteousness that they know, who meet for various neighborhood and community gatherings which have some very proper civic or social objective, where nothing enters that would dull our moral or spiritual sensibilities.

We are thinking rather of that wide range of social gatherings the primary, if not the sole, objective of which is pleasure. The forms of pleasure indulged in in such gatherings include a subtle mixture of good and bad. Oftentimes, for example, an informal dance may be the feature of the evening's pleasure, for those who wish to participate; or card tables may be present at still others.

It is not sufficient for a believer to answer that he does not personally engage in any feature of the evening's pleasure that is contrary to his standards. The facts are that by attending such gatherings we place ourselves in an atmosphere that is not conducive to holy living. We are putting ourselves to a greater or lesser degree under the influence of men and women who would draw us away from the true standards. It is scarcely possible for any one to spend hours in certain social gatherings in the more or less carefree attitude of mind to which such gatherings conduce, without being definitely affected by these adverse influences and associations. No man liveth unto himself. We are all affected by our associations.

There is, too, this very real fact that must not be forgotten,—others are watching us. The good name

and the standards of the advent movement are on trial in our lives. While others may seek to have us join them in their social activities, they may at the same time be perplexed at our accepting their invitations.

No hard and fast rule, of course, can be set down as to when it is right or wrong to attend a social gathering. There will be bewilderment at times as to what course should be taken. In such situations this rule is worth remembering: When in doubt, don't. We shall never suffer irreparable loss by failing to attend some social function, and we may be saved from great spiritual damage.

There is a very distressing feature to this subject. In many instances there are divided homes. A wife has found the faith and new standards of living, but the husband has not. He pleads, or perhaps harshly insists, that his wife attend social gatherings and places of amusement with him as before, threatening, perhaps, that if she refuses to attend, he will find other friends.

This is no minor or imaginary problem. Confronted with this test, some wives have compromised by attending gatherings or amusement places, trusting that in time they could win their companion away from such associations, but all the while troubled in their conscience because of compromising their standards. Surely this is not the way to meet this trying issue. Compromise is never the way out of perplexity, when conscience must be stifled in the bargain. If ever there is need of maintaining spiritual peace and calm and an active faith that God will

solve the problem, there is need in a situation like this.

It is a happy fact, demonstrated in the lives of many of our devoted sisters, that a quiet but resolute refusal by the wife to participate in activities that formerly engaged the attention, has been definitely used of God to bring conviction to the husband. In many other instances, where conviction and conversion have not resulted, there has at least been created a profound respect for the newly acquired religion of the wife that has put an end to friction over the matter of amusements, and has resulted in the husband's staying at home evenings rather than going out. Invariably, where the wife's courageous stand has brought these cheering results, it has been accompanied in the home by the fruits of righteousness, peace, long-suffering, goodness, patience,—virtues that are more eloquent than words, that are indeed an end to all argument.

But no matter whether the outcome be happy or not, this fact undeniably stands out plain and clear,—there cannot be compromise with principle. History tells us of a woman in the early Christian church who had accepted Christ, and who therefore refused to attend places of pagan amusement with her husband. With fiendish hatred he turned upon her, haled her before the magistrate, and had her condemned to death. For what was the life of a Christian worth in those days? It was out of such heroic material as this that the Christian church was built. Hard, then, as the problem of any of our sisters today may be, it is not so hard as that which confronted those who

lived centuries before us. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Heb. 12:4.

No labored arguments should be needed to establish as a fact that in the matter of education we should be separate from the world. The child who begins in the first grade and goes on through to the end of college, spends sixteen years, the most plastic years of his life, in school. It seems unnecessary to remark that the atmosphere of that school, its teachers and its associations, will have made an indelible impression upon him long before the sixteen years are completed. True it is that many children have run the gantlet of years in schools where the atmosphere has not been a reinforcement to Christian principles, and have not been turned away from God and the church. But let no one attempt to find in this a justification for sending his children to a worldly school, for there is another fact that bears directly on the question; namely, that a far greater number of youth who might have been saved to God and the church were led astray by the influences of a worldly school.

We live today in an age in which iniquity abounds, and in which the devil is making his last desperate endeavor to deceive man and destroy the race. The world moves along with an intensity it never knew before. A wide array of temptations peculiar to our time confronts our children. In a way unknown to the past, schools from the grammar grades up have every variety of social adjunct, so that it is exceedingly difficult for a student to escape being drawn into a complex cycle of social functions. Couple with this the fact that in our modern school

Behold, He Cometh

system there is a subtle brand of cynicism, skepticism, and infidelity taught that was unknown in former generations. Only a miracle of God can save the inexperienced, youthful mind from becoming lost in the fog of skeptical sophistry that clouds too many classrooms in worldly institutions of learning.

True, we may invoke such a miracle of grace in behalf of our children when it is absolutely impossible for them to acquire an education in one of our own schools. God still lives and works miracles for those who have faith, and who cooperate with Him in obtaining the answer to their prayers by casting about their children the influences of heaven during the hours they are at home.

But what is to be said of those parents who view apathetically this important question of education, and take no active steps to find a way whereby their children may be in one of our schools? There is an accountability that we have before God for our sons and daughters. And no shrug of the shoulders, no listless remark that a Christian education is out of the question, will discharge that responsibility. There are too many living proofs that godly fathers and mothers, determined to find some way, may by prayer and planning and economizing, discover a way. No parent can honestly say that he is sincerely endeavoring to apply in his own life and that of his family the principle of separation from the world, unless he does all within his power to see that his children are separated from the world in the matter of their education.

*Temptations Peculiar to
Our Day—The Movies*

Temptations Peculiar to Our Day— The Movies

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
Phil. 4:8.*

EVERY age has its distinctive characteristics, even as has every individual. Every age, speaking spiritually and morally, has temptations peculiar to it. That is strikingly true of our present time—perhaps more so than of any time in the past, because today we have seen more rapid changes than men have ever witnessed before. Suddenly we are confronted with new situations and problems and conditions, of which our fathers and our fathers' fathers never dreamed; and thus we are not fortified against them by any generations of training in the church or in the home.

To illustrate, for centuries we have had an institution known as the theater, very sharply labeled and defined. There had grown up in the church a well-defined attitude toward it. And from infancy up, children were instructed so that they would not attend. There was a mass of evidence submitted to show the baleful effects of this institution.

But we come to our present day, and suddenly something appears as a sort of hybrid. It did not

fit altogether within the limited bounds that had been labeled "the theater." It entered in an unobtrusive fashion, as a sort of scientific experiment, an improvement over still stereopticon pictures. Curiosity prompted many of us to go to see what this new thing was. And some began to reason that the movies were really not like the theater.

We repeat, The moving picture was ushered in suddenly in our day, and thus its relationship to the theater, that institution against which the church had long been fortified, was quite obscured. There was no wall built up in advance to meet this new temptation.

Some would tell us that there are "good" movies as well as bad. And who are we to dispute this? But as surely as there has been through the centuries a definite institution known as the theater, with a certain environment and atmosphere, so surely is there a definite institution today known as the moving-picture house, which has its certain influence and atmosphere. And if a person frequents such a place, he will become permeated with its atmosphere, and find himself in a frame of mind wholly foreign to that spiritual state necessary to the development of Christian character.

It is from this broad angle that we wish to consider the question, rather than to descend to the profitless discussion of relatively good or bad movies, with every one employing his own definition of "good" and "bad." Indeed, there is nothing more distinctive about the devil's whole program than his mixtures of good and bad. The very fact that the

good and the bad are together, is the clearest evidence of the subtle danger that is involved. For while there may be good films, generally there are others thrown in with them that quite neutralize the good, and almost invariably the music, which is so vital to the atmosphere of the place, is very, very foreign to holy living.

Let us approach the question in another way. We as Seventh-day Adventists hold as our greatest hope the belief that our eyes will finally gaze on the glorious sight of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. We would submit this thought, partly figurative and partly literal,—that if we are spending our hours in an institution which has darkness as a prerequisite to success, and our eyes are accustomed to darkness, we shall not be prepared to gaze with undimmed eye upon that dazzling sight. Instead, we shall turn away in terror, even as will others, blinded by the divine spectacle.

Again, we talk about letting our light shine; we say it should shine always. How can it shine in a darkened moving-picture place? It would ruin the picture! Certainly it would ruin most of the pictures that are thrown on the screen.

Eminent men of the world speak in no uncertain tones concerning the evil possibilities that reside in the moving-picture theater. For the evil is so evident that one need not have any particular theological bias in order to be able to see the dangers. We quote a short, typical statement. It is by Roger W. Babson, the head of the Babson Institute, one of the largest and most reputable of the numerous organizations

that provide financial and statistical information for the business world. In a "special letter" entitled, "Crime Waves," Mr. Babson sets forth certain staggering facts concerning the enormous increase in murders and other crimes, and then declares:

"Such studies as I have made lead directly to the movies as the basic cause of the crime waves of today. Furthermore, when one considers that ten million people, largely young people, in the United States alone, attend the movies every week, the tremendous influence of the cinema in all ways must be admitted. In view of statements by psychologists that impressions through the eye are very much more powerful than those which come through the ear, it is evident that the movies are the greatest force today in molding character for good or evil. In fact, I sent a questionnaire to the school principals of New England, asking which of the following had the greatest influence in molding the character of our young people today,—the school, the church, or the home,—and 70 per cent scratched off all three and replied: "The movies!" "

Plots and intrigue, villain and hero, seduction, betrayal, and double living—these terms, so essential to the stage, and to the movies, have no place in the speech of men and women who expect shortly to commune face to face with God and to hold converse with the inhabitants of unfallen worlds. Our eyes should follow with rapt attention, not the scenes and ideas revealed by the spotlight on the stage of the theater, but those signs and omens revealed by the great spotlight of prophecy on the stage of this

troubled world. It is this world that is soon to witness the mighty act which is the climax to the greatest drama of all, the drama of God's dealing with sinful man.

We read that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Doubtless, it was with this solemn truth in mind that David uttered that sublime prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer." But how can we pray David's prayer or make ready for the hour when the deepest recesses of our soul will be exposed to the penetrating brilliance of the judgment day, if we have allowed our thoughts to be directed along the channels of the plots and intrigues of popular movies?

It is no small thing to make ready for heaven; it is no light undertaking to prepare to dwell with a God who is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity, to live with angels whose innermost natures cherish not one suggestion of evil. In an earlier chapter we quoted the solemn warning of the apostle Peter that the righteous will "scarcely" be saved. So great is the pull of evil, so heavy is the atmosphere of sin that presses in all around us, that only by the greatest miracle of God's grace and by constant trust and reliance in Him can we hope to escape safely out of this world. It is when we view the matter in this light that we find the most sweeping indictment of the movies and every kindred place of amusement.

Some of these thoughts have been suggested by an editorial in the *Billboard*, a leading trade journal of

the theater. We are indebted to the Catholic weekly *America* for the quotation from this theater paper. Under the title, "The Degenerate Stage," *America* says in part:

"When a clergyman or teacher criticizes the morals of the stage, he is usually told that he does not know what he is talking about. The moral conduct of actors, off and on, is better on an average, he will be informed, than that of teachers and clergy. But when the criticism comes from the stage itself, the probabilities are that it is true.

"In the *Billboard* for January 7, the editor offers the following considerations under the caption, 'Shall We Rejoin the Ladies?' Once upon a time, the editor mourns, there were ladies on the stage, and ladies and gentlemen in the audience. But now—

"It is seldom that we see a lady depicted behind the footlights. Harridans, prostitutes, and wenches make up the female population of our plays, and even when some one with the status of a lady must be introduced, she is shown up as a fishwife—or, preferably, a strumpet. The stage has taken the aspect of a smoking room, and it is seldom enough now that gentility finds its place either behind or before the footlights.'

"The *Billboard* is a leader among trade papers, and is not given to exaggeration on its editorial page. Its criticism, which comes with authority, agrees with that which is entertained by civilized persons generally. Unfortunately, there are no groups of associations which are able to raise the stage from its low estate."—*January 14, 1933.*

What *America* as a religious journal says regarding the stage might of course be considered by many worldlings as prejudiced, but the statement it quotes from the *Billboard* editor is not open to such a charge. Certainly when a theater trade paper finds itself forced to describe its own industry thus, it is almost superfluous for religious leaders to add any further indictment of their own. Even if we were planning to make ourselves simply better citizens of this present world, we might well conclude that our character and our outlook should be based on something other than the stage. But in view of the fact that we are preparing for citizenship in the kingdom of God, we find the reasons for abstaining from attendance at the theater and the movies overwhelming.

*Temptations Peculiar to
Our Day—Radio, Styles,
Speed and Tension*

Temptations Peculiar to Our Day— Radio, Styles, Speed and Tension

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." 2 Tim. 3:1.

"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." Rev. 12:12.

WHAT a wonderful aid the radio can be in the dissemination of truth. Doubtless it will prove an even greater aid as the days go by. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the devil has succeeded largely in prostituting this marvelous invention to his own ends.

We suppose that in former generations some in the church were tempted to go to places where the music of the devil was being played. But that desire had to be quite sharp and pronounced, and the urge definite and clear, to cause a church member to put on his coat and hat and go down to such a musical place and pay admission to sit there. But today that temptation need only be strong enough to cause him to turn the radio dial a few points, and the whole house is filled from cellar to garret with strange, unholy sounds. That is a peculiar temptation of our day. As one goes up and down the streets, one hears strange overtones and other weird sounds pouring out of innumerable radios—sounds which offend both musical and religious sensibilities. The air is filled with a

raucous jargon, deafening and deadening in its effect.

But some one will probably inquire: "What is wrong in listening now and then to some music that is not holy hymns and psalms? What is so terribly evil in such music?" We shall not attempt to argue the question. It is a thing that cannot be argued. In fact, we are willing to confess we do not know just *why* such music is evil. But the fact that we do not know the "why" of something, does not prevent us from being certain as to its *effects*.

We might argue all day, striving to understand *why* the earth pulls all free objects to it—in other words, why the law of gravitation produces the effect it does. But though we are not able to understand *why*, there is not one of us so foolhardy as to defy the law and walk out over a precipice. We have too many proofs of the sure effect, even though we do not know the why of it. Likewise there are too many proofs that music of a certain tempo that causes a sympathetic vibration of every part of the being except the soul, will drive every spiritual thought from the mind. We do not care whether we can prove how this effect is produced. That it *is* produced is the thing that ought to concern us in this connection.

