

Study for the Month January, 2011

Cleansed of Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit

A Short Study on 2 Corinthians 7:1

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**“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved,
let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,
perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 7: 1, KJV. The New International
Version reads: “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves
from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of
reverence for God.”**

Principle: Since “we are fearfully and wonderfully made,” and our “body is the temple of God and the Holy Spirit, a pure healthy life is most favorable for the perfection of Christian character, and for the development of the powers of the mind and body.

God’s people on earth are those “called out from the moral darkness of the world into His marvelous light of truth. They are to be a “peculiar, special people,” a “peculiar treasure” “above all people and nations” “to Himself.” 1 Pet. 2:9

As the Divine Refiner, He undertakes the work of purifying and “refining the sons of Levi that they may offer to the Lord and offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3: 2, 3). This work of purification cannot but make them distinctly peculiar from the rest of the world, nations, and churches. This He purposed for ancient Israel, descended from the loins of Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, and made an eternal, conditional covenant with them. But when by the time He came into the world after they (both the ten northern tribes of Israel and Judah, thence the Jewish nation, had stubbornly refused to keep their part of the covenant), He, in mercy, extended their probation for another prophetic 70-weeks (490 literal years, Dan. 9: 24-27). For three years, from His baptism to the closing out of His ministry, Christ still looked for the fruits of righteousness from them, providing the religious leaders and the whole Jewish nation all the necessary evidences that He was the promised Messiah they were waiting for, the very Substance of all the types and symbols of the ceremonial law. They demanded for a “sign” (Matt. 12: 38; 16:4; Luke 11:16; John 2:18; 1 Cor. 1:22, etc.) when all the evidences were given them. They were looking for a Messiah whom their religious leaders had re-invented, a temporal king to set up a temporal kingdom, not a Deliverer from sin who was prophesied to set up a spiritual kingdom. Isa. 9: 6, 7. John the Baptist heralded it as “the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 3: 1-3, etc.

When they finally hardened their hearts, (and soon after crucified the Lord of glory), He turned “to another nation bearing fruits,” honoring His everlasting Abrahamic covenant. This spiritual generation is called the children of Abraham by *faith*, no longer determined by genealogy and the “circumcision of the flesh” but of the heart.” They are the spiritual Jews, the New Testament Christians. At the proclamation of the third

angels' message after 1844, they are all those who receive the message and "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. The dragon then "makes war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God and have *the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev. 19:10), identified as the Seventh-day Adventists. And in the waning hours of earth's probation they are finally "the remnant that purify their souls by obeying all the truth and overcome the beast and his image by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."

Now here are those conditional covenant promises from the Old Testament to the New:

"Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant (the Ten Commandments, Deut. 4: 13), then ye shall be a peculiar (special, margin) treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto Me kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Exo. 19: 5, 6.

"Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all nations that are upon the earth." Deut. 14: 1, 2.

"And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all the commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken. Deut. 26: 18, 19.

"For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for this peculiar treasure. "Ps. 135: 4;

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2: 14;

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and 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 Pet. 2:9.

Our Body and Mind Belongs to God, Not to Ourselves. See 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

"Life is a gift of God. Our bodies have been given us in God's service, and He declares that we shall care for and appreciate them. Our bodies must be kept in the best possible condition *physically*, and under the most *spiritual* influences. . . .

A pure healthy life is most favorable for the perfection of Christian character, and for the development of the powers of mind and body.

The law of temperance must control the life of every Christian. God is to be in all our thoughts; His glory is to be ever kept in view. We must break away from every influence that would captivate our thoughts and lead us from God. We are under sacred obligations to God so to govern our bodies and rule our appetites and passions that they will not lead us away from purity and holiness, or take our minds from the work God requires us to do.

Those who serve God in sincerity and truth will be a peculiar people, unlike the world, separate from the world. Their food will be prepared, not to encourage gluttony or gratify a perverted taste, but to secure for themselves the greatest physical strength, and consequently the best mental conditions. . . .

