

# *Let Us Spiritually Prepare to Meet God*

*Written by Jon Taylor*

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God has blessed us with everything we need to prepare for the Second Advent. He has done this by sending a message to the whole world, in Revelations 14; and a special blessing of information, crucial to preparation, has been granted to His people through His prophet, Ellen White. How can we proclaim a message that we do not practice? How can we practice what we do not understand? For some people, the information in this article may be new; for them, I would say that God is permitting light to shine upon us. Will you be like Paul or Pilate? Your course will determine your eternal destiny. To those who are already acquainted with this information: "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." 2 Peter 1:12.

The first angel's message, in Revelations 14:7, opens with "Fear God." What does it mean to fear God? "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13. (Fear: profound reverence and awe, especially toward God.) The word for fear is literal, not symbolic; however, Revelation 21:8 places those who are fearful (afraid) of God in the lake of fire. How can these verses be reconciled? Psalm 97:10 gives us some insight: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." The word for love is translated and understood in varying degrees of intensity. Most significantly, it may be understood as a term of friendship. God calls us to be friends with Him as Abraham was. We are to fear His justice, but love His mercy and wisdom. We are to imitate Him as a child imitates his father, understanding that mercy and justice together make love. We are to plead with God to show mercy to those who make themselves our enemies as Jesus did. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8.

Pure friendship is required of God. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. James 4:4. God does not accept people who are uncommitted to friendship with Him because a

relationship with Him is likened to marriage. God demonstrated His commitment to us at the cross. There, He made a commitment to humanity as a whole and individually. If we love God for what He has done, we will commit to Him too.

The opposite statement of James 4:4 is equally true: Whoever is a friend of God will be at enmity with the world. Are you persecuted? Do your worldly brethren in the Church hate you for lifting up Jesus and denying the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life? Do they seek to cast you out for calling sin by its right name or for speaking the Truth in love? You are walking in the footsteps of Jesus. He was even persecuted by the religious leaders, He says in Matthew 10:25: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" There is one word, in Matthew 5:1-11, that describes all those who suffer for righteousness sake: "blessed." Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, relates his friendship experience in Philippians 3:8, 10-11: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ... That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." When we suffer for the truth's sake we are in fellowship with Christ and with all His disciples. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us." 2 Timothy 2:12. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." 1 Peter 4:14-15.

Sometimes we suffer because we fight with one another. God does not call those who hate evil to fight tooth and nail against evil people or wolves in sheep's clothing. We are told in Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” No human is our enemy. Those who are taken captive by Satan become mediums for temptation and evil as the serpent was. They are helpless in the slavery of sin. Have we not all been used in such a way? All have sinned and been taken captive. In 2 Timothy 2:23-26, we are given wisdom to help us discern the kind of strife to avoid: “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure (by chance; perhaps) will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Jesus tells us, in a deeper way, in Matthew 10:16, how to deal with such people: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Jesus says that if we are His sheep, we will act as doves, but we should be as cunning as the serpent. The serpent had a specific kind of wisdom, which is first mentioned in Genesis 3:1; the word used is *arum* (translated shrewd, wicked, deception, trickery). Proverbs 14:15 uses this word in a positive light: “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent (*arum*) man looketh well to his going.” Or, in other words, someone who is wise as a serpent knows the wolves by their works and does not simply accept the words of others. As a snake tests everything with its tongue, so we should test everything with the tongue of the Lord, the Bible. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil.” 1 John 3:7-8. “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matthew 7:20.

God, in His advice, does not stop there. What are we to do with the knowledge of others’ sins and mistakes that we will inevitably see and hear? “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” Proverbs 17:9. “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Galatians 5:14-15. Brothers and sisters, do sheep eat wolves? Do doves devour snakes? Psalm 57:4 says: “My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.” The psalmist here parallels teeth with spears and arrows and says the tongue is as a

sword. Psalm 64:3 says: the wicked are those “who whet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.” This parallels arrows with bitter words and, by extension, teeth. What does it mean to bite and devour? to speak bitter words and reveal the sins of another, likely what David was referring to in Psalm 35:16 (compare with Proverbs 11:9). Since God calls us not to bite and tear but to seek love, how are we to react to contentious people? “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” Romans 16:17. There is great wisdom in avoiding arguments. “Only by pride cometh contention.” Proverbs 13:10. Contention will only come if both individuals have pride; persecution will come if only one is proud. Jesus never argued His points; He made them, and His life exemplified them. A correction in humility is more likely to be humbly accepted. I have seen proud Christians persecute others with the truth. It makes Jesus cry.