Let us be concrete again: Probably in former generations there have been some in the church tempted to see pugilistic encounters; but that temptation had to be almost overwhelming to cause a church member to rise up from home, go to the ring, and pay his money to watch such an encounter. Very few were tempted to that extent. But today the tempta-

tion need be very slight—just enough to cause him to turn the dial an inch or two, and out comes a vivid word picture of the prize fight.

It is beside the point to discuss the relative evil or sinfulness of being present beside the ring and of listening to the vivid word picture pouring out of the radio. We would simply ask: How can one listen to such a word picture without having the mind filled with thoughts that cannot be harmonized with the program of those who are making ready to meet God in peace?

But there are other dangers that lurk in the radio. There is the subtle variety of propaganda that pours out, running the whole gamut from a delightfully harmless dissertation on a brand of breakfast food, to a persuasive appeal to smoke a certain brand of cigarettes. There is no need to go into detail. Surely a fine sense of spiritual discretion must be employed if we are to make this modern invention of the radio serve only a right use in our homes. It calls for a sense of discretion our fathers were never called upon to employ.

Possibly one of the gravest dangers the radio has created is the added temptation to break the Sabbath. In a former generation a church member would rarely be so tempted that he would go somewhere on the Sabbath to hear things wholly foreign, not only to the Sabbath day, but to all holy living. But all this has been changed by the radio. Does the opening of the Sabbath close your radio? Or do you allow the prince of the power of the air to bring Sabbath desecration into your home by way of the ether?

Perhaps it may sound fanatical, but we would say that if a Seventh-day Adventist feels in his soul that he is not able to withstand these temptations, then in order to cooperate with his prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," it would be far better for him to throw the radio into the furnace, and go to heaven without having had this remarkable invention in his home, than it would be to go down in the lake of fire having heard a radio all his life. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Matt. 5:30.

Let us pass, now, to a more expansive and yet specific problem under the general title of "Styles." We are not going to discuss the question of women's dress. We wish to use that word, "style," in its larger aspect, as embracing the whole subject of changing vogues or fashions in every aspect of our modern living.

There is nothing more distinctive of the present time in contrast to all the past than that today our whole industrial world is geared up for mass production. In order to obtain a constant market for an ever-increasing output of automobiles, radios, furniture, pianos, bedsteads, chairs,—everything imaginable,—there has been set in motion a campaign which our fathers before us never witnessed, a campaign which has a very definite relationship to spiritual living, though we may not have realized it. We refer to the high-pressure program of national advertising that greets us in every magazine and newspaper, and

on every billboard. No matter which way we turn, we are confronted with the subtle, and sometimes very obvious, appeal to turn in the old model of this, that, or the other thing and get a later one. As a person reads the advertisements, he is likely to feel that he is behind the times if he does not have the very latest of everything.

Now, we would not advocate living as did our father Abraham, in a tent amid the dust and germs that must have been there in abundance. We are *in* the world. There is a certain definite relationship to it that we must maintain. No one can escape that fact. But the admission of that fact seems to us far removed from the tendency to turn our attention and first thought from morning till night to the question of whether we can keep in step with all the fashions and fads of the hour—whether we can scrape together a little money to buy this later model or that. And the most unsatisfying thing about this whole program of keeping up with the trend, is that one really cannot keep up—before the installments have been paid on the new model, it has become old.

The effect is twofold. There is created an abnormal longing and craving which is of the essence of covetousness. We view our brother just a little enviously because he can pay \$5 or \$10 a month more in installments, and thus is able to have a more up-to-the-minute kind of radio or washing machine, or dining-room furniture of a newer style, or what not, than we. The feeling in our heart is covetousness. Let us call it by its right name. And this vice of covetousness brings on an unhealthy, unthankful state.

We become unthankful for the blessings God has already given us. That is the danger of it.

But not only does this striving to keep pace with the fashions tend to generate covetousness; it goes contrary to the very genius of this advent movement, which is one of sacrificial living and missionary giving. This urge to get hold of everything we can, to turn in the old model simply because a new one is now advertised, stands in sharp opposition to all the mighty appeals that come to us from the mission fields to give and give and give. It would be highly profitable for us as Seventh-day Adventists to guide our lives more fully by Paul's economic philosophy:

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." 1 Tim. 6:6-8.

This inspired message applies more directly to us than to any people who ever lived before in all the history of the world. Let us pray very definitely to God for spiritual help to be so contented with what we already have that our first thought will be concentrated on adding a little more to our mission offering rather than to installments for the latest models of everything for the home. We need to pray for that quietness of soul and calmness of spirit that make us contented with the simpler things of life, and free us from an undue craving for material comforts. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

Right in this connection a word might appropriately be said concerning the prosperity that belongs

to our present age. Despite the depression, we live on a level of prosperity not dreamed of before. We have comforts not conceived of by our fathers. Of course there are exceptions. They prove the rule. But think of our ordinary homes. We have a wealth of material blessings. The whole standard of living has been raised very greatly.

And let us repeat right here that we are not opposed to material comforts as such. But surely it is proper to sound a warning against the potentiality for evil that resides in this present high level of material comforts, the danger of too-great contentment with this present evil world. Most of us are really quite happy, physically speaking. Our needs are well provided for. In a partly literal and partly figurative sense we might say that everything is padded with upholstery today, so that we do not feel the sharp, jagged edges of this old sinful world. The danger is that we shall not sense as we should that this present evil world is not a good place in which to live.

Of course it need not be true that simply because we have comforts we cannot realize that this world is not a good place in which to live. It is possible for us to realize it, but it is less likely that we shall. The Scripture declares that God allows hardships to come, so that man may know he does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

There is one more characteristic of our day on which we wish to comment, and that is the tremendous speed and tension. This situation did not con-

Behold, He Cometh

front any former generation in all the history of mankind. Our father Abraham, to illustrate by this patriarch again, could sit calmly in the door of his tent in the cool of the evening and talk with his friends. A traveler would stop to visit with him, would spend the night, and stay another day or two, perhaps, before going on. In all former generations they had plenty of time.

Today, we rush by and are gone. The symbol of our age is a rapidly revolving wheel. Our nerves are frayed. We find we have very little time for our families or for quietness and spirituality. There is always something else to do. We rush here and rush there. This state of affairs has a definite relationship to the spiritual life. It is a temptation peculiar to our day. Not only should we realize this, but we should be prepared to meet the potentialities for evil that reside in it. Otherwise we shall find ourselves overwhelmed and driven to distraction. What we need to think of more than anything else, is the divine injunction, "Be *still*, and know that I am God."

If we would neutralize the baleful influence of this modern speed and tension, we shall have to work out a definite plan of spiritual discipline that will sanctify certain time for holy meditation and godly thinking and reading. We cannot escape from this world, but by God's help we can escape sufficiently from its noise and hurry to be able to hear His voice speaking to us day by day.

Holiness goes much deeper than mere conformity to creed and freedom from outward violation of divine law. That is good, so far as it goes. But it

Radio—Styles—Speed and Tension

seems to us that the very essence of godly living is found in quiet meditation, in communion with God alone, when all the world is shut out. And in such meditation there comes into the soul a consciousness of fellowship with God, a comprehension of spiritual truths, that cannot come in any other way. If we allow the rush of the modern world to deprive us of this silent communion, we never can say that we walk with God or that we really know Him. Surely the devil has come down with great wrath. He would increase our pace so that we have no time to walk or talk with our God. It is for us to make the high resolve to take time to be holy.

*Temptations Peculiar to
Our Day—Automobile,
Modern Literature,
Trend Toward the Cities*

**Temptations Peculiar to Our Day—
Automobile, Modern Literature,
Trend Toward the Cities**

*“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,
deceiving, and being deceived.” 2 Tim. 3:13.*

OUR fathers never had an automobile, but our children know nothing else. It is distinctive of our day. Without it we would be greatly handicapped in our missionary labor. No one wishes to dispute that. The point is that this invention which has suddenly come to us has great potentialities for both good and evil, and that it is necessary for us to sense what these potentialities are, that we may be fortified against the evil ones.

The automobile presents peculiar temptations for the old and for the young. Never before has it been possible for young people in a few moments to be swiftly and completely removed altogether from the environment and atmosphere of home. And it is the home that provides the normal, wholesome, inhibitory influence upon the tempestuous emotions of youth. Never before have the youth been presented with a temptation so large and so full of evil possibilities. It is highly necessary that fathers and mothers realize that they in their youthful days were not confronted with such a temptation, and that they must take definite, concrete steps to fortify their

children against it. This new temptation calls for new precautions, if we are to guide aright the feet of our children and build up their spiritual resistance.

But it is not only the youth who are confronted with temptation because of the automobile. From another angle the old as well as the young are tempted. The automobile has more potentialities for ruining that calm and meditative repose, without which Sabbathkeeping is impossible, than almost any other modern invention.

Are we therefore opposed to taking any sort of ride on the Sabbath? No, it is possible to employ the automobile on that day in a way not necessarily foreign to the Sabbath. But after making that statement we wish to qualify it immediately with one just as obvious and as easily demonstrable; namely, that we may easily let the automobile bring into our Sabbath day a stir and bustle, a haste and scramble, that drives all spiritual thoughts from the soul. We are likely to be so desirous of making some extended journey or some great trip somewhere that we would make certain preparations on the Sabbath which are not justifiable on any account. And by a gradual process of dulling the spiritual sensibilities, a person may finally begin patronizing a gasoline station, for example, on God's holy day.

The automobile also presents a temptation to some to be irregular in church attendance. They want to go to this church and that. We do not say it is a sin for a person to visit some other church. We simply call attention to the grave possibility of

a person's being so on wheels that he has no direct connection with, and thus does not give consistent support to, *any* church. In fact, there is real danger that he will become so irregular that after a while he will not feel the necessity of even being *present* anywhere. That is where lie the gravest potentialities for sin. Now surely it is our duty to give steady support to one church, whenever that is possible. Nor do we see how it is possible to shirk this duty and be wholly free from sin.

It is their very subtlety that makes the temptations of our day so insidious. It is the obvious benefits that belong to many of these modern inventions that blind us to the equally obvious dangers that also are found in them.

Let us consider another temptation of our day,—modern literature. This is a very broad classification. It covers a multitude of good things and a multitude of sins, and again illustrates that very sharp distinction which exists between the present day and all the past. There is nothing more distinctive of our modern world than the wealth of printed matter that we have, of all sizes, shapes, descriptions, and colors. Whereas in former generations there were perhaps a few hundred books published in a year, today there are so many that one would scarcely have time to read even the titles of them.

What would Seventh-day Adventists be without the press? We should be handicapped to such an extent that our work would be almost paralyzed. Surely printing is proving a mighty blessing. But on the other hand, we must not be blind to the dangers

inherent in much of the matter that is pouring forth from the presses everywhere.

Christian people of earlier times were well fortified against a certain specific variety of literature, known as the novel. It was quite well marked out, a definite size book with a definite kind of typography. And when a church member thought of a novel, he thought of something well defined both as to its nature and as to its specific evil effects.

But today! We are not prepared by any generations of training to meet what suddenly confronts us in the world of literature. To be specific: Virtually every home today has its newspaper. And thus we all receive that literary monstrosity, the Sunday newspaper, expanded beyond all the conceptions of those who published newspapers in former years. It covers every angle of life, from the banal, vacuous funny page, to serious dissertations on philosophy, and runs the gamut of everything between. There is far more potentiality for evil in it than there was in the newspapers of the past. We have not been fortified against it, for it is a sudden thing that has confronted us in this generation.

What about the old idea of the novel as describing such literature as should not be read? It has disappeared. Instead, we now have the novel cut up in small sections—short stories. In fact, a most distinctive thing about the Sunday newspaper is the variety of short stories dropped in here and there. Perhaps the piece of fiction takes only a column of type. We think there is surely no harm in sketching through the story. Then we find another, and an-

other. But what is the difference, spiritually speaking, between spending hours on one piece of fiction, a novel, and spending the same amount of time on an accumulation of novelettes?

It is absolutely impossible for one to read a very large portion of what is presented to us every day in the newspapers—even some of the actual facts and happenings of the day—without having the mind brought into such a frame that it has no relish for the Good Book, if indeed there is any time left for such reading.

But the newspaper is not the only unique feature of modern printing. Think of the wealth of current magazines. They are a development of our very present day. Our fathers before us never dreamed of seeing an array of all shapes and sizes and colors of magazines such as strikes our eyes today in the stores everywhere. And these magazines contain a mixture of good and evil, generally more evil than good. They often have one or two good articles, but at the same time contain an overwhelming proportion of stories—fiction that may run all the way from what might be labeled “high class” down to that which is most appallingly insidious and immoral.

We cannot fill up our reading tables in our homes with a host of these journals, dabbling in them ourselves, and leaving them around as a temptation to our children, without suffering spiritually. The devil has come down with great wrath, knowing he has but a short time; so he endeavors to persuade us to fill up our homes with such a mass of current

journals that we literally will not have room for the Bible.

If there were no other indictment against the mass of printed matter today, this one would stand without possibility of challenge: that we are likely so to consume all our available spare moments in reading current literature that we have no time or mental energy left for strictly spiritual reading. This indictment can stand even though we might grant that the current literature which is read is not in any sense reprehensible.

This danger runs through the whole series of temptations peculiar to our day. There is the definite tendency to fill up all our time with things foreign to godly living. If Satan can succeed in having us do that, he has completely carried out his plot.

Up to this present age, at least in America, the large majority of people lived out in the country, in the open spaces. Now the whole trend, with increasing momentum, is toward the cities, and the abnormal living that goes with the cities. There are very serious results growing out of this—serious as to the status of the home and the children, serious as to all the confusion and noise and activities that belong with the city and that draw us away from quietness and the spiritual life. This city life is presenting a variety of temptations that rarely confronted our fathers before us.

This is something we should think of very often when we consider the whole question of where we shall live and in what environment we shall rear our

children. It is often possible by careful study and thought so to situate ourselves that there will be a little of the open spaces around us; a little of God's green trees and flowers, rather than the curbstones and city streets, and the innumerable sounds and influences that accompany such streets. It is hardly possible for a person to live all the time in the abnormal atmosphere of a great city—and assuredly it is abnormal—without suffering spiritual loss, without at least being placed under a most serious handicap. Heaven intended man to live with nature, to be in a certain state of quietness in which God could ever speak to him. It calls for very strong spiritual discipline to be able constantly and completely to stem the insidious tide that ever sweeps about us if we are drawn closely into a congested city.