Our heavenly Father has bestowed upon us the great blessing of health reform, that we may glorify Him by obeying the claims He has upon us. . . . The harmonious action of all the powers of body and mind results in happiness; the more elevated and refined the

powers [of body and mind], the more pure and unalloyed the happiness.” – *My Life Today*, p. 125.

What “promises” are here being referred to? Since it is by these promises that we are instructed *cleanse*---which also means to purify or sanctify---ourselves from “all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,” it is essential that we know what these promises are. If we don’t, it would be futile to even try and would be tantamount to aiming for the moon but not knowing how to get there. Worse, if we did we would be trying on our own effort and strength which will ultimately result in at least two things: (a) quitting out of discouragement and frustration due to failure, or (b) ascending to dangerous heights of the self-deception and intolerant Pharisaical self-righteousness. Both result from failing to be diligent and thorough in our quest to know “the truth as it is in Jesus.” (Eph. 4:21).

The word “promise” used in these passages of Scripture by Apostle Paul is translated from the Greek *epimelos* which means “carefully, diligently,” derived from another Greek word that means “care for, (physically or otherwise); to take care of.” 2 Pet. 1:4-12 is a vital passage to study regarding the steps to sanctification “in order to make our calling and election sure,” also referred by some preachers as “Peter’s ladder.” The word “promises” here is *epaggelma*, meaning, “a self-committal, by assurance of conferring some good.”

The English Dictionary defines promise as “an engagement to do or not to do something; ground for expectation of good things in the future, as, he is a young man of *great promise*; a pledge; the thing which is promised. It is synonymous with “engagement, pledge, word. *Promise* is a general term; *engagement* implies a binding covenant, carrying certain definite obligations; a *pledge* denotes a solemn promise, as, to *promise* a book; to give one’s promise to, as, I *promised* him/her my support. To afford hope, give ground for expecting much, as, the weather promises well. To engage, to do, make, or obtain, as, I *promised* the work by Friday.”-*Webster’s Unified Dictionary & Encyclopedia*, 1960 edition.

Putting all these foregoing definitions together, we may conclude that the composite and comprehensive definition of the word “promises” is as follows:

It is a mutual engagement, carrying certain definite obligations on both sides, where the one making the solemn promise pledges his word of good things to come, and the one accepting the promise, pledges to commit himself to carefully and diligently take care of his obligations, in hopeful anticipation of good things in the future. Thus, promise, in this consideration, is not a one-sided proposition but a joint venture, a working partnership entered into intelligently and voluntarily, rendering it more accurately, a Covenant-Promise.

These certain and definite obligations specified under these “covenant-promises” are defined in the preceding chapter. Let us review them carefully. Failure to meet its obligations, defining what to do and what not to do, renders null and void the promises or rewards of good things in the future. They are (as found in the N.K.J.V.):

“Do not be unequally yoked together with *unbelievers*. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell with them and walk among them. I will be their God,

and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 2 Cor. 6: 14-18.

Who is an “Unbeliever?”

Now, the first of these terms and conditions that must be satisfied under this Covenant-Promise is: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.” This means many things.

First, it obviously forbids the joining in holy wedlock two lives of different religious persuasions or beliefs. The reason is obvious: “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:12). It is saying: Don’t buy trouble; you have more than you can already handle in this life. As Biblical history shows it is the rule rather than the exception that the believer is the one who eventually is persuaded to yield to the desires and practices of the unbelieving spouse.

That is why from the very beginning God gave express instructions to ancient Israel, starting from the line of Abel through Seth,---never to intermarry with the heathen---the line of Cain. They disobeyed and thus started the mingling of the seed of “the sons of God” with the “sons of man,” the righteous and unrighteous, truth and error, the sacred with the common from which emerged the prophesied “falling away” of the Christian church by compromise with paganism, resulting in the union of church and state—the papacy---which Paul described as “the man of sin.” The final confederacy will be between the “kings of the earth” with “the Mother of harlots” and her daughters against a faithful remnant in the last days of earth’s history.