*If God calls us to a direct confrontation, let us not forget that our beloved prophet, who received little honor in her home church, gives us wonderful advice full of the wisdom of love:*

“A word of love and encouragement will do more to subdue the hasty temper and wilful disposition than all the fault-finding and severe censure that you can heap upon the erring ones.”—*Paulson Collection, 97.*

“Those who really love Jesus will seek to labor in His spirit and strive to conform their own lives and characters to the great Pattern. In reforms, the Spirit of Christ must continually abide with the reformer. Men may be attracted and won into the ranks of Christ and reform; but they cannot be forced or driven by censure, reproach, or harsh measures. A course of Christian forbearance, of candor (honesty and sincerity), and of consideration and courteousness toward all who do not see the truth as we do, will be a power for good.”—*12 Manuscript Releases, 292.*

“Paul carried with him the atmosphere of heaven. All who associated with him felt the influence of his union with Christ. The fact that his own life exemplified the truth he proclaimed gave convincing power to his preaching. Here lies the power of truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 510-511.*

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 “It is always humiliating to have one’s errors pointed out. None should make the experience more bitter by needless censure. No one was ever reclaimed by reproach; but many have thus been repelled and have been led to steel their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins.”—*Ministry of healing*, 166.

Unfortunately, there are many well-meaning brothers and sisters who fall into this trap of Satan by reproaching the erring. The victim of reproach often steels their heart against the Truth, perhaps resulting in an eternal loss. Zealousness for Christ is not a bad thing; but, of some, Jesus says: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” Luke 9:55-56. It is a fearful thing to be recorded pulling tares or sowing discord among the brethren by speaking the truth in a spirit of pride. Knowing the Truth does not qualify us to speak it. “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” 1 Corinthians 8:1. The natural result of all knowledge is pride, Jesus says: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. Over the course of earth’s history, many will be saved because they had the spirit of love, though they knew not the truth; and many will be condemned because they had the truth, but their love waxed cold. Faith itself is not even a substitute for charity. “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:2.

*Our prophet makes mention of this:*

“No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 318-319.

An ambitious hypocrite sounds like a Pharisee: “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:20.

There is another aspect to the wisdom of a serpent in Proverbs 12:23: “A prudent (*arum*) man

concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.” What is the knowledge concealed? Two kinds of knowledge, *First*, a wise man temporarily conceals some Truths. Some things are too difficult for the babies in the faith to swallow. Would you feed a two-month-old baby anything other than milk? Yet how many well-meaning brothers or sisters come to newborn Christians with knowledge God has revealed to them after a twenty-year relationship? Yes, it’s light; yes, they need to know. But, by God’s grace, have some discretion; there is a time for everything. If you disagree, at the next opportunity, take a flashlight and find a very dark place to kneel down and pray for God to reveal to you whether what has been said is truth or error. Then, after you have prayed in the dark for a few minutes, directly shine your flashlight into your own eyes. During that experience, remember that God calls us out of the darkness and into the light; but will too much light not blind you from the truth? Will it not cause pain, confusion, and anger? Will some not leave and condemn the light? We should pity the less knowledgeable and make the learning experience as pleasant as possible.

*The second kind of knowledge to conceal is that of foolishness or sin. All the reproach cast upon a Christian is reflected upon Jesus. For this cause, the Bible states in 2 Timothy 2:19: “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* The world makes no distinction between the wheat and the tares. They recognize them by the name they are told, for they are spiritually blind. Let us not share the sins of our brothers and sisters, especially if those sins are a product of evil surmising. When our brethren surmise evil, we could go to them, saying, “Forgive me if I have done anything to harm you.” In this way, we might break the spell of Satan and set our brethren free from their temptations. Do not let anything interfere between you and your brethren. If there is anything that you can do, by sacrifice, to clear away the rubbish of suspicion, do it. God wants us to love one another as brethren. He wants us to be pitiful and courteous. He wants us to educate ourselves to believe that our brethren love us and that Christ loves us. Love begets love. See *9 Testimonies to the Church*, 192.