We as a people are not alone in seeing in the distinctive features of our present-day life, temptations stronger than those of former generations. Under the arresting title, "Are We Riding for a Fall?" the widely known New York clergyman, Harry Emerson Fosdick, writes of the peculiar dangers that confront us today. He is speaking in particular of the United States, but in a larger way of the whole world. He cites several specific incidents to illustrate his points. The following is typical:

"Here in the juvenile court is Clara, a young girl from an American family, who has gone the limit and at fourteen has little to learn about the raw side of life. 'A generation or two ago,' comments a social worker, 'Clara would have been flirting, more or

less innocently, at husking parties and church socials. The automobile, modern hotel, and city have merely enlarged her opportunities.' That comment covers many facts in our present situation. Into the hands of our generation have come countless new instruments of power, from autos and movies to knowledge about birth control, and new power always means a moral strain that many cannot stand."—*American Magazine*.

J. H. Randall, a professor at Columbia University, has written an article on the "Effects of Science and Industry on Religion." He proceeds to show with much force of logic and many illustrations, that the great change that has taken place in our world from the quiet agricultural life of former generations to the highly industrialized city life of today, is breaking down most of the social, moral, and spiritual ideals of our fathers. While he believes that the new scientific theories have done much to break down old standards, yet he declares:

"Industrialism and city life have been far more subversive than all the scientific theories put together. . . . A truly intelligent Fundamentalist, indeed, would leave biology alone as of little influence. He would instead try to abolish the automobiles and movies and Sunday papers and golf links that are emptying our churches."—*Current History*.

These declarations, one from an outstanding preacher and the other from a university professor, are quite representative of numerous quotations that might be given in support of the declaration that our present age offers to us problems and perplex-

ities and temptations unique in their nature, and beyond all controversy, stronger and more insidious in their downward pull than those which attacked men in all former generations.

*The Danger of
Speculating on
Unfulfilled Prophecy*

The Danger of Speculating on Unfulfilled Prophecy

*"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." Matt. 24:36.
"The secret things belong unto God." Deut. 29:29.*

TO a certain type of mind, great happenings in the world present an almost irresistible temptation—the temptation to speculate on just how the particular happening is related to the closing events of earth's history, and on just what will develop out of any particular situation that arises in the world.

During the World War, for example, there were some, not many, who felt constrained to declare that the World War was the last war this earth would witness. There were a few who seemed free to dogmatize even on the details of how the World War would shape the closing events and merge into Armageddon.

When the World War ended and the League of Nations was formed, again there were a few who hastened to dogmatize on what this new development meant, some even going so far as to declare that this was the means through which the pope of Rome would come into the leadership of the nations of Europe. The pope was pictured as sitting at the head of the League table, discussing the affairs of the world.

When the Interchurch World Movement was

Behold, He Cometh

launched, that ambitious project to federate all Protestant bodies, there were again a few who felt free to speak with great certainty on the exact relationship that this happening bore to prophecy, some going so far as to picture the exact way in which Protestantism would be bound together by this new movement and would finally persecute the people of God.

A few years ago there was launched in the United States a bold program of economic recovery known as the NRA. In connection with this, as with other outstanding events of the past, the temptation came again to speculate. There were a few who told us just how the NRA was related to certain prophecies in the book of Revelation, and of exactly the way in which this governmental move for restoring prosperity would result in persecution.

But forecasts regarding the NRA proved to be in the same category with forecasts regarding other notable happenings. That the World War came to an end instead of merging into Armageddon; that the League of Nations has failed to prove a dominating force in world affairs, with the nations going their own nationalistic way; that the Inter-church World Movement died almost before it was born; and that now the NRA is dead,—these are simple matters of record. They prove more eloquently than could any studied line of reasoning, the grave danger of speculating concerning the exact outcome of notable happenings in the world.

It is not that we would dismiss any event of the day as necessarily meaningless for us as a people

The Danger of Speculating

who believe the end of all things is at hand. We simply feel that no one can venture even a successful guess as to what may develop out of any passing event, and that therefore we should refrain from speculating. Let us prayerfully and quietly watch what is taking place. It is always fitting to “*watch and pray.*”

We have never had any reason to doubt the sincerity or devotion to the cause of the layman or minister who falls before this temptation to speculate. In fact, it is the very devotion and sincerity of such an individual that often give to his dogmatic forecasts a ring of certainty that causes the listener to accept such unsupported predictions as gospel truth.

If the failure of time to prove the predictions of such persons true, reacted only against the individual himself, small harm, perhaps, would be done. But this is not the case. When events fail to work out exactly as some one has declared they must and will, there are always those whose faith is thereby weakened regarding the whole subject of prophecy and the signs of Christ's coming.

Of course, such a weakening of faith is unwarranted, for all should be able to see that there is a clear distinction between the definite signs of Christ's coming as marked out in the prophecies, and the detailed speculations of a few individuals regarding the exact outcome of particular happenings. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the faith of some in the general subject of prophecy is injured by the failure of speculations to prove true. At the same time, the skeptic is provided with what he believes

is just another reason for making sport of the whole subject of religion in general and prophecy in particular.

But with our world in its present troubled state, there is an even more serious possibility—yes, even a probability—in connection with these speculations and forecasts; there is a very real danger that un-called-for handicaps may be placed upon the work of God, and persecution may be unnecessarily provoked because of unwarranted declarations concerning the future in relation to present events. We live in a time of unstable emotions among the great masses of the people throughout the whole world, in a day when intense hatreds can be quickly generated and translated into action against this or that party or group which arouses the ill will of those in the majority. Too many illustrations of this in all corners of the earth come immediately to mind, for any added proof to be required here. But it is this very state of affairs in the world that should cause us to exercise the greatest good judgment in all our utterances. If ever there was a time, when, in our speech, we should follow the Scriptural injunction to be wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves, it is now.

We have a message that must be preached, and with courage we should preach it. But there is a very wide difference between proclaiming the rugged outlines of the great time prophecies, with the related Bible forecasts of conditions in the last days, and speculating on the exact outcome of particular happenings of the day. Surely we have a sufficiently positive and startling message for the world when we

stay by the clear statements of prophecy. Of course, to a certain extent we must deal with unfulfilled prophecies; but if we will confine ourselves to what is stated by the prophet, we shall be safe. The temptation is to fill in details where the prophet is silent.

Sir Isaac Newton, who was as devout as he was learned, well remarked in his "Observations on the Prophecies," that "the folly of interpreters has been, to foretell times and things by this prophecy [of the Revelation], as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness, they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt."—*Page 251.*

With such a wide field of fulfilled prophecy to expound to the world, how unfortunate that any should fall before the temptation to wander off into speculation on unrevealed details of unfulfilled prophecy, or to attempt to construct out of some present happening a whole chain of closely connected links to tie together that happening in direct and logical relationship to the day of Christ's coming! It is not a sufficient defense for a person who thus makes predictions to inquire, "Well, is not my explanation of the outcome of these present happenings plausible and reasonable?" Experience proves that too often in this uncertain world, what is plausible and apparently reasonable today becomes impossible tomorrow. Where the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy are both silent as to the details of future events, reverence and a recognition of the blunders of those who have speculated in the past, prompt us to be silent also.

Behold, He Cometh

We are confident there are not many who allow themselves to fall before this temptation to speculate. Unfortunately, it takes only a few such to bring great perplexity, embarrassment, and even confusion to many. It is one thing to view with godly fear the events of our present troubled day as playing a part in the last act of this world's sinful drama, and to declare with confidence that all these events provide increasing evidence that the day of the Lord is near and hasteth greatly. It is an altogether different thing to single out some particular happening, and dogmatically attempt to find in it the key to unlock the mystery of all the remaining details of this world's history. We shall never go astray, nor will our message ever be brought into disrepute, if we confine ourselves to the definite utterances of the prophets. And, what is more, we shall not lack for an effective, a timely, and a soulsaving message for the world in these last days.

In a closely related category is the tendency of a few to give credence to unsupported bits of hearsay concerning what Mrs. E. G. White is supposed to have said at some time or other about future events. Recently a worker wrote in to us to say that in his part of the field a stir was being created by the circulation of the story that Mrs. White had foretold by name the man who would be in charge of the United States Government when Christ returns, and that this forecast was to be found in one of her unpublished manuscripts.

It is unfortunate enough to have some one wander afield in idle speculation about future events; it is

The Danger of Speculating

tragic when an attempt is made, though perhaps unwittingly, to obtain the support of the Spirit of prophecy for such speculations. Is it reasonable to believe that an important revelation to the servant of God concerning the events of these last days would not see the light of day until some one in a distant corner of the field heard of it through the precarious medium of word of mouth? The question answers itself. Why turn aside our ears unto fables?

We need to be careful lest our pious desire to learn more fully God's purposes for this world, be displaced by an idle curiosity to discover what God has not seen fit to reveal. Let us not add to the words of the prophets, lest we come under the judgments which God will mete out to those guilty of so doing. And let us not assume the role of prophets ourselves, by attempting to dogmatize on the exact outcome of various happenings, lest we be found guilty as false prophets.

*The Danger of
Waning Confidence
and Deception*

The Danger of Waning Confidence and Deception

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."
Heb. 10:35-37.

THERE is a certain danger that presents itself to the church as a result of the breakdown of faith and confidence everywhere. The world today is marked in a very distinctive way by a loss of faith in all things spiritual,—a loss of faith in God, a loss of faith in the Bible, a loss of faith in the church. And it expands beyond that to the very corroding influence of loss of faith in our fellow men, in established institutions, in all things that we have taken as permanent and dependable in the world. Society itself seems to be shaking and disintegrating under the pressure of forces which can best be described under the head of loss of faith and confidence.

The special danger to us is that this loss of faith may attack the very shrine of our hearts, and rob us of the confidence and hope that have distinguished the advent believers from the beginning of the movement. And when hope is lost, all is lost. For if we lose the faith and confidence in the nearness of the advent of the Lord which created this movement, there is nothing but disintegration ahead.

We are confronted in a very peculiar way today with a temptation to loss of confidence that did not confront the first believers. Time has lingered longer than the limited understanding of the first believers permitted them to see. They did not grasp the fullness of the dimensions of the program of God for this people in the last days. It could not be expected that they should. But as the decades have passed, the devil has endeavored to capitalize the mere passage of time as a reason why we should lose faith in the advent truth. The warning and exhortation in Hebrews comes directly to our hearts today with a more pertinent meaning than ever before:

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 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.” Heb. 10:35-39.

This is a time for strengthening our faith and our confidence in God. It is a time when our confidence ought to be stronger than it ever was before. The present lack of faith and confidence in all things spiritual should be a challenge to us to know God better, to know His Scriptures more fully, to know more definitely what it means to pray to God and to have answers to our prayers. We ought, in these last days, to have more definite confidence in the divine

origin of this movement than we ever had before; we have more reason to have it.

True, time has continued longer than the pioneers anticipated. But as time has grown longer, the evidence has grown stronger in support of the advent message. What the pioneers had to see with the eye of faith in their preaching of the prophecies, we can see with the natural eye today. What they had to read largely in the symbolic language of the prophets, we can read in the literal language of the newspapers.

In a sense we do not live in a day of prophecy, but in a day of fulfillment. We witness the actual reviving of the Papacy, the struggle between capital and labor, the religious apostasy, the preparation for war—to mention only a few of the forecasts that were made at a time when it seemed to the casual observer that such forecasts would never come true.

We witness today a state of affairs in our world which is at once the greatest vindication of Seventh-day Adventist preaching through the years, and the greatest reason for the continuance of that preaching.

But we are confronted not simply with the danger of loss of faith, but also with the danger of deception. In the remarkable twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, which records Christ's prophecy concerning His second advent, is found a warning that should be carefully pondered by every one of us. Christ's first words in response to the questions of the disciples were, “Take heed that no man deceive you.” Then later in the chapter He declared again to them: “There shall arise false christs, and false prophets,

Behold, He Cometh

and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Verse 24.

This warning against deception was given for the protection of the church. As we draw near the end, the warning applies with added force. As a people, we may not be in grave danger of delusion from certain types of deception that would easily lead others astray, but that does not mean we are free from all danger. Whatever would turn our minds and hearts from a proper understanding of the times in which we live, or divert our energies from this advent movement, is as disastrous a deception as though we literally followed some leader who draws men off to the darkened chamber or out to the desert place.

Seventh-day Adventists are a crusading people. Thank God for the fire and enthusiasm in our hearts! But while that is a great asset, it is also a potential danger to us if it is diverted to a wrong use. There is a variety of remedies being offered in our troubled world today as cure-alls for the ills that beset nations and men. There are panaceas political and panaceas social. They look very charming, they look very inviting, they look very plausible; and one certainly would not wish to indict the good intentions of those who put them forth. Many times the promoters are high-minded men and women, with noble ambitions, who, without a doubt, may accomplish a certain amount of good in holding back the forces of evil.

We must guard against allowing any real measure of the fire, the energy, the time, and the resources that

The Danger of Waning Confidence

belong to us individually and as a people, to be turned aside into any of these channels. There are enough good people around the circle of the world who have not been commissioned of God to preach a special message, to give to the varied plans for world betterment all the momentum and support they deserve. We must never lose sight of the fact that there is but one reason for our existence as a people. And the reason is that God desires that there be brought to the world a certain definite message—a message to prepare men for the second advent of Jesus Christ in our day. There is no gainsaying this fact. It has controlled the thinking of this movement from the beginning. If we change the emphasis in any degree, to that degree we turn aside from the real purpose of and the real reason for our existence.

We are as surely deceived if we turn aside to support some glittering scheme for world betterment as if we followed some new, strange religious view. The nature of the deception is different, but the effect can be just as disastrous. In both cases we give our energy to that which is not of the essence of this advent message.

As a religious body grows older and larger, its very size gives to it a certain influence. Increasingly its membership, either individually or collectively, is urged by various organizations to give support to this project or that. We are beginning to be confronted with this problem. There is something flattering about this to a little people like us, who have had to struggle against tremendous opposition to gain the headway we now have. The very energy

Behold, He Cometh

we have revealed in promoting our beliefs serves only to increase the invitations given to us to support various noble schemes and plans for world improvement.