It forbids the joining together in any business partnership of one who trusts God and obeys His commandments and the other who is an infidel, whose god is the riches of this world. The reason is obvious. “You cannot serve God and mammon.” The opposing principles of these incompatible business partners will be constantly in the way and manner the business will be managed. Those who have accepted, and are thus divinely-entrusted with preserving and proclaiming the end-time messages of the three angels messages of Revelation 14 have an added grave responsibility. Note the following (emphasis mine):

“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 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 their God-given work.*” – Vol. 9, Testimonies, p. 9.

It also includes never entering into and investing in any business that trades in or manufactures products or services that propagate sickness, disease, dissipation, immorality, violence, hatred, spiritualism, covetousness for things of this world, and erroneous doctrines.

But it may be observed that there is an alarming increase in broken marriages and divorces among Christians and “believers” themselves, including theologians, pastors, and ministers! Which brings us to this question: *Who is an unbeliever?* Or, by way of contrast and comparison, *Who is a true believer?* Let us allow the Holy Spirit to impress us individually as to what the answer to these important question are as we carefully consider the thoughts contained in the following inspired counsels (all emphasis supplied):

“It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Savior. It is not enough to believe the theory of the truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered in the church roll. ‘He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.’ ‘Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.’ 1 John 3:24; 2:3. *Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness.*

The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into daily practice.”- *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312.

“A mere profession of discipleship is of no value. The faith in Christ which saves soul is not what it is represented to be by many. “Believe, Believe,” they say, “and you need not keep the law.” But a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption. The apostle John says, “He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 2:4. . . .

Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, we know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tender-heartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right-doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order. “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” – *Mount of Blessing*, p. 146.

“When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. *There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith.* The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that “*the devils also believe, and tremble;*” but *this is not faith.* James 2:19. Where there is not only a belief in God’s word, but of a *submission* of the will to Him; where the heart is *yielded* to Him, the *affections* fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through *this* faith the heart is renewed in the image of God.” – *Steps to Christ*, p. 63.

“Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the Judgment, men will not be condemned because they believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they *neglected* the opportunity of learning what is truth. Notwithstanding the sophistry of Satan to the contrary, it is always disastrous to disobey God. We must set our hearts to know what is truth. All the lessons, which God has caused to be placed on record in His word, are for our warning and instruction. They are given to save us from deception. Their neglect will result in ruin to ourselves. Whatever contradicts God’s word, we may be sure proceeds from Satan.” – *Patriarchs & Prophets*, p. 55.

“Let no one deceive his own soul in this matter. If you harbor *pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil speaking, lying, deception, slandering*, you have not Christ abiding in your hearts. The *evidence* shows that you have the mind and character of Satan, not of Jesus Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. You must have a Christian character that will stand. You may have good intentions, good

impulses, can speak the truth understandingly, but you are *not fit* for the kingdom of heaven. Your character has in it base material, which destroys the value of the gold. You have not reached the standard. The impress of the divine is not upon you. The furnace fires would consume you, because you are worthless, counterfeit gold.

There must be *thorough conversions* among those who claim to believe the truth, or they will fall in the day of trial. God's people must reach a high standard. They must be a holy nation, a peculiar people, a chosen generation---zealous of good works." – *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 441, "Clean Hands and Pure Hearts" chapter.

Cleansed Within and Without, Physically

Principle: "*Heaven is pure and holy, and those who pass through the gates of the city of God must be clothed with inward and outward purity.*" MLT 129.

Paul says: "For the word is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." (Heb. 4: 12, 13).

Thus we are not to judge the outward appearance, which includes skin color, culture, religion, occupation, or station in life of anyone, or for that matter, we are not judge anyone at all in any thing for judgment alone belongs to God, the Judge of all the earth. There are, however, two meanings of "judge" as used in the New Testament of the Authorized Version. For brevity's sake, let us consider the two Greek words used with their corresponding meanings:

(1) *Krino*, meaning, "to decide mentally or judicially. To try, condemn, punish; sue at law." (Strong's Greek Dictionary # 2919). Judge here is a legal term. The persons or organizations that "pass judgment" here are not only those vested with official capacity (whether in truth or usurped or pretended) not only to render judgment but to enforce it with punishment as well. See Acts 24: 1-27 for instance. The orator Tertullus, in falsely accusing Paul to Felix the Roman governor, at the behest of the Jewish high priest Ananias and the elders (the religious hierarchy), clearly illustrates the true application of *krino*. This is what Jesus meant when He warned, "Judge not that thou be not judged."

