

# ***THE PRESENT TRUTH***

*Bishop Stephen D. Lewis*

## **Special People for a Special Season**

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import--the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.

The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them. They are not to engage in speculation, neither are they to enter into business enterprises with unbelievers; for this would hinder them in their God-given work.

Christ says of His people: "Ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14. It is not a small matter that the counsels and plans of God have been so clearly opened to us. It is a wonderful privilege to be able to understand the will of God as revealed in the sure word of prophecy. This places on us a heavy responsibility. God expects us to impart to others the knowledge that He has given us. It is His purpose that divine and human instrumentalities shall unite in the proclamation of the warning message.

So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same responsibility as was the prophet of Israel to whom came the word: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 33:7-9.

Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, "even at the doors." Let us read and understand before it is too late.

We are to be consecrated channels, through which the heavenly life is to flow to others. The Holy Spirit is to animate and pervade the whole church, purifying and cementing hearts. Those who have been buried with Christ in baptism are to rise to newness of life, giving a living representation of the life of Christ. Upon us is laid a sacred charge. The commission has been given us: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:19, 20, margin. You are dedicated to the work of making known the gospel of salvation. Heaven's perfection is to be your power.

It is not only by preaching the truth, not only by distributing literature, that we are to witness for God. Let us remember that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, and that a cheap Christian character works more harm in the world than the character of a worldling. Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life. Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives. Too often the influence of the sermon preached from the pulpit is counteracted by the sermon preached in the lives of those who claim to be advocates of truth.

It is the purpose of God to glorify Himself in His people before the world. He expects those who bear the name of Christ to represent Him in thought, word, and deed. Their thoughts are to be pure and their words noble and uplifting, drawing those around them nearer the Saviour. The religion of Christ is to be interwoven with all that they do and say. Their every business transaction is to be fragrant with the presence of God.

Sin is a hateful thing. It marred the moral beauty of a large number of the angels. It entered our world and well-nigh obliterated the moral image of God in man. But in His great love, God provided a way whereby man might regain the position from which he fell in yielding to the tempter. Christ came to stand at the head of humanity, to work out in our behalf a perfect character. Those who receive Him are born again. Christ saw humanity, through the working of the mighty growth of sin, possessed by the prince of the power of the air and putting forth gigantic strength in exploits of evil. He saw also that a mightier power was to meet and conquer Satan. "Now is the judgment of this world," He said, "now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31. He saw that if human beings believed on Him, they would be given power against the host of fallen angels, whose name is legion. Christ strengthened His soul with the thought that, by the wonderful sacrifice which He was about to make, the prince of this world was to be cast out and men and women placed where, through the grace of God, they could regain what they had lost.

The life that Christ lived in this world, men and women can live through His power and under His instruction. In their conflict with Satan they may have all the help that He had. They may be more than conquerors through Him who loved them and gave Himself for them.

The lives of professing Christians who do not live the Christ life are a mockery to religion. Everyone whose name is registered on the church roll is under obligation to represent Christ by revealing the inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit. They are to be His witnesses, making known the advantages of walking and working as Christ has given them example. The truth for this time is to appear in its power in the lives of those who believe it, and is to be imparted to the world. Believers are to represent in their lives its power to sanctify and ennoble.

The inhabitants of the heavenly universe expect the followers of Christ to shine as lights in the world. They are to show forth the power of the grace that Christ died to give men. God expects those who profess to be Christians to reveal in their lives the highest development of Christianity. They are recognized representatives of Christ, and they are to show that Christianity is a reality. They are to be men of faith, men of courage, whole-souled men, who, without questioning, trust in God and His promises.

All who would enter the city of God must during their earthly life set forth Christ in their dealings. It is this that constitutes them the messengers of Christ, His witnesses. They are to bear a plain, decided testimony against all evil practices, pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He gives to all who receive Him, power to become the sons of God. Regeneration is the only path by which we can enter the city of God. It is narrow, and the gate by which we enter is strait; but along it we are to lead men and women and children, teaching them that, in order to be saved, they must have a new heart and a new spirit. The old, hereditary traits of character must be overcome. The natural desires of the soul must be changed. All deception, all falsifying, all evilspeaking, must be put away. The new life, which makes men and women Christlike, is to be lived.

There must be no pretense in the lives of those who have so sacred and solemn a message as we have been called to bear. The world is watching Seventh-day Adventists because it knows something of their profession of faith and of their high standard, and when it sees those who do not live up to their profession, it points at them with scorn.

Those who love Jesus will bring all in their lives into harmony with His will. They have chosen to be on the Lord's side, and their lives are to stand out in vivid contrast with the lives of worldlings. The tempter will come to them with his blandishments and bribes, saying: "All this will I give thee if thou wilt worship me." But they know that he has nothing worth receiving, and they refuse to yield to his temptations. Through the grace of God they are enabled to keep their purity of principle unsullied. Holy angels are close beside them, and Christ is revealed in their steadfast adherence to the truth. They are Christ's minutemen, bearing, as true witnesses, a decided testimony in favor of the truth. They show that there is a spiritual power that can enable men and women not to swerve an inch from truth and justice for all the gifts that men can bestow. Such ones, wherever they may be, will be honored of heaven because they have conformed their lives to the will of God, caring not what sacrifices they are called upon to make.

The light that God has given His people is not to be shut up within the churches that already know the truth. It is to be shed abroad into the dark places of the earth. Those who walk in the light as Christ is in the light will co-operate with the Saviour by revealing to others what He has revealed to them. It is God's purpose that the truth for this time shall be made known to every kindred and nation and tongue and people. In the world today men and women are absorbed in the search for worldly gain and worldly pleasure. There are thousands upon thousands who give no time or thought to the salvation of the soul. The time has come when the message of Christ's soon coming is to sound throughout the world.

Unmistakable evidences point to the nearness of the end. The warning is to be given in certain tones. The way must be prepared for the coming of the Prince of Peace in the clouds of heaven. There is much to be done in the cities that have not yet heard the truth for this time. We are not to establish institutions to rival in size and splendor the institutions of the world; but in the name of the Lord, with the untiring perseverance and unflinching zeal that Christ brought into His labors, we are to carry forward the work of the Lord.

As a people we greatly need to humble our hearts before God, pleading His forgiveness for our neglect to fulfill the gospel commission. We have made large centers in a few places, leaving unworked many important cities. Let us now take up the work appointed us and proclaim the message that is to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger. If every Seventh-day Adventist had done the work laid upon him, the number of believers would now be much larger than it is. In all the cities of America there would be those who had been led to heed the message to obey the Law of God.

In some places the message regarding the observance of the Sabbath has been set forth with clearness and power, while other places have been left without warning. Will not those who know the truth awake to the responsibilities resting upon them? My brethren, you cannot afford to bury yourselves in worldly enterprises or interests. You cannot afford to neglect the commission given you by the Saviour.

Everything in the universe calls upon those who know the truth to consecrate themselves unreservedly to the proclamation of the truth as it has been made known to them in the third angel's message. That which we see and hear calls us to our duty. The working of satanic agencies calls every Christian to stand in his lot. {Testimonies Volume 9, Pg. 20-24}

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