We cannot isolate ourselves from the world and its material problems; yet we cannot afford under any circumstances to turn our primary energies to any of the numerous projects for world betterment. While it is true, for example, that we may properly give a certain support to the prohibition movement, our chief endeavor should be along the path of the health and temperance message that God has given to us. We may properly give some moral support to the many laudable movements for peace, but our real endeavor is to bring to men's hearts the Prince of Peace, and make them ready for the setting up of the kingdom of peace. We may hope and pray for the success of the schemes devised for settling the age-old conflict between capital and labor; yet our real endeavor should be to point men to the meaning of this conflict, and to turn their hearts toward readiness for the soon-coming day when God will solve the problem.

With delusive teachings springing up here and there, and with appealing projects for world reform beckoning to us, we should remember the warning of Christ: "Take heed that no man deceive you."

*The Deception
of Apostasy*

The Deception of Apostasy

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Rev. 3:11.

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Matt. 24:13.

PROBABLY the most subtle of deceptions is that created by the apostasy of some from the church. John wrote concerning apostasy in the first century:

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

1 John 2:19.

This inspired statement was made only about seventy years after the founding of the Christian church. There were numbers still living who had witnessed the organization of this new movement in the world. Yet in this short space of time there had been desertions from the church, with all the troubles that such apostasies create. It is therefore not a thing to be marveled at, that in these last days also the church of God should be troubled with apostasy in its various forms.

The Bible does not give us many details regarding the church troubles of the first century, nor is it necessary for us to know them; but it is well for us to give some study to the problem as it affects our own age. From time to time since the beginning of this second advent message, there have been those

who have gone out from us. This is frequently a cause of perplexity to many good church members, who, though they may not be led away into apostasy, are nevertheless not quite able to understand why such "earnest people" have withdrawn from the movement.

We believe that a lucid way to deal with this problem is to set down the outstanding characteristics of these offshoots. With these points before us we can then draw definite conclusions. Allowing for some minor exceptions, the various offshoots that have developed from time to time possess, or did possess while they existed, the following characteristics:

1. They are destructive. Their message is not a new, clear, positive one, but a negative one. They are chiefly concerned with denouncing the movement with which they have so lately been allied. Now true Protestantism, though it is a protest against the evil of the false church out of which our fathers came, is defined in terms of positive truths that were set forth by the Reformers. No great wisdom is required to be a critic or to denounce others. The evidence of wisdom, of the wisdom that cometh down from above, is in the setting forth of a new and better way in which men should walk.

2. Irrelevant or unimportant questions are stressed. If the whole time and energy of the offshoot is not concerned with denouncing or criticizing the denomination, the "new light" given out generally consists of irrelevant and often ludicrous points. There are certain minds that seem possessed

of the sad faculty of stressing the unimportant; they are almost ready to become martyrs for the inconsequential. We have a ludicrous illustration of this in the person who is ready to call down anathemas upon the men of the denomination because they shave the "corners of the beard."

It is a fact, however, that at times "new light" is advocated by such offshoots, that does not deal with an irrelevant or unimportant subject. Instead, it affects some basic doctrine. If we remember one simple rule, we shall be able to judge rightly as to whether to accept "new light." And that rule is that no new light from God will cast a shadow over light already given to us.

3. The mistakes of certain leaders are held up. Reduced to a syllogism, the argument runs thus: Elder Blank is a minister. He is not what he ought to be. Therefore the whole movement is evil.

This is not a new method of attacking an organization. It is as old, and also as faulty, as the human race. The rightness or wrongness of a movement cannot thus be determined. There will always be those among the leaders who are not what God would have them to be. The movement is not bad because of them, but good in spite of them. The question of whether the Lord is leading in a movement is best answered by comparing its doctrines with the words of Scripture. "If they speak not according to this word," then we can rightly say that the organization is not of God; and, conversely, if they do speak according to the Bible, then God surely must be directing the work, for only when the Spirit of God

enlightens men, can they know the truth. Flesh and blood cannot reveal it unto them. Therefore this second advent movement, which is teaching the true Bible doctrines, was not started by the wisdom of man, nor does it thus continue.

Without question, the faulty life of a leader can do great damage and cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. It is also true that genuine Christianity can be fully understood only as it is lived out. Yet we must always remember that the question of the divine origin of Christianity must be decided by the great spiritual truths and moral standards it represents, and not by the lives of those who call themselves Christians.

For four years the so-called Christian peoples of various nations killed one another in bloody fighting, much to the bewilderment of the heathen, who thought that Christianity meant loving one another. The only explanation needed for this paradox is that these Christian peoples were not living up to what they claimed to believe. Christianity still stands as the revelation of God to man despite the course that so-called Christian nations pursue; and likewise the threefold message still remains as God's last message for the world, despite the course that any member or leader in the movement may take.

However, before we pass on to the next point, a word of caution might well be given regarding the charges that the enemies of the denomination make against various leaders. Most of these charges are a pure tissue of falsehoods, and others are based on a gross distortion of facts.

4. The Testimonies are frequently the pivotal point. The various offshoots may generally be classed in two opposing groups as regards the writings of Mrs. E. G. White. The first quote the Spirit of prophecy at great length; the second denounce it as a fraud. The first use the Testimonies because they find therein certain passages that apparently give support to their charge that the denomination is so sinful that its members should leave it; the second group denounce them as fraudulent in an attempt to escape the indictment found in those writings against deserters from the faith.

The first group are not consistent, because the very Testimonies which point out sins in the denomination, also affirm that despite spiritual weaknesses God is still with the movement, and will bring it through to a successful finish, and denounce those who raise the cry, "Come out." The second group show the weakness of their charge that the Testimonies are a fraud, by the irrelevant objections they bring forth. It is possible to bring objections against even the Bible, but they are palpably weak. Thus with the case that this second group would strive to make out against the Testimonies.

Of those who wrongly quote the Spirit of prophecy, the messenger of the Lord inquires:

"Those who have proclaimed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon, have made use of the 'Testimonies' in giving their position a seeming support; but why is it that they did not present that which for years has been the burden of my message,—the unity of the church? Why did they not quote

the words of the angel, 'Press together, press together, press together'? Why did they not repeat the admonition and state the principle, that 'in union there is strength; in division there is weakness'?—"*Testimonies to Ministers*," p. 56.

5. Great earnestness and sincerity seem to control offshoots. This feature is a source of perplexity to many. "How," they ask, "could those people be so earnest and sincere if they did not believe what they teach?" Unfortunately, earnestness and sincerity, while they generally accompany a firm belief in anything, do not thereby prove the belief true. It is the truth of a belief that sanctifies the earnestness, and not the earnestness that sanctifies and makes true the belief.

The human mind is so constructed that a lie may ultimately be accepted as the truth if there is the will to believe. This fact is well illustrated by Scripture. "The time cometh," said Christ to His disciples, "that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2. This is the choicest example that could be offered of reversed thinking combined with great earnestness. Further, we are told of a class of people who, "because they received not the love of the truth," finally believed "a lie." 2 Thess. 2:10, 11. A self-deceived earnest man we may appropriately pity, but we cannot believe. The Spirit of prophecy declares:

"False teachers may appear to be very zealous for the work of God, and may expend means to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they mingle error with truth, their message is one

of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. They are to be met, and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of falsehood, and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth."—*Id.*, p. 55.

6. These offshoots ultimately languish and die. If, as they claim, they are the final "called out" of God who are to complete the great work begun by this movement, they should grow stronger and more successful as the years go by. But just the reverse is true. Now God is not the leader of a dying concern. He is directing a growing and expanding movement in these closing days, for His last message is not going to end up in a corner, but is to be proclaimed mightily in every part of the earth.

Whenever our minds are troubled over this whole question of countermovements, we should think back a moment over the characteristics that distinguish them, and then ask ourselves, Is God the author of such offshoots? To ask the question is to answer it. With that question decided in the negative, we should then remember these five great positive facts:

1. God has a church on the earth.

"God has a church upon the earth, who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people."—*Id.*, p. 61.

2. The remnant church is *not* Babylon.

"When any one arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with

Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent."—*Id.*, p. 41.

3. This great movement came at exactly the right time in fulfillment of prophecy. If it had come earlier or later, it could not claim to have arisen in response to prophecy. It was no accident that this message began in the days of '44. God started it, and what is more encouraging, we have the promise that He will carry it through to a glorious conclusion.

4. The offshoots are simply so many signs that the end is upon us, for the devil knows of no more effective way to hinder God's plan than to attempt to tear down this organization that Heaven has built up in these last days. Instead of being downcast by these desertions, we should lift up our heads and rejoice, for our redemption draweth nigh.

5. Despite all the weaknesses and mistakes of both leaders and lay members, God still loves and directs this advent movement.

"God has a people in which all heaven is interested, and they are the one object on earth dear to the heart of God. Let every one who reads these words give them thorough consideration; for in the name of Jesus I would press them home upon every soul."—*Ibid.*

"The church, enfeebled and defective, needing

to be reprov'd, warn'd, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard."—*Id.*, p. 49.

It is well for all of us to ask ourselves betimes, "Why am I a Seventh-day Adventist?" The answer is that we are Adventists because, as a result of the study of the Bible, which we believe to be God's word to us, we have learned great truths that are vital to our salvation, and particularly because we have learned from the prophecies that the day of the Lord is near at hand. Believing these truths in the setting of the prophecies, we have applied them to our lives, and have joined ourselves to those who hold the same religious convictions. We have thus joined with others, not only that we may receive the joy that comes from such fellowship, but also that we may give that added strength to the spreading of the message that comes from united effort.

When we thus view our membership in this movement, we arm ourselves against the subtle temptation to give up everything because of the failure of some individual member. We think of ourselves as an army under orders that we have found in God's word, commissioning us to warn the world. Thus, if a traitor, whether official or private, is discovered, we do not conclude that it is time for us all to desert. Rather, we feel that there is need for greater loyalty on our part. God, who has brought forth and enlarged and strengthened this movement over the earth, is not going to desert it in these last days. There is no danger of that. There is danger that, under the pressure of temptation, some member of

Behold, He Cometh

the movement may desert it. That is what we must guard against.

Apostates and apostate movements will confront us until the end. Sad to say, there are a few believers who have been deceived and led astray by them. But we need not be thus deceived if we will but remember the characteristics that have always distinguished apostasy.

*Aids to Maintaining
Faith in the
Advent Movement*

Aids to Maintaining Faith in the Advent Movement

"When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Daystar arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19.

IN our day, when the devil is seeking to break down our faith in the advent movement, what course should we follow to ensure the maintenance of our faith? We offer five brief suggestions:

1. We should keep fresh in our minds the history of this movement. In reading the story of the children of Israel, we are repeatedly impressed with the fact that God desired them to remember all the way that He had led them. Their appalling outbursts of rebellion in the wilderness and their departures from God later on in Canaan, were generally the result of a loss of faith in God's leadership. This, in turn, was the result of their forgetting what God had done in their behalf at former times. The Lord commanded the Israelites to erect various memorials, that when their children asked, "What mean these stones?" their parents might recount to them the experiences of the past.

The Bible presents to us the doctrine of faith as resting not simply on the immediate conviction of the individual soul, apart from all things else, but as

depending in a very real way on the demonstrations that God has given in former times of His care for His children. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, that notable chapter on faith, is followed immediately by an appeal to those who know of what God did for the worthies of old, and who are thus "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," to press on unflinching in the way.

We do well to refresh our mind regarding the signal evidences of God's guiding hand in the early years of this advent movement. Only recently we were reading again the life of William Miller, and the experiences of 1844. Our own soul was refreshed as we received a renewed conviction that God led in that mighty spiritual awakening. Then, as we follow on from 1844, and witness the forming of a compact and growing movement, protected in its tender years from extremes of fanaticism and directed along paths that have led to a world-wide field of endeavor, there comes over us the renewed conviction that God has been leading this movement from the beginning.

2. But it is not sufficient that we should simply keep bright in our minds God's leading hand in the early days of this advent movement. We need also to keep closely in touch with the very present evidences of God's guiding. We are not connected with something static, but with a movement, something that is enlarging and spreading its borders constantly. The miracles of grace, the evidences of a directing Providence, and the proofs of divine intervention that repeatedly present themselves in connection with our far-flung mission work, reveal that God is lead-

ing this movement today as surely as when it began. The one who has been tempted to lose faith because time lingers, will be led to a new and stronger faith, for he will see in the harvest of souls in benighted lands a new meaning to the words of Peter regarding the Lord's promise to return: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9.

The one who is tempted to give up everything because he sees about him those who are hypocritical and who do not live out the truth, will find in these reports of mission advance the best antidote for this temptation to desert. He will be impressed anew that the faithlessness of some member in his local church cannot minimize the courageous faith of some far convert from heathenism who endures great dangers and hardships in following his new-found faith.

3. But there is something even more stimulating to our faith than the reading of the heartening reports from far mission fields. We can provide a demonstration in our own community that the power of God attends this message. There is no better antidote for that listlessness and waning interest that so quickly changes to complete loss of faith in the movement than to engage in soulsaving work for God. We may hear some one else say that there is a power that attends the preaching of the prophecies, and the other distinctive truths from God's holy word. But what each of us needs is the proof of that in

experiences we ourselves have. There is no substitute for this. In spiritual matters, even more than in material, we learn best in the school of experience. No theory regarding the divine source of our message and its transforming effect upon men's lives can compare with the conviction that takes hold upon us as we witness a life transformed through the message we have been instrumental in presenting.

The church member who is busy in such work for the Lord, and who sees men turning from evil habits with rejoicing to walk in the ways of right, will have little time for the attacks of those who would instill doubts concerning God's leadership of this movement.

We touch here only briefly on the subject of missionary work as it relates to maintaining our faith in the movement. The related aspects of missionary work will be considered in later chapters.

4. We should keep in close touch with world events in relation to fulfilling prophecy. It is not sufficient simply to read our daily newspaper or the weekly news magazines, as those of the world read them. Instead, we should scan the news of changing events and trends in our world always with a consciousness that the news we read may have a bearing upon the prophecies for these last days.

In order to have this prophetic outlook on the news of the day, we must find time to read something else besides the news. Too often in our busy life we seem to find little time for reading other than the newspaper. What we need to make sure of is that we are also constantly reading the prophetically in-

terpreted news, such as is found in abundance in our denominational literature, both books and periodicals.