(2) *Anakrino*, meaning, "to scrutinize, investigate, determine, ask, question, discern, search." God wants His people to *anakrino*, to judge, i.e., to discern, investigate, search, and to ask questions"—not merely assent to what is termed as truth. He designed man to be thinkers, not merely reflectors of other men's ideas. Thus Paul says "he that is spiritual *judgeth* all things yet he himself is judged of no man." 1 Cor. 2: 15. Only the spiritually-minded, however, those who have "the mind of Christ" will be able to discern or judge safely for they do such on the basis of "the law and testimony (Isa. 8:20). It only is in this sense that God wants and expects His people to live up to His standard of cleanliness in all areas, including:

Cleanliness of body and surroundings

Cleanliness is next to godliness. While the heart and the mind must be made pure by sanctifying truth, the physical body, clothing, and surroundings must likewise be kept clean and tidy for God is a God of order, a lover of that which is called beautiful by heavenly standards.

The power of bathing

Heb. 10:2. "Scrupulous cleanliness is essential to both physical and mental health. Impurities are constantly thrown off the body through the skin. Its millions of pores are quickly clogged unless kept clean by frequent bathing, and the impurities which should pass off through the skin become an *additional* burden to the other eliminating organs. . . . A bath, properly taken, fortifies against cold, because it improves the circulation; the blood is brought to the surface, and more easy and regular flow is obtained. The mind and body are alike invigorated. The muscles become more flexible, the intellect is made brighter. The bath is a soother of nerves." - *My Life Today*, p. 129.

Cleanliness of home and its surroundings. -

"Truth never places her delicate feet in a path of uncleanness or impurity. . . . He who was so particular that the children of Israel should cherish habits of cleanliness will not sanction any impurity in the homes of His people today. God looks with disfavor on uncleanness of any kind.

Unclean, neglected corners in the *house* will tend to make impure, neglected corners of the *soul*."

Perfect cleanliness, plenty of sunlight, careful attention to sanitation in every detail of the home life, are essential to freedom from disease and to the cheerfulness and vigor of the inmates of the home." - *Ibid*.

"In order to be *acceptable* to God's sight, the leaders of the people were to give *strict heed to the sanitary conditions* of the armies of Israel, even when they went forth to battle. Every soul, from the commander-in-chief to the lowest soldier in the army, was *sacredly charged to preserve cleanliness in his person and surroundings*; for the Israelites were chosen by God as His peculiar people. They were sacredly bound to be holy in body and spirit. They were not to be careless or neglectful of their personal duties. In every respect they were to preserve cleanliness. They were to allow nothing untidy or unwholesome in their surroundings, nothing which would taint the atmosphere."

"**The Ten Commandments**, spoken by Jehovah from Sinai, *cannot live in the hearts of persons of disorderly, filthy habits*. If ancient Israel could not so much as listen to the proclamations of that holy law unless they had obeyed the injunction of Jehovah, and had *cleansed their clothing*, how can that sacred law be written upon the hearts of persons who are not cleanly in person, in clothing, or in their houses? *It is impossible*."

"Heaven is a clean and holy place. God is pure and holy. All who come into His presence should take heed to His directions, and have the *body and clothing* in a pure, clean condition, thus showing respect to themselves and to Him. *The heart also must be sanctified*. Those who do this will not dishonor His sacred name by worshipping Him while their *hearts are polluted* and *their apparel is untidy*. God sees these things. He marks the heart-preparation, the thoughts, the cleanliness. . . . of those who worship Him. Angels are impressed with the things which they behold in the *outward surroundings* of God's people." - Sons & Daughters, p. 173.

Body Piercing, Tattoos, Jewelry, and Attire

All effacing of the skin through tattooing, body painting, and piercing are expressly forbidden in the word of God. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. . . . You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord." Lev. 19: 1, 2, 28.