*Let us, here, change the topic of the wrong kinds of speech to the topic of pride.*

As previously mentioned, the natural result of knowledge is pride. According to Proverbs 13:16, “Every prudent (*arum*) man dealeth with knowledge.” All who would be wise will have to confront the problem of pride. Let us trace the results of pride in the Bible: “When pride cometh,

then cometh shame.” Proverbs 11:2. *First*, pride will bring us public disgrace; it will then rise up in our hearts, telling us that we do not deserve the disgrace and we need to fight to sustain our path. “Only by pride cometh contention.” Proverbs 13:10. We will become separated from others who do not side with us; then, “a man’s pride shall bring him low.” Proverbs 29:23. We may lose our position or fall into depression; and, if pride continues to be fostered in our hearts, eventually destruction will be the result. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18. It may be self-destruction or destruction in the Judgment. Did not Lucifer also walk this path? Is he not even now awaiting destruction, having been cast down to the earth after starting a contention in heaven? How can we avoid a similar fate? Simple; there is never a need to justify ourself. If we are wrong, we should admit it. If we are right, have we not made God our defense? Is it not Jesus Christ who justifies us? Justifying ourselves shows we lack faith that God will fight for us. Self should be crucified. And, when Christ is in the heart, no man can rightly judge us; for we have the mind of Christ. “The Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. And He shall bring upon them their own iniquity and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.” Psalm 94:22-23. Let us not usurp the position of Jesus Christ, the one who justifies us, because we are proud. “Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.” Jeremiah 13:15-16. In this world, we are vessels “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7. When was the last time you heard your bottle of olive oil boasting against you? “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Romans 12:3.

There is more to the fear of the Lord than the avoidance of wrong speech and pride. These things have been highlighted because they are the problems that are most prevalent among those who follow the reforms and desire friendship with God.

What is the friendship experience like? Friends spend time together; they enjoy similar things, they hate similar things, they talk a lot to each other, and they share secrets. Did you know that God has a secret only for those who are friends with Him? “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and

He will show them His covenant.” Psalm 25:14. The secret God shares with His friends is His covenant. In order to understand this secret, we must look to the Heavenly Sanctuary and the earthly sanctuary (where it was revealed, in type (symbolic, a shadow, made according to the Sanctuary in heaven, as shown in Hebrews 8:1-5) to generations of God’s friends before us. Every article of furniture, every service, every detail about the heavenly Sanctuary, bears symbolism of Jesus’ ministry for us; for He is “the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” John 14:6. Stepping beyond the curtain into the Most Holy Place, the earthly sanctuary contained only one piece of furniture: the Ark of the Covenant, with the tablet of the Ten Commandments written by God. In Revelation 11:19: “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the Ark of His Testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” The last phrase is a placeholder in time—a chapter mark, if you please—that helps us understand where John is in earth’s history. (Note the progression: Revelation 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18.) When hail is mentioned in Revelation, it is a reference to the final plague, which occurs just before the Second Coming. So the ark of God is seen in heaven at, or just before, the time of the Second Coming.

Spiritually, this was fulfilled in 1844, when the door to the most holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary was opened to the believers who entered in by faith and began accepting the truths about it from the Bible. It will be literally fulfilled when the wicked see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven and are destroyed.

What happens if you see the ark of God and aren’t cleansed of your sins? There is a record of the men of Bethshemesh who experienced it in 1 Samuel 6:19: “And He smote the men of Bethshemesh because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. Even He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.” (Bethshemesh means “House of the Sun” and is a city located approximately 30 kilometers [19 miles] west of Jerusalem in Israel’s Jerusalem District, with a population of 154,694 in 2022.) The members of today’s house of the sun will share a similar fate.

Every article of furniture in the earthly sanctuary had an antitype (the first person or thing that foreshadows or represents another thing like itself in the Old Testament), so what is the antitype of the Ark of the Covenant (or Testament)? The specifications can be found in Exodus 25:14-22. It was a box

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## Part 2

made of Shittim wood covered with gold, and the staves for lifting it were never to be removed. The lid on the box is known as the “mercy seat.” Two cherubims of beaten gold are placed on the mercy seat, one on each end of the lid. Their wings are stretched high, covering the mercy seat, and they are looking down toward the mercy seat. God spoke from above the mercy seat, and His glory was manifested as light. This light reflected off all the gold and could be indirectly seen from a great distance. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” Psalm 48:2. Truly in the darkest times of our lives we catch the brightest glimpses of the glory of God. What was inside the Ark? “The Ark of the Covenant was overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.” Hebrews 9:4. There was a time when only the Ten Commandments were found inside the ark. This was after the wanderings of the children of Israel, after they had reached the promised land. “There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.” 1 Kings 8:9.