We have found some Adventist homes—we like to think there are few—in which the members of the household say they do not have time to read our denominational literature. Yet those same homes almost invariably subscribe to a bulky daily newspaper, and often to some worldly magazines. The question is not necessarily whether such reading matter is good or bad, for we may grant that there is much worth-while information to be obtained from these sources. The question is, rather, Should we devote our few available reading hours to perusing this secular literature, to the virtual exclusion of our own truth-filled journals and books? On the answer to this question hinges in no small degree the spiritual fervor and faith of certain church members.

5. Last, but certainly not least in this brief series of suggestions on aids to maintaining faith and confidence in the movement, is that we talk with others in the church of what God has done for us as a result of our following the light. We are busy people, but generally we find a little time to visit with others. Yet how often the social hour is completely filled with a discussion of things that have no possible relationship to our spiritual living. There is certainly no sin in discussing the weather, or business, or crop conditions, or a variety of similar subjects. But it is a pity to deprive our souls of the spiritual strength that comes from even a brief exchange of thoughts and experiences in the spiritual realm.

Behold, He Cometh

Much is said of the need of gaining greater boldness in Jesus Christ, to proclaim Him to the world. But sometimes it seems that we need a measure of this boldness in order to speak out naturally and freely about spiritual matters, even to those of the household of faith. It is a good thing at times simply to talk of the goodness of God when you meet some brother along the wayside, or have a word across the fence, or call on him for a few moments in a social way.

Greater reality and depth is given to our own spiritual understanding when we make audible in conversation with others our hopes and our desires in the Christian way. Almost invariably such expressions by us result in similar ones by those to whom we speak. This in turn adds strength to our Christian living. For who of us has not noted at times the new impetus to godly living that we have received from the words of faith and fervor expressed by some other soul? Perhaps it has been but a simple confession of calm faith in God under some trying experience. We go back to our own home, and the memory of it fastens upon us. In our own hours of trial and perplexity, we are aided by the conviction that if some other brother is experiencing blessing and increased faith in the midst of his trials, we can also.

And the value of this interchange of experiences moves out beyond the narrow circle of our own particular life's problem, to the larger sphere of our confidence in the whole movement that has nurtured our spiritual life in a denominational way.

*Prayer—An Aid
to Growth in Grace*

Prayer—An Aid to Growth in Grace

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matt. 26:41.

“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” Mark 13:33.

WHILE it is true that we are saved through no virtue of our own, and through no pious works that we may perform, it is equally true that God has set before us certain activities as aids to growth in grace. While justification from sin and acceptance with God is the work of a moment, sanctification is the work of a lifetime. This is simply another way of saying that while the new birth may be instantaneous, growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is to continue through all our days. Our goal should ever be to grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

As truly as in the physical life, we cannot expect God to feed and clothe and strengthen our bodies while we sit listless, failing to avail ourselves of the opportunity of labor; even so in the spiritual life we cannot expect the Lord to strengthen our soul, enlarge our understanding, or quicken our spirit, if we apathetically move along in our spiritual life, failing to avail ourselves of the divine aids to growth in grace. There is in this matter of spiritual growth the same beautiful principle of cooperation of the divine and the human as in the matter of provision

for the physical body. God does not move independently of the creatures whom He has created, and to whom He has given free will and the mysterious privilege of developing character as the result of the experiences that are met day by day.

No truth is more important for the beginner in the Christian way to learn. In fact, many who have been long in the way need to have this truth refreshed in their minds. How often those who did run well for a time find themselves hindered in the way! How often those who have had a rich and blessed experience starting out on the path, find their hearts cold and their spiritual movements stiff and halting after a little time!

There are present everywhere about us evidences of a lack of growth in grace. Many church members seem to conclude that religious experience is an illustration of perpetual motion, that once the religious life has been set in motion by conversion, it ought to run automatically, without any attention or care on their part. But the idea of perpetual motion is as much an error in the spiritual world as in the physical. Our religion is based on very solid and substantial facts, and the experience that is to be drawn from them demands certain nurture and care and exercise.

There are those who apparently think that they find in an occasional revival service and in a few fleeting moments of exalted feeling or deep contrition, a substitute for this consistent care and exercise. Revivals are proper; contrition is most wholesome; and exalted feelings may well be part of the Chris-

tian life at times. But they are not a substitute for that consistent, day-by-day program and discipline for the spiritual life, without which the soul becomes flabby, languid, and cold.

And what are the aids to growth in grace, the activities in which the Christian should consistently engage if he is to ensure for himself a steady and an enriching spiritual life that will prepare him for the day of the Lord? We do not claim to offer a complete answer to this question, but we venture to set forth certain primary means ordained of God for this purpose. We shall consider in this chapter what we believe is the most obvious and most important of all these aids,—prayer. The person who knows not how to pray knows not God, and he who has forgotten to pray has forgotten God. God is not only our Saviour from sin, the one who has lifted us from the kingdom of darkness and placed us in the kingdom of light; but He is our counselor, our guide, our comforter, our sustainer, our protector against temptation. In these manifold ways God proves a source of consistent strength and guidance to us, and a very present help in time of trouble.

The irreligious view God as one whom they need call on only in the hour of extremity; the true Christian, having had the experience of receiving help from God in the hour of spiritual conviction of sin, seeks ever a closer fellowship with such a God, and strives to know Him better day by day. As the communion of friend with friend brings mutual joy, encouragement, counsel, and consolation, so the daily communion of the Christian with his Father in

Behold, He Cometh

heaven brings that sense of constant fellowship, protection, and guidance that gives to the Christian the peace that passes all understanding.

In His notable prayer in the shadow of Gethsemane, Christ declared: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. But how can we hope to know God, whom to know aright is life eternal, unless we commune often with Him? There is no substitute for prayer in the spiritual life, even as there is no substitute for breathing in the physical life. To talk with God is the exalted privilege of those who, having once been enemies of God, are now made friends by the blood of Christ. It is the privilege of those who, once having been aliens and outcasts, are now adopted into the family of heaven. Those who are enemies hold no converse with one another. What must Heaven think of the one who, having been reconciled to God, continues on, at least in the matter of converse with God, as though he were still an enemy!

We should ever be in a prayerful attitude, ever conscious that our dependence is upon God, and that it is to Him that we must look for such spiritual aid as may be needed for any emergency that confronts us. It is in this sense that the apostle's words are to be understood, "Pray without ceasing." Particularly, as a practice of life, we should pray in the morning when we arise, committing our ways to the Lord, asking for His divine power for successful living for the day; and then again in the evening, expressing thankfulness for the blessings of the day,

Prayer

pleading forgiveness for sins, and invoking an evening benediction and protection upon the home. It hardly need be added that the range of our prayers may properly move far beyond the limits of this briefest outline. But this simply describes certain primary features that should be dominant in the prayer life, so far as the individual's own soul is concerned.

If prayer is to be other than a mere form of words, faith must be exercised. Indeed, true prayer is a sublime exhibition of faith. It is a constant revelation on the part of a poor, frail human being that he believes the God of the universe is interested in his little problems and needs. The book of Hebrews sets forth this matter of faith in relationship to our coming to God. We read: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6.

We should pray to God, not in the attitude of those who anxiously fear lest their supplications will not be heard, but in the attitude of those who possess quiet confidence and assurance that God has heard them in the past, and will again listen to their pleas. A beautiful illustration of this quiet confidence is seen in the words of Christ as He stood before the tomb of Lazarus: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John 11:41, 42.

Not only should we pray with confidence, but we should pray with definiteness. One obstacle to successful prayer is the hackneyed groove into which we are ever in danger of letting our words fall. There is something peculiar about words. Phrases which, when first uttered, expressed most precisely the deepest feelings of the soul, may, as a result of endless repetition, lose all meaning and significance. Words have no meaning, at least in prayer, unless they reflect immediately and definitely the feelings of the mind and heart. But how can it be said that the heart's longings are being expressed to God when most of the prayer consists of the repetition of phrases that have been used countless times before, and which pour from the lips with scarcely any relationship to the heart? Too many prayers reveal a good memory rather than a good religious experience. This is a hard saying, but who will doubt the truth of it?

All of us are in danger of falling before this temptation, and few escape altogether. If we continued to talk to our friends as many of us too often talk to God in prayer, we would lose our friends. They would conclude, and rightly so, that our heart was not in what we said, that our words and phrases were strangely like those they had heard us use many time before, and that we were merely going through a set form of expression for politeness' sake, rather than because we really desired to converse with them on matters of immediate present interest.

When we pray to God, we should mention specifically our needs, and pray very definitely for protection against specific temptations that confront us

day by day. There is no other way than this for prayer to serve the real purpose that God intended it should as an aid to growth in grace. We do not live day by day in broad generalities; we live in terms of actual, definite experiences that we meet hour by hour. Then let our prayers be definite and to the point.

The devil's temptations do not present themselves in a vague, cloudy way along the pathway of life, but in terms of very real and generally well-defined temptations. And while it is true that none of us knows all the possible iniquity of his heart, yet sad experiences have revealed to us that in certain kinds of encounters with the devil we have not come off conquerors. Therefore our prayer to God should be for victory on these very points. It may be passion, it may be pride, it may be temper; but whatever it is, God has grace and power for that problem. For where sin abounds, grace does much more abound, and with every temptation God has prepared a way of escape. (See Rom. 5:20; 1 Cor. 10:13.)

Of what value is our Christian life if it cannot help us in the places where we are weakest? And therefore of what value is prayer, unless it can serve as a means of presenting definitely to the Lord our need of help on these particular points? How sad indeed, when we must go forth day by day to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil, that our morning prayers are so often filled with what in harsh truth must be described as little more than a form of words, a mere repetition of phrases.

One means of making our prayer very definite

Behold, He Cometh

is to place our finger on a promise of God that is found in the Scriptures, and then claim a fulfillment of that promise in our own experience, reverently challenging the Lord to fulfill His promise in our behalf. This is the counsel offered to us in the Spirit of prophecy.

It is we who live in the last days who are in the greatest need of this mighty aid to growth in grace. To us the warning of Christ applies with the most timely force: "Take ye heed, watch and *pray*: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33. How can we expect to meet successfully the subtle temptations of these last times unless we commune much with God? Those who will go triumphantly through the final time of trouble will be a praying people.

***Bible Study—An Aid
to Growth in Grace***

Bible Study—An Aid to Growth in Grace

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Ps. 119:11.

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures, and who have received the love of the truth, will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive."—"The Great Controversy," p. 625.

THE words of the apostle Peter properly introduce our discussion of the Bible as an aid to growth in grace. We read: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:1, 2.

The figure of speech here used is a simple one. As the newborn babe, by partaking of milk, grows strong, even so those newborn in the faith grow by faithfully partaking of the word of God. In both cases the opposite results certainly follow failure to take food. A failure to partake of food would cause the newborn infant to weaken and die; even so, the beginner in the Christian way who fails to feed upon the word of God, will not have his spiritual life maintained and strengthened. Without doubt we find in this fact the reason why there are so many weak, sickly Christians.

Let us carry the figure a little further: If food is to give real strength and growth to the body, it must be eaten regularly. Spasmodic feeding, a great

quantity occasionally, with varying long intervals between, would produce very poor results. The child might survive, but it would be far from healthy. Even so with the Christian. We cannot make our study of the Bible a hit-or-miss affair, reading only occasionally as the mood impels, and leaving the Bible unread for long periods between. There must be system and order and a carefully followed program in the spiritual life, as in the physical, if satisfactory growth is to result. God will not work miracles to give physical health when we knowingly violate the laws that govern our bodies. How, then, can we expect Him in some miraculous way to maintain for us our spiritual vitality and fervor when we knowingly fail to observe the most primary laws that govern our spiritual being? These questions are so obvious that they provide their own answer. But how often members in the church proceed on a course that reveals that they have given no serious thought to such questions!

No fact needs to be impressed more firmly on our minds than this, that growth in grace is not the result of accident, nor even exclusively of providence or a miracle, as we commonly understand those terms, but rather of a beautiful combination of the divine and the human. God, on His part, gives promised wisdom and strength for holy living. We, on our part, give obedience to the laws of the spiritual life. And beyond all controversy, one of those laws is that we should diligently, prayerfully study the Scriptures.

Some portion of the Bible should be read morn-

ing and evening, that our first thoughts of the day may be of the instruction God has for us, and our last thoughts at night a meditation on His Holy Word.

If we are just starting out in the Christian way, we may profitably begin our study of the word by reading the more simple narratives, the four Gospels, for example, and the stories of God's leading of the patriarchs and the children of Israel, as found in the writings of Moses. Not only are these passages the most simple, and therefore the most easily understood, but they provide the proper introduction to a more exhaustive study of the whole Bible; for the four Gospels provide the setting in which we are to see all the writings of the New Testament. The epistles of Paul and the other apostles are an exposition of the gospel which Christ enunciated by His life and teachings.

The writings of Moses are not only the introduction to the Old Testament, but the introduction to all the Scriptures, for Christ declared to the Jews: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me." John 5:46. And again, when Christ set before His disciples the proof that He must needs suffer and die and be raised again, He drew His proof first from Moses. We read: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27.

We should not be discouraged if we do not at first fully understand all that we read. While the Bible has passages of the most charming simplicity,

Behold, He Cometh

it also has portions that are profound. But God has promised that His Spirit will enlighten our minds, so that we can ever more fully understand His word. And it is the testimony of all those who have prayerfully and reverently studied the Scriptures over a period of years that He has fulfilled to them His promise. There is always a true thrill in studying the Bible. There are ever new truths to discover in it. When we read, at first the outline of God's ways for man may stand forth as a very dim, hazy picture; but as our study continues, the outlines become sharper, the details are filled in, the colors become more clear and rich.

Not only should we read the word of God, but we should endeavor to memorize choice portions. There is no stronger bulwark against temptation. The psalmist declares: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Ps. 119:11.

The words of God, fixed in our memory, are not only a bulwark against temptation, but a source of comfort and guidance in hours of perplexity or gloom. What is fixed in the memory has a remarkable way of coming suddenly into the foreground of one's thinking at the critical moment. If our memory is filled with Scripture, the hour of crisis will find us considering some choice passages of inspired instruction. In the midnight watches, when sleep refuses to come to us, whether from physical affliction or from nervous anxiety, how strengthening and quieting it is to meditate upon some portion of the word that we have fixed in our memory!

While memorizing will require diligent and

Bible Study

repeated effort, it is an encouragement to know that a systematic study of the Scriptures will cause certain choice passages to become fixed in our minds almost without our realizing it. This is one of the unexpected dividends of systematic study.