Tattooing is "the practice of indelibly marking the skin by pricking it and planting dyestuff in skin openings thus produced. The Hebrew *qa'aqua'* has the meaning tattoo in Mishnac Hebrew, and also in Lev. 19:28 where it is thus rendered in the RSV as "print."

Tattooing was practiced in ancient times by the Lybians and probably by the earliest Egyptians.” –*SDA Bible Dictionary, Commentary Reference Series, Vol. 8.*

Earrings are mentioned several times, but the word usually thus translated (*nezem*) is a general term for “ring” and may refer to a *nose ring* (Gen. 24: 30) as well as to an earring (ch. 35: 4; Exo. 32:2). The context sometimes makes clear what type of ring is intended. The Israelites wore golden earrings, and contributed of these for the manufacture of the golden calf (Exo. 32: 2, 3). In the New Testament women are counseled against wearing of gold (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:3). The “earrings” of Isaiah 3:20, KJV, were probably amulets. Earrings are listed in the spoils taken from the Midianites (Num. 31:50). The Ishmaelites [forebears of the Saracens, Turks, Arabic race, and Moslems] wore earrings of gold (Judges 8: 24-26). –*Ibid.*

In its *Conclusions* of a paper entitled “The Origin of Wearing Earrings and Jewellery in Ancient Times (No. 197) by Wade Cox, Christian Churches of God, www.logon.org, we read:

“The wearing of **earrings**, is, along with the animistic origins of the Saiva and other Indo-Aryan religions, of great antiquity. There seems little doubt that the wearing of earrings by men, as well as women, was originally amongst the Indo-Europeans, of an adherence to animistic or idolatrous practice involving Chaldean theology, which spread both east and west. It was forbidden by a simple analysis of Genesis 35: 4. Despite its eradication by Jacob, the wearing of earrings appears to have crept back into use during the Egyptian captivity. The cessation of the practice with Moses appears to have lasted for an indeterminate period with amulets in general going underground or, more correctly, under garment. Most of the Anglo-Saxon people no longer understand the origin of the practice.

“The wearing of **jewellery** [spelling in the original] generally appears to have stemmed from the same practice as that of earrings---namely, as amulets against the spirits, and the serpent amulet was the most prominent form. This was associated with the crescent moon or the rounded form of a circle.

“The crescent moon was not associated with the simple determination of the calendar from tradition and away from the true New Moon (the conjunction) but is the symbolic representation of the moon God Shaman of the Middle Eastern systems, His form is generally represented by the crescent.

“The view of **cosmetics** among the early sects was that it was an art taught by Azazel or Satan at the rebellion of the Host [angels]. The Bible has no specific injunction against the use of *preventative* [emphasis mine] cosmetics or to oils and unguents or spices in that role.

“The attitude to the attire is an appeal to sober and modest dress, being decorated by good deeds. The painting of the eye seems to have been associated with false worship and adulterous behavior. Once again, the fault seems to have been in the presentation and the attitude behind the fact.

“The use of **charms and amulets** is forbidden and is associated with idolatry. In this way decorative items of dress are restricted and amulets or such ornamentation are forbidden.

“This use seems to be associated with a mindset that degenerates into idolatry or stems from it and hence the social degradation we see described by Paul in Romans 1 following on from idolatry.

“The **dress** of a Christian is to be seemly and without suggestion of association with these idolatrous practices or with superstition generally.

“Women and men are not to wear the apparel of the other [such as transvestites or cross-over dressers] and their behavior is to be seemly [becoming, tasteful, *Webster*].

“God declared that He adorned His chosen Jerusalem [Ezekiel 16: 18-22 quoted]. God adorned Jerusalem, and, symbolically, all of the elect. Jerusalem turned away from God and became apostate even though they were adorned by God with jewellery and apparel that was symbolic of the gods to which the nations turned. They fell to an even worse state than Samaria and Sodom had before them. Yet God will restore all of these systems under His new covenant (Eze. 15: 55-

63). It is our task to remember the spiritual adornments that have been given us by God and not be concerned with the physical or material substance as is this world.” (end of quote).

Physically Cleansed Within

David, in holy awe and admiration exclaimed, “We are fearfully and wonderfully made.” Ps. 139: 14. And John says: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” 3 John 2.