Now that we have all the details, let us compare them with the antitype—it’s Jesus: “I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8. He had God’s law inside Him. We are to always lift Him up (John 12:32); for this cause the staves were never to be removed (Exodus 25:15). He had two guardian angels: “And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.” Acts 1:10.

*Notice what our prophet says about these angels:*

“These angels were of the company that had been waiting in a shining cloud to escort Jesus to His heavenly home. The most exalted of the angel throng, they were the two who had come to the tomb at Christ’s resurrection, and they had been with Him throughout His life on earth.”—*Desire of Ages*, 832.

Jesus was born a human. Part of His mission was “to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to

give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3. He Himself was the Tree of Righteousness, the Kernel of Wheat, the Vine, the Root of David, and the Branch. His humanity was marked by the Shittim wood and was overlaid with divinity—gold: “then the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver.” Job 22:25 (ESV [English Standard Version]; read this verse in the KJV Version of the Bible). As His friends, what does this mean to us? “For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock.” Psalm 27:5. Brothers and sisters, here is the the secret of where the rock is inside the Sanctuary. Is not the rock the law of God? “He brought me up also out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.” Psalm 40:2. Are we not living in a time marked by miry clay? God’s people have been contaminated by unity with the world. Let Christ bring you out of the horrible pit of secret sins, out of worldly conformity. Let Him establish your path in His law. Pray with David: “I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.” Psalm 119:32. God says in Psalm 91:1: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Our obedience to the Ten Commandments that are inside the ark, under the mercy seat, is the only way that we will be safe from the blinding glory of God when He comes again in the clouds of heaven to take His children home. Paul phrases this Truth like this: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17. Allow God to recreate you. “Enter into the rock [Jesus Christ] and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His majesty.” Isaiah 2:10. Only those who are in Christ or those who were in Christ when He laid them to rest in death (Isaiah 57:1) will be safe from His consuming glory.

How can we be sure we are in Christ? Are we making efforts to enter the ark (a representation of the presence and power of Christ) by faith? Are all ten of the Commandments fulfilled in our lives? Are we abstaining from evil and replacing those evil

habits with well doing? God does not simply help us remove evil from our lives, He gives us something better to replace it with. As we dwell under the mercy of God, do we have mercy on others? In our walk, do we keep in mind that we are a spectacle to the angels in heaven? Do we consider that they give God a report of every act, merciful or unmerciful, shown toward a child in the faith? Let's remember that this is still the Judgement hour. Jesus will soon step out of the most holy place in heaven. Then there is no more forgiveness of sin to us. Let us do our part every day.

*Let us now consider why God also instructed Moses to put the bowl of manna and Aaron's rod that budded into the Ark of the Covenant (see Exodus 16:33-35 and Hebrews 9:4).*

The history behind the pot of manna is found in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. The pot of manna was to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant to symbolize God's plan for His people as it pertained to health reform. God also has manna for us—the health message. Note the following statements:

“The Lord brought His people out of Egypt in a victorious manner. He led them through the wilderness, to prove them and try them. He repeatedly manifested His miraculous power in their deliverances from their enemies. He promised to take them to Himself as His peculiar treasure, if they would obey His voice and keep His commandments. He did not forbid them to eat the flesh of animals, but withheld it from them in a great measure. He provided them food which was the most healthful. He rained their bread from heaven and gave them purest water from the flinty rock. He made a covenant with them. If they would obey Him in all things, He would preserve them from disease.