If we would gain the full inspiration and blessing from the reading of the Bible, we should strive to impress anew upon our minds each time we open the Book, that we are dealing with the word of the living God. Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul declared: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." 1 Thess. 2:13. Indeed, the word cannot work effectually in us unless we believe that it is in truth the word of God.

There are many scholars who read the Bible as they would a piece of literature, reveling in its choice phrases and figures of speech. But they fail to receive from it any real blessing or renewing of spirit, because they look upon it simply as the words of men. It is well for us at times to ponder the sweeping declaration of Paul: "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." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

But there is one step further even than maintaining a consciousness that we are reading the word of God and that all that it says, whether in prophecy

or history or exhortation, is true. That further step is the realization that those things "written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15:4. It avails little that we should know of God's dealing with the ancient worthies who had faith in Him, unless we see that the same God who rewarded their faith will reward ours. The great lesson that Paul strives to bring out from the recital of the faithful patriarchs in that notable eleventh chapter of Hebrews, is that inasmuch as we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, we should "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and . . . run with patience the race that is set before us." Heb. 12:1.

For example, we should not read the story of Elijah simply as a record of a man whose prayer God answered thousands of years ago, but as an occasion for confidence that God will answer our prayers. It is in this way that James viewed this experience. In exhorting to faith in prayer, he declared to the New Testament believers: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James 5:17, 18. The obvious lesson, of course, is that if God heard a man by the name of Elijah, who was flesh and blood as we are, He will hear us. The conclusion is simple and irresistible, and it is this conclusion that we must ever bring into the forefront of our thinking

as we read the experiences related in the Scriptures.

But we are to see the practical application of Scriptures not only with respect to the promises and the faithfulness of God, but also with respect to the warnings of Scripture. Of the record of wayward Israel of old, Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:

"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:6-11.

Well does the apostle add immediately: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Verse 12. That is the moral, we might say, to the stories of the Old Testament. Human nature is surprisingly the same through all the ages. That is what makes the Old Testament characters seem so real to us, and their experiences so vivid. And that is why we should ever strive to find in each of these incidents of the long ago the practical lesson for our own present-day living. The same primary temptations that pressed upon them crowd in on us today.

Behold, He Cometh

We, above all who have lived before us, should be diligent students of the word. This is so, not simply because we are in the greatest need of being fortified against temptation and prepared to answer for our faith, but also because we must be fortified against deception. There are to be delusions so persuasive that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. Repeatedly are we warned against deception in connection with the return of our Lord. In her description of the time of trouble, Mrs. E. G. White makes this solemn statement, "Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures, and who have received the love of the truth, will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive."—*"The Great Controversy,"* p. 625.

And then follows almost immediately this searching inquiry: "Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses?" Could more impressive proof be provided of the solemn necessity that is ours of studying diligently the Scriptures!

*Attendance at Divine
Services—An Aid to
Growth in Grace*

Attendance at Divine Services—An Aid to Growth in Grace

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Heb. 10:25.

ANOTHER of the important aids to growth in grace is the services of the house of the Lord. Where the word of God is proclaimed, there God, by His Spirit, is present to enlighten and to bless. The Lord's promise is that “where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. 18:20.

God did not ordain church services simply to establish for His children a ritual, a form, or a ceremony, but because such services are vital to the continuation and growth of the spiritual life. There is nothing meaningless or unnecessary in God's plans for us. There are countless opportunities for men and women to meet together in a variety of capacities for culture, for education, for amusement. It is not because we need simply one more opportunity of mingling with our fellow men, that God ordained the services of the church.

God ordained the church, not as an addition to, but rather in the place of, many other organizations and gatherings that the world offers to meet the natural desire for fellowship. The picture that the

Behold, He Cometh

Bible presents to us of the church is that of a body called out of the world. Our spiritual standards, our whole view of living, automatically makes a dividing line between us and the world at large. Former pleasures and associations are no longer proper or enjoyable. God offers us instead the fellowship of the saints, communion with the children of light in the circle of His church. He intends that the church shall provide a bulwark against many evil associations that otherwise might overwhelm us.

There are always those who declare that they can worship God as richly by staying at home and reading their Bibles. They may be sincere in thus thinking, but we are confident that they are mistaken, and our confidence rests on the simple fact that there is no safe substitute for God's ways and plans. If one could live as satisfactorily in his spiritual life by confining his religious exercises to his own home, or to his own self, he would automatically make unnecessary the church service. But there is nothing unnecessary in God's plans.

This idea that one can worship God as well by himself is not a twentieth-century idea. It is very ancient. It was present in the early church. We read this earnest warning of Scripture: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10:25. These words are straightforward, and admit of no misunderstanding. The "manner of some" in the early church was to forsake the assembling of themselves together. The manner of some

Attendance at Divine Services

today is the same. Against both are the clear, unequivocal words of Scripture, that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. On the contrary, we are to be "exhorting one another." Furthermore, we are to be the more diligent in our faithfulness at services as we "see the day approaching."

With the world more and more banded together in a bewildering array of leagues and cliques, political and social, in an endeavor to meet the problems that our troubled times present, we should be more and more faithful in our support of the one organization in this world that God has promised to guide safely to the end.

If we are to view this subject of attendance at church in the true light, we must impress on our minds the fact that we come to church, not to hear the preacher, but to worship God. How often do some excuse their absence from service by declaring that they do not care particularly to hear the speaker. We may freely grant that some ministers bring to our souls a more powerful message from God than do others, and that we feel more strengthened in spirit when we have sat under the preaching of some than when we have listened to others. Such differences are inevitable, for there has not been given to every man the same measure of grace; and some who might possess more grace have not sought for it as they might.

In the presentation of Heaven's message, God has always worked through human agencies, and preaching in the church services is no exception. But the

Behold, He Cometh

fact that the sermon may not possess the strength that we might properly long for, cannot alter the fact that God has promised to be in our midst to bless us. Nor does it alter the equally important fact that the presentation of Scripture, even in the hands of the most mediocre preacher, has in it a blessing for those who hear it and receive it to their hearts. His word will not return unto Him void.

We should enter the house of God with the realization that it *is* the house of God, remembering the admonition: "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." Hab. 2:20. And as we enter with that realization, a spirit of solemnity will take possession of our hearts, a consciousness that God's Spirit is present, and His angels are there. We shall sing with the spirit and the understanding, raising our voices thus in worship to God. When the prayer is offered, our heart will join with the one who leads the congregation. We shall view the receiving of the offering as an opportunity to show our love to God. When the Scriptures are opened by the speaker of the hour, we shall look beyond the preacher to the word that he is proclaiming from the Holy Book. And when the benediction is pronounced, we shall thank God anew that we can claim His blessing and His protection upon us as we leave His holy habitation. Maintaining this attitude, we may truly worship God and be refreshed in spirit, despite all the limitations of the speaker.

But the blessings of attendance at service are by no means confined to what is described as the eleven-o'clock hour on Sabbath morning. Unfortunately,

Attendance at Divine Services

there are some who restrict their view of the services of God's house to this one lone hour. Thus they rob themselves of much that God has for them. There is the Sabbath school hour, which immediately precedes. It needs no labored argument to show its worth. The Sabbath school is no longer on trial; rather, those who fail to attend are on trial. Here we have the systematic study of portions of God's word. Many point to the Sabbath school as the means whereby they have obtained their real instruction in the Bible.

There is also the prayer meeting. A Sunday-keeping minister once declared that the eleven-o'clock hour revealed the popularity of Sunday; the evening service, the popularity of the preacher; and the Wednesday-night service, the popularity of the Lord. The prayer meeting is really a very unusual sort of meeting. The world is filled with every kind of forum and gathering where men rise up to discuss a multitude of material problems, and likewise the world is filled with innumerable clubs where people gather to discuss aimlessly the gossip and scandal of the day. But the prayer meeting is a place where people meet to talk together about the goodness of God, to exhort one another to more holy living, and to recount to each other the blessings and experiences that have brought help and strength. There is nothing else quite like the prayer meeting anywhere in the wide circle of man's activities. It is a good place to be. The goodness of God is a blessed subject to discuss, and it is in the prayer meeting that such discussion is carried on.

Behold, He Cometh

But it is not only the listeners in the pews who hear what is said concerning the Lord and His blessings; God Himself in heaven above hears. We read: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Mal. 3:16, 17. It is those who would rather talk of God's love and goodness than anything else, whose conversation is in heaven, that are the fit subjects for heaven. And so, declares God, "they shall be Mine . . . in that day when I make up My jewels."

It is in the prayer meeting that we are best able to follow the admonition from the scripture in Hebrews already quoted, "exhorting one another." We can give strength and new courage to one another by mutual exhortation. The experience of one believer proves an aid to faith for another. God has so designed. We may rob some soul of the encouragement and blessing that he sorely needs if we fail to be present at the prayer meeting to offer our testimony of what God has done for us.

There are some who, while generally quite regular in their attendance at church service, absent themselves on the Sabbath when the Lord's supper is celebrated. We have never been able to understand fully why this should be so. Communion service is intended to keep bright in our minds the

Attendance at Divine Services

central fact of Christ's sacrifice in our behalf. For, said the Saviour to His disciples, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." 1 Cor. 11:26. Surely we have none too many aids to memory concerning this sublime fact in the plan of salvation.

The ordinance of humility which immediately precedes, is also of great spiritual significance. Who of us but needs ever to learn anew the lesson of humility, to sense that if we are to be true followers of the lowly Christ, there must be no pride or self-esteem in our hearts? If we are tempted to stay away from this special service because our heart smites us or because of some tension with our brethren, we should thank God that He has ordained this service that so clearly brings to our minds the need of a better Christian experience.

Seventh-day Adventists are a churchgoing people. It is one of the marks of this movement. It must continue to be a mark of those who will go through safely to the kingdom of God. We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more as we see the day approaching.

*Liberality—An Aid to
Growth in Grace*

Liberality—An Aid to Growth in Grace

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matt. 6:20, 21.

IT is difficult for some church members to see a very close relationship between money and spirituality. There are some, even, who feel that while the collection is indeed a necessary part of the church service, it is rather alien to the rest of the service, and plays no real part at all in the cycle of spiritual activities that mark the worship in the house of the Lord. We grant that it is possible for the financial features of church life to be handled in such a way that they are not only alien to the spiritual worship, but actually opposed to it. This is truly to be regretted, and the fact that such matters are occasionally thus handled causes some to forget that God intends our acts of giving to be a very real part of our worship, to be, indeed, aids to growth in grace.

The same principle applies in this matter as applies in subjects we have studied in the preceding chapters; namely, the spirit in which the act is performed determines the effect of that act upon our spiritual life. If we give grudgingly, contributing out of a sense of compunction or cold duty, certainly there is little or no blessing that will come to our heart in exchange. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

But if, filled with a sense of our great debt to God for all His goodness to us, we express our gratitude, not simply in words or even in hours of labor, but also in giving of our means, we make of that giving a religious act; it becomes the outward expression of an inward feeling and conviction of the soul.

The devil ever tempts us to selfishness. There are a great many Christians who succumb in varying degrees to this temptation, and who thus give expression to their love and gratitude to God in a much smaller manner than they ought. To the extent that we stifle our expressions of gratitude, to that extent we hinder growth in grace. The picture that the Bible presents to us of God's side of the plan of salvation is one of unreserved giving, holding back nothing from us. Paul thus describes the divine attitude: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. The Christian who would follow the divine example will allow no place for the temptation to selfishness; he will be ready to respond to the promptings of God's Spirit to give whatever the Lord impresses him to give.

It is a notable fact that in the early Christian church just such a course as this was followed. The believers sold what they had and placed the money at the apostles' feet. (See Acts 4:32-37.) And one of the most striking judgments of God took place in connection with the man and his wife who, while making a pretense of placing all at the apostles' feet, actually kept back part for themselves. They wished

the reputation of liberality while enjoying the material security of money.

God has ordained the path of liberality as an avenue of escape from that deep-seated vice of selfishness which is present in the natural heart. Indeed, we cannot follow Christ, and thus cannot grow in grace, unless we are willing to walk along the path of liberality toward the Lord. This is one of the lessons taught in the story of the rich young ruler. Evidently, from his answer to the Master, he was what would be known as a model young man, to all intents and appearances, at least so far as the letter of the law was concerned. But to his question, "What lack I yet?" the Master replied: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt. 19:21-24.

The decision of this young man is one of the tragic decisions of history. He decided to follow the path of his riches rather than follow Christ. He could not follow both. The command of the Saviour, "Go and sell that thou hast," went deep down to the source of the trouble, the natural selfishness of the human heart.

Christ's declaration "that a rich man shall hardly

enter into the kingdom of heaven" (verse 23), has caused some to conclude that rich men of necessity are essentially more evil than others, but this is to miss the spiritual truth entirely. The only difference between the rich and any other of Adam's children is that they are under greater temptation to selfishness and covetousness. And thus, unless they receive definite help from God for victory over this temptation, they can never obtain that growth in grace needful to obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Again, we may view this matter of liberality from another standpoint. The more we invest in a project, the more our heart is there, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. And Christ declared that when our gifts are given in liberality to causes that God ordains, we "have treasure in heaven." Now of a surety if we are following a program in our spiritual life that causes us increasingly to have our heart fixed on heaven, we are following a plan that means growth in grace. God invested all that He had, even His only-begotten Son, in this earth of ours. All the thoughts and the plans of heaven have been directed first of all to our little earth, and it is this that ensures full salvation. If God had only a halfhearted interest in our benighted world, what hope would we have? We, upon accepting of salvation, place all of the treasure that we have in heaven; our whole heart and interest is there. Thus a divine balance is maintained. To the extent that we allow our heart to be centered on the world, to that extent we hinder growth in grace.

The spiritual value of unstinted liberality toward

the Lord is revealed further in the fact that it tends ever to develop in us faith in God. Christ said to His disciples: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" Luke 12:22-24.

Bible writers condemn the hoarding of resources as an enemy to spirituality and to that sense of dependence on God which should characterize the Christian. Paul well sets forth the Christian philosophy of living, so far as material possessions are concerned: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." 1 Tim. 6:6-8.

He immediately presents the other half of the picture by declaring: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." Verses 9-11. Coveting money, loving money so dearly that we allow it to stifle a proper expression of our love to God,—this, indeed, is the enemy of righteous living. Paul would have Timothy "flee these things; and

follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." Following after these, we grow in grace.