“The health reform is an important part of the third angels’ message; and as a people professing this reform, we should not retrograde, but make continual advancement. It is a great thing to ensure health by placing ourselves in right relations to the laws of life. . . . In order to enjoy good health, we must *ask* the Lord to bless us, and then *do* what we can to place ourselves under conditions the most favorable to health.” – *My Life Today*, p. 128.

Our body and all the amazing various systems and their mechanisms are made up of what we eat and drink. We are what we eat. If we eat junk food, and even those who do not believe in the Bible knows what it refers to, can we expect anything better to come out of it? That the body is the temple of the living God comprehends much more than many Christians think. The vast majority in the Christian world believe that health has nothing to do with the gospel of salvation. They say, Leave the matter of health to the doctor and the hospital and the matter of salvation to the minister and the church. This where they err and pay the painful consequences. “True religion and the laws of health go hand in hand.”- RH Nov. 12, 1901/*My Life Today*, p. 135

Seventh-day Adventists are the most privileged people on earth in the sense that they have been entrusted with the greatest light regarding the plan of redemption and the closing messages of the eternal gospel which includes the genuine message of health reform as part of *sanctification—our fitness for heaven*. If they fail, it is only because they ignored or made of no effect the precious trove of these truths found in the following books: *Counsels and Diets and Foods, Counsels on Health, Ministry of Healing, Medical Ministry, Mind, Character, and Personality*, etc.

A Biblical Nutritious Diet. – See Isaiah 55:2.

“Health reform is an intelligent selection of the most healthful article of food prepared in the most healthful, simple form.”

“Our bodies are built up from the food we eat. There is a constant breaking down of the tissues of the body; every movement of every organ involves waste, and this waste is repaired from our food. Each organ of the body requires its share of nutrition. The brain must be supplied its portion; the bones, muscles, and nerves demand theirs. It is a wonderful process that transforms the food into blood to build up the varied and uses this blood to build up the varied parts of the body; but this process is going on continually, supplying with life and strength each nerve, muscle, and tissue.

“God has furnished man with abundant means for the gratification of an unperverted appetite. He has spread before him the products of the earth—a bountiful variety of food that is palatable to the taste and nutritious to the system. Of these our benevolent heavenly Father says we may freely eat. Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet. They impart nourishment to the body and give power of endurance and a vigor of intellect that are not produced by a stimulating diet. . .

“God has given us the fruits and grains of the earth for food, that we might have unfevered blood, calm nerves, and clear minds [which a flesh diet will not do].”- *My Life Today*, p. 132.

Thus we see that a *true believer*, in the fullest sense, means much more than we realize. Now that we hopefully we do, let us accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to repent of our shortsightedness and misconceptions regarding the matter and humbly allow Him to enlighten our minds, and reform our thinking and way of doing things. As the servant of God solemnly points out, “There must be *thorough* conversions among those who claim to *believe* the truth, or else they will *fall* in the day of trial.”

“The *greatest deception* of the human mind in Christ’s day was that a *mere assent* to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a mere *theoretical* knowledge of the truth has proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in the life. The darkest chapters of history are burdened with the record of crimes committed by bigoted religionists. The Pharisees *claimed* to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possession of the *oracles* of God; yet these advantages did *not* preserve them selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest hypocrisy. They thought themselves the *greatest religionists* in the world, but their so-called *orthodoxy* led them to crucify the Lord of glory. *The same danger still exists.* Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through the sanctification of the truth. Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.”-- *Desire of Ages*, pp. 309-10.

Claiming “the bragging rights of a Christian,” a phrase some preachers like to encourage their congregations with, is the very proof that one isn’t. Christian means Christlike. Jesus Christ was sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, and heavenly minded. He, the Righteous One, never bragged; He never asserted His rights. He was the Perfect One but never called the peoples’ attention to it. Never did He *profess* His faith; He *possessed* it and lived it. His life itself was the living testimony to the truth and the law that He came to magnify and make honorable. And even if He had it He didn’t flaunt it for there was *no* need to. It is those who are wanting or lacking that feel compelled to profess or pretend that they have it—and proclaim it in loud tones and ostentatious show. The Bible calls such human “trees” as “all leaves and no fruits.” Or as Apostle Paul puts it, “a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” True holiness, as in true beauty, exudes from within, and is not a paint-on, a glitzy wrapper, or even an “extreme makeover.”