“But the Hebrews were not satisfied. They despised the food given them from heaven, and wished themselves back in Egypt where they could sit by the flesh-pots. They preferred slavery, and even death, rather than to be deprived of meat.”—*2 Selected Messages, 412.*

“The health reform is one branch of the great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel's message as the hand is with the body. The law of Ten Commandments has been lightly regarded by man; yet the Lord will not come to punish the transgressors of that law without first sending them a message of warning. Men and women cannot violate natural law by indulging depraved appetites and lustful passions, without violating the law of God. Therefore He has permitted the light of health

reform to shine upon us, that we may realize the sinfulness of breaking the laws which He has established in our very being.”—*Counsels on Health 20-21.*

“It is just as much sin to violate the laws of our being as to break one of the Ten Commandments.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods, 45.*

God has warned us: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8. Sobriety is a state of mind commonly gained by abstinence from alcohol, classified as a psychoactive drug (a drug or other substance that affects how the brain works and causes changes in mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings, and behavior). A simple Google search of psychoactive drugs will give you a list of things Ellen White spoke against consuming well before their effects were known. God has given us every possible advantage in the writings of His prophet. To reject the advice of a loving father is to be a foolish child, and foolish children are corrected by a rod of punishment. Let us be wise and change as needed while God is still showing us mercy.

According to 1 Corinthians 10:11, the wanderings of the children of Israel are an example to us, including their longing for the food of Egypt in Numbers 11:3-6. Notice what Paul calls the lust for the food of Egypt: “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” 1 Corinthians 10:6. If we would dwell more fully under the mercy of God, we must put away flesh meats, psychoactive foods, and especially (during our time) dairy. Christians often try to excuse their diets. Some claim they feel no conviction to obey what God asks them to do. Some even claim a lack of strength to do this. To those who feel no conviction: A conscience violated for long enough becomes quiet. Does your lack of conviction give license to disobedience? To those who claim no strength: How is it that the health-conscious, animal-loving, and environmentally conscious worldlings with lesser power dispense with such things for lesser reasons than for the glory of the Almighty? Would you dare to tell such a worldling to fear God and give Him glory? Would your hypocrisy be veiled from their keen eyes? No. No. Brothers and sisters, if Babylon has your stomach, Babylon has your heart. You may visit a friend who is patriotic. He obeys America's laws and loves America's leadership. But when you sit down to eat and they have a traditional Japanese meal, chopsticks included, you immediately know that Japan still has their heart. Is it any different with us? The

best way to share a culture is with food. Is the culture of the world in your heart, or are you sharing the culture of heaven? I want nothing of worldliness in my heart: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:17. God has called us to reform, and each has their own struggles; but with God, all things are possible. Health reform is not, and never should be, a test of piety. This article's purpose is to sweep away self-deception and reveal the location of this principle of health reform in the plan of salvation. No one needs to be weak in Christ; the only thing that is weak are the excuses made to conceal the idol of appetite. This beautiful principle, the health reform, is as close to the heart of God as the Ten Commandments.

"While we do not make the use of flesh meat a test, while we do not want to force any one to give up its use, yet it is our duty to request that no minister of the conference shall make light of or oppose the message of reform on this point. If, in the face of the light God has given concerning the effect of meat eating on the system, you will still continue to eat meat, you must bear the consequences. But do not take a position before the people that will permit them to think that it is not necessary to call for a reform in regard to meat eating; because the Lord is calling for a reform. The Lord has given us the work of proclaiming the message of health reform, and if you cannot step forward in the ranks of those who are giving this message, you are not to make this prominent. In counterworking the efforts of your fellow laborers, who are teaching health reform, you are out of order, working on the wrong side."—*Councils on Diet and Foods* 401.

Brothers and sisters, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 1:2. In accepting this blessing of healthful living from heaven, we will also receive wisdom far beyond those of the heathen wise men, such as God blessed Daniel with.

*So what is the responsibility of God's Church today? What is the pot of manna for today?*

Spiritually, manna is symbolic of the daily provision of the bread of life that God has for us. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:53-54. Those who eat the Word of God are those who read (intake), consider (chew), and apply (absorb and use) it to their lives until they experience (Matthew 26:42) the Life of Christ (My blood: Leviticus 17:11). This is also the

best preparation we can make to face the coming crisis and answer for our faith.

"The light that God has given and will continue to give on the food question is to be to His people today what the manna was to the children of Israel."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 269.