It is not simply the rich who are under the special temptation we have been here discussing, but also "they that will be rich;" that is, all who set their will to acquire earthly riches, as the goal and objective of life. The fact that our means may be limited does not free us from the temptation to selfishness and covetousness. It may still be true that we are seeking with all our energy to make the acquiring of worldly treasure our first objective in life.

The taking of the offering in the house of the Lord provides for many members a test, a time of decision. Even as the ordinance of humility brings to us at regularly recurring intervals a realization of our need of humility before God and of humble fellowship with our brethren, just so may we view the regular taking up of the offering as ordained of God to bring to us the realization that our treasure should be in heaven, that selfish desire should be crucified. Down here in the last days of earthly history the scripture is still true, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And the blessing that the Lord gives to the liberal soul is one that cannot be obtained in any other way; it is a blessing, indeed, that contributes much to our spiritual growth. A true Adventist will be a liberal giver.

The subject of liberality toward the Lord is one that ought to receive increasing attention. We live in a day when there is soon to be fulfilled the prediction that men will throw their gold and their silver

to the bats. Right today we are witnessing here and there throughout the world the most amazing evidences of financial insecurity. Even in the most favored of lands men are fearful as to the safety of their investments. To us comes the exhortation of Christ, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt. 6:19, 20. The spiritual value of following such a course is revealed in the next verse: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If we would have our heart and our affection in heaven above, from whence we expect, soon, to see our Saviour come, we must give increasing attention to the spiritual value of sacrificial liberality.

*Missionary Work—
An Aid to
Growth in Grace*

Missionary Work—An Aid to Growth in Grace

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Matt. 24:45, 46.

ALL who are true Christians believe in missionary work, in laboring for the salvation of others. Certainly every true Seventh-day Adventist does. But very frequently such missionary work is viewed wholly as a blessing that is brought to others. The fact is that this kind of work brings as much blessing to us as it does to those for whom we labor. Missionary work has a definite place in that group of factors which God has ordained as aids to growth in grace. Certainly this much is true at the outset, that he who fails to engage in any kind of labor for souls, who does not turn over his hand at any time to advance the kingdom of God by his own personal missionary efforts, will lead a stunted, sickly spiritual life.

The Christian life is a life of giving, and such giving is subject to the miraculous rule that the more we give, the more we have. The more we give out to others of a knowledge of God's saving grace, the more fully we possess that knowledge ourselves, and the more richly we grasp the meaning of this salvation for our own lives.

There are some who act as though the giving of their resources was a substitute for personal missionary work. This is an error. There is no substitute for personal work. However, this is not to say that God holds all responsible for the same amount of personal work. It simply means that we cannot buy our way out of our personal responsibility, whatever the measure of that responsibility is. This is not to minimize the giving of resources, but simply to magnify the primary importance of personal, immediate labor for souls.

The last words of Christ in the Gospel record are the solemn command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Matt. 28:19. When we compare this command with the record in the book of Acts, we find that the early Christian church took this command very literally and very personally; we read that they "went everywhere preaching the word." Acts 8:4. And who will doubt but that this personal missionary fervor contributed much to the spiritual life and vitality of the early church? Certainly it contributed greatly to its growth in membership.

Of course, we are not blind to the fact that a person may go through the forms of missionary service without gaining grace or enlargement of the spiritual life. Christ declared that in the last days there would be those who would say to Him: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" And to these He makes the astounding reply: "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7:22, 23.

Certainly we cannot work our way to heaven, whether by missionary work or by works of penance or by any other kind of works. It is also true that we cannot read our way into the kingdom of heaven. The ancient rabbis read the Scriptures so intensively that they committed long portions to memory; but their act of reading and memorizing could not save them. Nor can we pray our way into heaven. There were rabbis who made long prayers, and many have followed their example with a certain kind of religious fervor in the centuries afterward; but this did not ensure them salvation, but rather the contrary.

But granting these facts does not in any way minimize the importance of prayer or Bible study or missionary work, or invalidate in any way the statement that all of them are intended of God to serve as aids to growth in grace. We must ever remember in connection with any program or endeavor we perform in the spiritual life, that we must always carry out such a program with the spirit and with the understanding, so that it is a reflection of the deepest movings of the soul.

It is deplorable, we grant, that some who are very busy about the work of the Lord, and whose missionary reports reveal much activity, fail to display in their lives a growth in grace that is in keeping with this volume of activity. But it is more deplorable when others use such examples as an excuse for not doing anything in the work of the Lord. The one who doubts that a spiritual blessing and enlargement of heart await him in missionary labor,

simply reveals that he has either never carried on any such work, or else has never entered into it with a whole heart and an unreserved desire to advance the kingdom of God.

All about us are men and women who, though they live in a so-called Christian land, are in truth pagans. They know nothing of God, His Holy Word, or His plan of salvation. Many of them have hearts that are filled with distress and fears and troubles, and not infrequently they long for some one to speak some word of help and inspiration and comfort to them. If you go out with your heart full of the love of God and a desire to bear witness to what God has done for your soul, you will find opportunities to bear witness, and you will find that when you have borne your testimony, you have brought blessing not only to those who have heard you, but also to yourself. You will find opportunities even to teach them how to pray. What a rare privilege—to introduce poor, troubled men to God, to help them frame the first words, perhaps, that they have ever uttered in supplication to Heaven! When we are thus acquainting men with God, we become better acquainted with Him ourselves, and thus we grow in grace.

One of the most hopeful aspects of this whole subject of missionary labor is that we need not have great learning or specialized training in order to make such work contribute definitely to our growth in grace. Not the eloquence of our witnessing, but the truth and sincerity of it, is the test of its value in the sight of Heaven. Perhaps not all are able to reveal in their endeavors the evidence of a brilliant mind,

but, thank God, all may reveal a heart glowing with the warmth of heaven. And the more we fan the flame in our hearts by such missionary endeavor, the more brightly it burns and the more radiant is our Christian life.

Paul tells us that we “are laborers together with God.” 1 Cor. 3:9. When we are laboring with God, we are thinking His thoughts; our plans are being molded to the pattern of heaven; our ideals and objectives are constantly being shaped by the divine. Think of it—laborers together with God! We may easily say the words, but who can fathom the depth of their meaning? Who can enter into the fullness of the experience made possible by these words? And who will doubt that there is great growth in grace in store for the man whose life is dedicated to laboring together with God. There is not only greater grace that results, but also a new and true dignity to living. Life takes on a meaning that it could never have otherwise. We sense that there is a plan and a purpose for us in this seemingly distraught and confused world.

When we are sincerely engaged in missionary labor for souls, we are using one of Heaven’s ordained barriers against temptation. It is as true in the spiritual world as it is in the material world that “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.” A church that has set for itself no diligent labors for God, but is merely going through a round of routine service, is as surely laying itself open to temptations as is the man who is physically idle. God never intended that His church should consist

of a group of people with time so heavy on their hands that they would be subject to the constant temptation to discuss rumors about Sister Smith or express critical views of Brother Brown.

Paul warns us: "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. 5:26. And how needful this warning is! But if it is to have its full value for us, we ought to read it in connection with these words from the epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Heb. 10:24. Evidently there are two kinds of provoking: one kind that leads to envy and jealousy, and another kind that leads to love and good works. If the church of God follows the pattern set for it, being diligent in missionary labor, one member encouraging another by the blessed experiences that he has had in such labor, there will be little chance for the devil to make headway in tempting us to provoke others to envy and jealousy. And of course, if we are provoking one another to love and to good works, we are following a path that will lead us to greater growth in grace.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a missionary church. It always has been, and it ever must be if it is to carry out the full counsel of God. We cannot truly fit into the spirit of this movement unless missionary zeal takes hold of our hearts. It is a very solemn thing to be a Seventh-day Adventist. This is most fully sensed when we realize, not only that missionary work is the duty of all, but also that our missionary work has as its most distinctive feature

the proclaiming to men of the solemn message of the soon coming of Jesus Christ.

In a sense that is more real and more easily understood than at any previous time in the world's history, the message we have for men is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death; for those to whom we preach are either to be ready with us to lift up their heads and rejoice in the day of Christ, or else to flee in terror to the rocks and mountains. God did not give us this solemn message simply to treasure in our own hearts, but to share with others. We are not intended to be reservoirs, but channels, of grace. And if we let the grace of salvation flow out to others from us, richer and still richer currents of grace will flow into our own hearts.

*Do You Work for God
as if You Believed
the End Near?*

representative organization in American Protestantism. The editorial is discussing the importance of the great Oxford conference of all of the churches that was held in 1937, at Oxford, England. This Oxford meeting was the greatest of its kind since the Reformation days. One of the real reasons why it was called was that the churches now realize that the world about them has become so pagan and so hostile to all the ideals and the principles of Christianity, that unless the churches unite and gain the strength that comes from unity, they can hardly hope to withstand the pagan forces crowding in on them from all sides.

This editorial in the *Federal Council Bulletin* opens with a quotation from a well-known liberal professor who is discussing the Oxford conference as he imagines a future historian would describe it. He believes that in some far-distant day a historian, looking back to the early days of the twentieth century, would write as follows:

“Oxford came too late. Once again it was the ‘home of lost causes and impossible loyalties.’ All the findings of this conference, applicable as they were to the tragic situation in the early twentieth century, never registered with the churches, and so failed to forestall the debacle or prevent the dark ages which followed.”—*Federal Council Bulletin, November, 1937.*

The comment of the *Bulletin* editor on this doleful picture is this:

“No one who faces realistically the actualities of the world situation, or who tries to answer the ques-

tion as to how what happened at Oxford can be made to leaven the life of the churches, and thereby of the world, while there is yet time, will doubt that there is ground for fears.”

Now the phrase to which we wish to call particular attention is this, “the dark ages.” It is into such an age that churchmen today feel the world is moving.

Place alongside this another description of our times. The *Christian Century*, which is undoubtedly the most representative interdenominational journal published in America, contained in the closing issue of 1937, an editorial discussing the state of the world at the turn of the year. We quote the first paragraph:

“Another year enters history. Many will see it pass without regret, remembering it as a period of fear, when most of man’s efforts ended in failure, and every day brought new foreboding. Everywhere the sense of apprehension, the feeling that civilization is rushing blindly to an awful doom, has increased during the twelve months now closing. No longer is the question asked, ‘Will there be another world war?’ The terror at the back of men’s minds now forces their lips to say, ‘When will the second world war start?’ Many with historical insight, viewing the events of 1937, are questioning, ‘Has the new world war begun?’ Man, the hunted quarry of his own follies, staggers along a dark road that seems to lead toward a greater darkness.”

We do not recall having read in many a day a more gloomy or more doleful declaration than this. This liberal editor thinks that man is staggering

“along a dark road that seems to lead toward a greater darkness.” Further on in the editorial is found this comment on conditions in England, which are typical of conditions in many lands today:

“Gas masks have been provided for every man, woman, and child in the British Isles. And as 1937 closes, the government is rushing through Parliament a law which, on the outbreak of war, will transport seven million of the inhabitants of the cities of England into the country and hide them in woods or in caves in the earth. England marshals her might to prepare her people for a return to the Dark Ages!”
—*Ibid.*

Note those closing words, “a return to the Dark Ages.” Place them alongside the almost identical thoughts found in the preceding quotation. Then bring to mind very similar descriptions given by other eminent commentators on world affairs today; and when all that has been brought to mind, then place alongside the inspired forecast, “Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”

Note the remarkable fulfillment of the prophetic descriptions of our time. But more striking is the *source* of some of these descriptions of our troubled world. It is not Adventists who are here speaking, or even statesmen, who have from time to time viewed the future with foreboding. Instead, the statements are made by spokesmen for that group in the world who might be described as diehards for the doctrine of world progress. It has been liberal churchmen who have kept insisting, in the face of growing evi-

dence to the contrary, that even if all was not well with the world, the future would surely soon bring about a better condition. These apostles of a man-made millennium quite refused, even through World War days, to believe that their beautiful doctrines of progress were unfounded. They were sure the world was being purged by war, and that a better world would arise from the ashes of the terrible conflagration.

But now these very men, who often ridiculed our prophetic preaching, are almost outdoing us today in the gloomy picture they paint of world conditions, both present and future. To our mind, this complete reversal of attitude and viewpoint on the part of liberal churchmen is one of the most significant facts of our day, and provides a most unexpected and forceful support for the Bible predictions we have been making.

What is more, these conditions in the world give the greatest timeliness and force to the command, “Arise, shine.” This is a day when there must not be an unlighted Adventist. There must be shining out from each of us the light of this truth. The glory of the Lord has risen upon us. God has caused the light of heaven to shine on our way. He has given us a knowledge of prophecy, which is as a light in a dark place, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But that light is not to be kept to ourselves. It is to shine out, that others may see the way of life everlasting.

We read one time of an accident case that was being tried in court. A car had collided with a

Behold, He Cometh

train at a railroad crossing at dusk. The crossing watchman was on the witness stand. He was asked whether he was on duty at the time of the accident. Then, whether he was actually standing out in the road at the time of the accident. And finally, whether he was waving his lantern. To each of these questions, he replied, "Yes," and was dismissed from the witness stand. The story goes that afterward he said quietly to his own lawyer, that he was glad he was not asked whether the lantern was lighted. It seems that he had failed to sense that darkness was coming on, and had to rush out with his unlighted lantern, hoping that the mere waving of it back and forth would attract sufficient attention to prevent accident.

We have thought of this story many times in relation to Adventists and this command to Isaiah, "Arise, shine." There are many of us who can go through the routine motions of attending the regular services in the house of God, of giving faithfully of tithes and offerings, of even taking part in various campaigns. And all this is good. It cannot justly be said that we are idle, but it is possible that we may be like the watchman: we are going through many motions, but there is still one thing lacking—no warning light shines forth from us to guide the travelers on the highway of life and protect them against destruction.

We need to sense that there is an immediate personal responsibility that rests upon us individually to let the light of this truth shine out to men. The command is not just to ministers or Bible workers, or conference employees, but to all. The darkness of

Do You Work for God?

night is settling down upon the earth. Let us not be taken unawares as was the watchman; let us have our lantern lighted.

Ours is the task of warning men to flee from the wrath to come. The judgments of God are already descending upon our earth, and soon a new Dark Age will be here in all its intensity, a Dark Age that will last for a thousand years. It is for us to light the paths of others, that they may be lifted out of this world at the advent of our Lord and spend the millennium in the light of His presence.