See the example of our Savior in this regard. The Bible says, “He went about *doing* good (Acts 10:38),” not *announcing or publishing* the good that He was doing! Aren’t you bothered when publishers of magazines and other publications representing their religious organizations, make an obvious extra effort to print “What Our Readers Say About Us”— and print only the ones that praise them and what they are doing? This is a staple of colorful brochures of companies selling their products as they compete against each other for clientele and a bigger market share. Yes, there are definite occasions when the need to *report* on what one is doing is called for. But there is a thin line that separates fact from exaggeration, modesty from extravagance. Good intentions are inadequate. As has been said, “The path to hell is paved with good intentions.” We must be guided by the Word, by Christ’ example, not what our natural inclinations compel us to say or do.

The danger of self-praise or *self-pity* is an ever-lurking temptation for most everyone—including those who believe they are doing a self-less work or ministry. The self-effacing prophet Elijah, the second man translated to heaven without tasting death, meaning, a saint of the first degree in heaven’s estimation, failed on self-pity. Make no mistake

about it; the typical Pharisee is so into worshipping and religion but is prompted by self-interest and filled with self-praise. He looks it, he walks it; he even prays it.

Once more, as *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 441 says, if we secretly harbor **pride, self-esteem, love for supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil-speaking, lying, deception, and slandering**—filthiness of the spirit, it is proof that Christ is not abiding in our hearts. God looks upon the heart but man looks after the outward appearance!

Finally this: the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, Christ's final work before He comes.

RH, March 22, 1877: "We are in the great day of atonement, when our sins, are, by confession and repentance, to go beforehand to judgment. . . . In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin the work of investigative judgment. The cases of the *righteous* dead have been passing in review before God. When that work shall be completed, judgment shall be pronounced upon the living. How precious, how important are these solemn moments! Each of us has a case pending in the courts of heaven. We are individually to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. In the typical service, when the work of atonement was performed by the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary, the people were required to afflict their souls before God, and confess their sins, that they may be atoned and blotted out. Will any less be required of us in this antitypical day of atonement, when Christ in the sanctuary above is pleading in behalf of His people, and the final, irrevocable decision is to be pronounced upon every case?

What is our condition in this fearful and solemn time? *Alas, what pride is prevailing in the church, what hypocrisy, what deception, what love of dress, frivolity and amusement, what desire for the supremacy!* All these sins have clouded the mind, so that eternal things have not been discerned. *Shall we not search the Scriptures, that we may know where we are in this world's history?* Shall we not become intelligent in regard to the work that is being accomplished for us at this time, and the position that we must as sinners should occupy while this work of atonement is going forward? If we have any regard for our soul's salvation, we must make a decided change. We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins, that they may be blotted out.

We must no longer remain on enchanted ground. We are fast approaching the close of our probation. Let every soul inquire, How do I stand before God? We know not how soon our names may be taken in the lips of Christ, and our cases be finally decided. What, oh what will these decisions be! Shall we be counted with the righteous, or shall we be numbered among the wicked?

Let the church arise, and repent of her backsliding before God. Let the watchmen awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound. It is a definite warning that we have to proclaim. God commands His servants, 'Cry aloud, and spare not, lift up thy voice and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins' (Isa. 58:1). The attention of the people must be gained; unless this can be done, all effort is useless; though an angel from heaven should come down and speak to them, his words would do no more good than if he were speaking into the cold ear of death. . . .

O my brethren, will you grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause it to depart? Will you shut out the blessed Savior, because you are unprepared for His presence? Will you leave souls to perish without the knowledge of the truth, because you love your ease too well to bear the burden that Jesus bore for you? Let us awake out of sleep. 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' (1 Pet. 5: 8). — *The Review & Herald*, March 22, 1887. --#