The last article in the ark for discussion is Aaron's rod that budded. The circumstances surrounding this miracle give us another important principle. This story may be read in Numbers 16 and 17, but here are the highlights: Korah started a rebellion with the help of Dathan and Abiram. They challenged the leadership of Moses and Aaron and accused them, saying, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Numbers 16:3. Not long after, a showdown involving offering incense occurred, and the Lord opened the earth, which swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. He then struck the 250 others, who offered incense with fire. The next day, the congregation accused Moses of killing the people of the Lord (Numbers 16:41). So the Lord sent a plague that killed 14,700. Then God had each tribe write the name of the chosen prince of their tribe on a rod. God's purpose for this is recorded in Numbers 17:5: "And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you." It was to quiet the murmurings over the priesthood. Aaron's rod was found the next morning in every stage of life—budding with blossoms, blooms, and even almonds. God was actually giving an object lesson. We can better understand this lesson from an interesting word picture that God makes in Jeremiah 1:11-12: "Moreover the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten My Word to perform it." The word for almond tree in Hebrew is *sha-KED*. The word for the tree is *Eitz haSha-KED* or *shkaydiYAH*. It coincidentally has the same root letters as a verb meaning "to be eager, alert, awake, diligent, ready to act." The first plant to bud in spring was the almond tree; it signaled the approach of spring and was seen with joy. God took this common sign and linked it to the prominence and abruptness of His soon coming judgments in book of Jeremiah. In Numbers, God said that Aaron's priesthood had been hastened to its fulfillment and was, in every stage, already completed; this was important. How can we apply

this to our day? God has selected for Himself a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, Jesus Christ. He was dead, but He is now alive forevermore, this is a sign to us that God chose Him. He is our leader, and none of us are holy enough to take His place.

It is our duty to “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (Revelation 14:4). It is vital for us, in these last days, to recognize His authority as our priest and leader. Have we accepted the ministration of Jesus in His heavenly Sanctuary? Are we cooperating with Him in His work to cleanse us from our sins? Are we following the calling God has given us?

“Christ in His life on earth made no plans for Himself. He accepted God’s plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps.”—*Ministry of Healing*, 479.

Aaron’s rod is also an archetype of death and rebirth pointing to one of the most dangerous deceptions of our time. (Archetype: the original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations, copies) “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9:5-6. The dead will not be helping the living: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?” Isaiah 8:19. We should look to the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, for our guidance—not spiritualism, not the man of sin. If we do, the arm of flesh will fail us. “Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” Jeremiah 17:5. Evil spirits may seek to impersonate our dead friends and relatives and lead us astray like Saul; but all who understand the true state of the dead will be in the mercy of God, who will protect them from deception.

*A brief summary of this article:*

1. Cease from evil by obeying God’s law.
2. Replace the evil habits with acts of love.
3. Guard our minds and health by obeying the health message.
4. Prepare for the future by daily feeding on the Word of God until we experience the life of Jesus (including His prayer life).
5. Accept Jesus Christ as our priest and leader.

6. Avoid anything of the nature of spiritualism (Spiritual Formation, seances, etc.).

Those who make the above six principles their practice will be in Christ, under the mercy of God, and will find themselves spiritually prepared for the crisis at hand. They will truly be new creations and known of the world to be citizens of Heaven—accepting its governing laws, leadership, and cultural food. Let us run the race, seeking to encourage and bring others with us in true knowledge and understanding.

“In this life our work for God often seems to be almost fruitless. Our efforts to do good may be earnest and persevering, yet we may not be permitted to witness their results. To us the effort may seem to be lost. But the Saviour assures us that our work is noted in heaven, and that the recompense cannot fail. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says: “Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” And in the words of the psalmist we read: “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Galatians 6:9; Psalm 126:6.”—*6 Testimonies* 305.

“When God shall work His strange work on the earth, when holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people.”—*5 Testimonies*, 77.

“Satan has laid every measure possible that nothing shall come among us as a people to reprove and rebuke us, and exhort us to put away our errors. But there is a people who will bear the ark of God. Some will go out from among us who will bear the ark no longer. But these cannot make walls to obstruct the truth; for it will go onward and upward to the end. In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding—men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar. When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the Word of the Lord; they will lift up their voice like a trumpet. The truth will not be diminished or lose its power in their hands. They will show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 411.

May the Lord keep you in the truth. May He provide for all your spiritual and physical needs according to His riches in glory. May He guide you as a shepherd and bless you with wisdom, understanding, and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit so that you may be found blameless, washed in the Word, and purified through faith at the soon coming of Christ Jesus, our Lord. — Jonathan Taylor