*Do You Live as if
You Believed the
End Is at Hand?*

Do You Live as if You Believed the End Is at Hand?

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:14.

AS Adventists, we are accustomed to speak often of the end of the world, and it is fitting that we should; for this mighty event is the climax of earth's history, and the day toward which we should all look, and for which we should prepare ourselves. But how many of us give heed to the solemn truth that in a very real sense of the word, the world may end for us today? It is truly fitting that we should make ready to meet God at the second advent, but we should so live that we may be ready to meet Him today, if called; for if death should come to us today, our next conscious waking moment would be when we stand before the judgment bar of God at the resurrection.

It may seem morbid to discuss the dark subject of sudden death, but it is folly not to sense the possibility of it. The insurance companies spend millions to keep the minds of men impressed with this serious fact, and so also do the makers of caskets and the sellers of grave lots. Lawyers and trust companies continually impress on the public the need of preparation for the unexpected, in the matter of making wills. Yet all these are dealing only with the material side of life, important as that may be.

Behold, He Cometh

But what of the spiritual side? What of the fact that our destiny for all eternity is settled when we close our earthly career? We are not of those who believe in a second probation, or in a purgatory where certain sins may be purged and an imperfect soul made ready for bliss. Instead, we find in the Good Book the definite truth that our hope of the life beyond depends altogether on how we have lived in this present life; that is, on whether or not we have accepted Christ and followed in His steps down here on this earth.

Too often we live in a manner that would lead others to conclude that we are following in our religious life the policy of putting off till tomorrow what we could or should do today. Some one has well said: "Work as though you would live forever. Live as though you would die today." That means we are not to put off till tomorrow anything that it is possible for us to do in the perfecting of life and of heart today.

In view of life's uncertainties, we cannot squarely face the question, "Am I ready for the advent?" except as we honestly answer the compelling inquiry, "Am I ready to meet God today?"

The writer would ask this question of his own heart, What would I do if I had but this day or this week to live?

First and foremost, I would make sure that I was right with God. I would make sure that my sins were all forgiven, through the blood of Jesus Christ. I would make certain that no secret sins were cherished in my heart, that would trouble me in the

Do You Believe the End Is at Hand?

resurrection day. I would ask God to probe the depths of my soul, to see if there was any wicked way in me of which I was unaware.

I would make sure that I had paid my vows to God, that I had not robbed Him in tithes or offerings. How could I rise in the resurrection day to meet God if I knew that I had kept back from Him that which belongs to Him, that I had used for my own selfish pleasure the sacred tithe, that I had spent upon my person or upon comforts for my home, money that should have been sacredly set aside for the advancement of the great mission program in these last days? Is it a small thing that we should rob God in tithes, or that we should chronically reveal a spirit of selfishness in thinking first of ourselves in the spending of our means rather than of the Lord, so that we should fail to give to Him our liberal offerings? There will be no thieves in heaven. There will be no stingy or selfish citizens in the new earth.

Is this a hard, stern way to speak of the matter of church finances? Perhaps so; but it is God Himself who speaks to us, through the prophet Malachi, and declares that there are those in the house of Israel who rob Him in tithes and offerings. A robber is a thief, and thievery grows out of a desire to have and to enjoy that which does not rightfully belong to one.

I do not want to end my earthly days with the consciousness that I have driven a hard bargain with the Lord in the matter of finance. I am certain that I cannot buy my way into heaven; but I am equally

certain that it is possible for me to lose my right to heaven by following a selfish course in the matter of my financial relationships to God.

If I had but this day or this week to live, I would make sure that I spoke some word for my Saviour. Christ said to the apostles, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." The original meaning of the word "martyr" is "a witness." The term came to acquire its present meaning because it was restricted to those who witnessed for Christ at the cost of their lives. When I meet my Lord at that last great day, my joy in meeting Him will be in no small degree measured by how faithfully and earnestly I have witnessed for Him here in this earth.

When I was certain that I had made all things right with God, I would turn to the question of whether all things were right between me and my fellow men. I would ask myself whether I had differences with any of my brethren; and if so, whether I had done all within my power to make peace and harmony and fellowship again. I am sure that if I had but today to live, I would not stand very much on dignity in the matter of striving to heal a wound or cement again a friendship within the circle of the brotherhood. Said Christ, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

I would ask myself whether, in my dealings with others, I had handled my business affairs in such a way as to be beyond reproach. There are those who move from one city to another or from one country to another to escape just debts, but there is no one who

can move from this earth to the new earth to escape an honest debt. If we may believe reports, and we have no reason to doubt them when they come from responsible heads of such institutions as our sanitariums and our schools, there are some among us who need a quickened sense of responsibility in the matter of their financial obligations.

Admittedly there are many instances, especially in these uncertain times, when one finds himself in a position where he is absolutely unable to meet in full a just debt. There are some instances, even, in which, though the debtor has the best of intentions and the most earnest desire, no settlement of any kind can be made. But in the great majority of instances, if there is a keen sense of duty and honor, and if there is real planning in the matter of economies at home, a way can be worked out that will mean the satisfactory settlement of the account within a reasonable period of time.

We have heard of those who cross to the other side of the street to avoid meeting a creditor. If there are such within our ranks, we would ask them this question: If you must avoid meeting one of your fellow men, how can you expect to meet God face to face? And after all, is not that the real question we must repeatedly ask ourselves? Of what worth is the whole of living,—all our religious activities, all our spiritual exercises,—if it does not prepare us for that great and final test when men must meet God face to face?

If I knew that my days were numbered, I would try also to be more thoughtful and more tender in

Behold, He Cometh

the home and with friends and brethren in the church. How easy it is to make some severe remark, to give audible expression to a criticism that wounds either the one hearing it or some other member in the church. If we truly believe that the future world holds for us the rare privilege of converse with sinless beings, should we not zealously strive in our conversation now to cultivate a manner of speaking that will prepare us to engage in the conversations of heaven?

If I had but today to live, surely there would be less place found in my heart for those chronic temptations to pride and to vanity with which the devil assails us. My heart would be fixed on eternal values, and that would give no room for pride or for vanity. The thought of meeting God would cause me to walk softly before Him here, and to purge my heart of that vice that has characterized sinful men since before Nebuchadnezzar boastfully declared, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" All my little achievements and successes would look pathetically small compared with the standard of perfection and the goal of a rich Christian character which the Scriptures set before me.

If I had but today to live, my conversation surely would be less on worldly things, and more on the things of heaven. How shallow our living and our thinking frequently are! Have there been no depths developed in our character? Shallow souls would not be happy in heaven.

What we do today may decide our destiny for all eternity. Are you willing that when the ledger closes

Do You Believe the End Is at Hand?

tonight, that record should stand as the final account for your life? To ask this question is the best way for us as Adventists to sense the gravity of this matter of readiness for the coming of the Lord.

*Are You Happy
or Fearful as You
Face the Future?*

Are You Happy or Fearful as You Face the Future?

"It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

WHEN Christ finally returns to this earth, there will be two distinct groups of people. One group are filled with terror and despair, and cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." (See Rev. 6:14-17.) The other group have entirely different feelings. They will cry out, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

In these days immediately preceding the second advent of Christ are found two groups, not as definitely marked off, perhaps, as at the actual advent of Christ, but nevertheless two separate companies. The state of heart of those in the one group is suggested by the words of Christ, that there will be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:25, 26. The feelings that should characterize the other group are indicated by the words of

Behold, He Cometh

Christ in the verse almost immediately following: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

This study in contrasts ought to have a very definite meaning for us in these present days of perplexity. Everywhere about us we see troubled countenances and listen to statements of neighbors and friends, as well as of those in high places, that reveal the state of mind that fits exactly this prophetic description by Christ in Luke 21:25, 26. The danger is that living, as we must, in such an environment, confronted constantly with increasing evidences of a distressed world, we shall allow our own hearts to become infected with some of that distress and fear. But if in the near future we are going to belong to the company who will cry out exultantly, "Lo, this is our God; . . . we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation," we must not allow our hearts to become possessed of the fears which increasingly control the ungodly. For those fears will come to their logical climax in an appeal to the rocks and mountains.

If our religion can bring to us joy and peace only in times of peace and plenty, then we are of all men most miserable. God desires that we claim serenity and joy amid the darkest and most terrifying experiences. In a very special sense, this is one of the spiritual dividends to be obtained from a belief in the doctrine of the second advent in the setting of prophecy.

In an hour when the disciples' hearts were filled

Are You Happy as You Face the Future?

with forebodings, Christ declared to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:1, 27. It is not difficult for us to understand the disciples' state of mind in the hours before Calvary, but it is impossible for us fully to fathom how Christ, facing Gethsemane and the cross alone, could speak such words as these. There is no greater lesson to be learned from the life of Christ on earth than this lesson of peace and quietness of heart, even within the shadow of troubles as dark as Golgotha. But while we cannot hope to fathom the mystery of how Christ could repeatedly utter such words of comfort and cheer, we may take those words by faith and claim their promises as unique and glorious gifts of the Christian religion.

The reason why many so-called Christian people fail to find reality and satisfaction in these promises, is that they fail to see them in their true setting. Christ placed them in the setting of His return to this world the second time. When He declared to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled," He added, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And again later in the chapter: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice."

If the disciples were to free their hearts from trouble and fear by remembering that Christ would

Behold, He Cometh

come again, how much more should we who live in the days when His coming is at hand, obtain our freedom from fear and foreboding in this glorious truth of the advent! The very conditions which serve to trouble the unbeliever may be viewed by us simply as so many signs and omens of the speedy fulfillment of the promise of Christ's return. In other words, that which occasions trouble to others' souls can serve to drive trouble away from ours.

It is possible for us to be so filled with the thought of the awfulness of the events now occurring in the world, and of greater ones still to come, to be so overwhelmed, if not terrified, by them, that we shall fail to experience that true happiness and joy in the Lord that we should. This thought cannot be too strongly stated. In no better way can we witness for the message, we believe, than by revealing in our lives the true happiness which is our rightful possession. Men search feverishly for happiness today and do not obtain it. It is ours by right. Men pay out money lavishly for some of the devil's substitutes for happiness. But genuine happiness is ours as a free gift. We ought to claim it more fully, and then proclaim it more effectively in the expression of our countenances, in our words, in our actions.

We believe that in spite of the limited way in which most of us avail ourselves of this gift from God, we are nevertheless, by contrast to the world about us, a marked people. In several different instances, we have personally noted the singular remark of non-Adventists in describing a company of our people, "You all seem so happy." We have

Are You Happy as You Face the Future?

heard almost this exact phrase from men who have visited our institutions, from police who have guarded our grounds at camp meetings, and from attendants who have cared for convention halls where we have met. To one such person who very recently made this remark, we replied, "Why should we not be happy? We expect soon to meet our Lord and Saviour at His second appearing. He will bring to an end this troubled world, and will give to us a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Men everywhere should know us, not simply as the people who believe in the soon coming of Christ, but also as the people who are truly happy—not with the kind of happiness that the world gives, but with the quiet, genuine, unaffected kind of happiness that does not forsake us amid the perplexities of life. Confronted, as we are constantly, with the handicap of prejudice and sometimes bitter and unreasoning malice and hatred, we would do well to see more definitely in this doctrine of advent happiness, a way of meeting such opposition. Hopelessly prejudiced enemies may continue their attacks, but to the hearts of many onlookers will come the conviction that a people who can be so joyful and happy amid the troubles of the world, have a message that is worth investigating.

In fact, the greater the opposition and attacks upon us, the greater should be our display of true joy, for declared Christ: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Re-

Behold, He Cometh

joyce ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven." Luke 6:22, 23. Strong arguments, disputes, and even debate, may at times be necessary in witnessing for the faith. But the argument of a radiant countenance and a joyful life can always safely be employed, and is always sure of producing some effect upon other lives.

Do the neighbors on your street know you simply as a member of a *church* that believes the second coming of Christ is near? or do they also know you as the most genuinely happy, joyful soul in the neighborhood? This is the practical question for each one of us individually to answer.

But we need not simply look forward to our Lord's return in order to be joyful. We have the promise that here and now Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. The sense of fellowship that comes from this abiding presence of Christ in our hearts brings to us our abiding joy and peace in anticipation of the day when we shall see our Redeemer's face. Declared the Saviour: "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11. In the light of this, it is not difficult to understand Paul's exhortation, "Rejoice evermore."

There is an amazingly long list of texts, both in the Old Testament and in the New, in which the words "joy" and "rejoice" are found. How tragic that the devil has succeeded in persuading so many to think that the living of the Christian life is a sad and doleful affair. A true reading of the Scriptures reveals the very opposite. This is so, whether we

Are You Happy as You Face the Future?

read the exhortations to joy, or the actual experiences of godly men.

Take, for example, the story of Peter and the other apostles who were beaten because they proclaimed the name of Christ. Of them the record declares: "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Acts 5:41. Or read the account of Paul and Silas, upon whom were laid many stripes: "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Acts 16:25. Or again, read of Paul and Barnabas, against whom was "raised persecution:" "The disciples were filled with joy." Acts 13:52.

The disciples, who believed that Christ dwelt in their hearts by faith, felt a sense of peace and happiness so great that it overwhelmed all feelings of bodily agony from persecution, or of depression and loneliness from the treatment they received at the hands of their own countrymen. The apostles knew that they were considered the offscouring of the earth; yet this realization brought to them no gloom or sorrow; they rejoiced, instead, that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

We may have the same exultant experience day by day. There is no more direct proof of the reality of our experience in the Christian way and our belief in the most essential feature of the Christian faith—the abiding presence of Christ—than our ability, by the grace of God, to remain peaceful amid perplexities, joyful amid adversities and even persecution.

Behold, He Cometh

In these days when fear is the most distinctive mark of the times, we should claim the promise of Christ's abiding presence, with all that this means for us, more fully than ever before. The reason why men's hearts fail them for fear is that they are looking after those things which are coming on the earth. They know not what portends, and they know not how to meet what they fear will come.

We know not all that the future may hold for us in this troubled day, but we do know that we shall not have to face that future alone. We face it in fellowship with God. We do not know what temptations and problems may confront us in our personal living, but we do know that we shall not have to face these in our own strength. Therein lies the great difference between the fearful worldling and the peaceful, joyous believer who walks with God day by day and who is awaiting the speedy return of his Lord.