

Preparing in Hope

MEMORY VERSE: “Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up” (Hosea 6:1).

“In the gathering, when God has set His hand to gather His people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work.”—Early Writings, p. 74.

Suggested Reading: The Ministry of Healing, pp. 177-182. (At the bottom of this page)

1. MISGUIDED ZEAL

Sun, Jan 11

a. If our actions betray God, what is the fearful result? Hosea 5:4-7; Isaiah 1:11, 15.

Hosea 5:4

They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.

Isaiah 1:11

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

Isaiah 1:15

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

“If the truth of God has not transformed our character into the likeness of Christ, all our professed knowledge of Him and the truth is but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. [Isaiah 1:10-20 quoted.]

“Let all who claim to keep the commandments of God, look well to this matter, and see if there are not reasons why they do not have more of the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit. How many have lifted up their souls unto vanity! They think themselves exalted in the favor of God, but they neglect the needy, they turn a deaf ear to the calls of the oppressed, and speak sharp, cutting words to those who need altogether different treatment. Thus they offend God daily by their hardness of heart.... Let every member of the church closely examine his heart, and investigate his course of action, to see if these are in harmony with the spirit and work of Jesus; for if not, what can he say when he stands before the Judge of all the earth?....

“Christ has identified His interest with that of suffering humanity; and while He is neglected in the person of His afflicted ones, all our assemblies, all our appointed meetings, all the machinery that is set in operation to advance the cause of God, will be of little avail. ‘This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.’ ‘Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.’”—The Review and Herald, August 4, 1891.

2. HOPE AMID CRISIS

Mon, Jan 12

a. What serious warning did God give to Ephraim and Judah—and what mistake did they make in crisis? Hosea 5:8-14.

Hosea 5:8-14

Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin. **9** Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. **10** The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. **11** Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. **12** Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. **13** When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. **14** For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

“The closing years of the ill-fated kingdom of Israel were marked with violence and bloodshed such as had never been witnessed even in the worst periods of strife and unrest under the house of Ahab. For two centuries and more the rulers of the ten tribes had been sowing the wind; now they were reaping the whirlwind.... Those who should have stood before the nations of earth as the

depositaries of divine grace, ‘dealt treacherously against the Lord’ and with one another. Hosea 5:7. . . .

“Some of the leaders in Israel felt keenly their loss of prestige and wished that this might be regained. But instead of turning away from those practices which had brought weakness to the kingdom, they continued in iniquity, flattering themselves that when occasion arose, they would attain to the political power they desired by allying themselves with the heathen.”—Prophets and Kings, pp. 279, 280.

b. In this crisis hour, what words of hope and entreaty did God direct the prophet to declare? Hosea 5:15; 6:1, 2. How does this apply to us right now?

Hosea 5:15

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Hosea 6:1, 2

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

“The transgressors were given many opportunities to repent. In their hour of deepest apostasy and greatest need, God’s message to them was one of forgiveness and hope.”—Ibid., p. 283.

“I appeal to our brethren to wake up. The spiritual faculties will grow weak and die if they are not exercised in winning souls to Christ. What excuse can be offered for the neglect of the great, grand work that Christ gave His life to accomplish?

“We cannot afford in the few days we have here on earth to spend our time in trifling and nothingness. We need to humble our souls before God, that every heart may drink in the truth, and let it work in the life a reformation that will convince the world that this is indeed the truth of God. Let the life be hid with Christ in God. Only when we seek the Lord as little children, when we cease picking flaws in our brethren and sisters, and in those who are seeking to carry faithfully the responsibilities of the work, and seek to get our own hearts right with God, can He use us to the glory of His name.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 105, 106.

a. What is God's special promise to His church in the last days and why is it needed? Hosea 6:3.

Hosea 6:3

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

“In the time of the end, when God’s work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God’s church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

“But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’—The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 54, 55.

b. What prevents us from receiving this blessing in fullness? Hosea 6:4-6.

Hosea 6:4-6

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. 5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. 6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

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

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble

without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. [Revelation 22:11 quoted.] I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action."—Early Writings, p. 71.

4. CORRUPTED WORSHIP

Wed, Jan 14

a. How is the instability of God's professed people depicted? Hosea 7:2, 7-11, 15.

Hosea 7:2

And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

Hosea 7:7-11

They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me. **8** Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. **9** Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. **10** And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this. **11** Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

Hosea 7:15

Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.

b. What conditions in Hosea's day parallel spiritual dangers in the church today?

Hosea 8:1-3; Jeremiah 23:1.

Hosea 8:1-3

Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. **2** Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. **3** Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.

Jeremiah 23:1

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

“There are professedly pious men who screen the sinner by their own transgression. They disregard the commandments of God, choosing the traditions of men, making void the law of God, and promoting apostasy. The excuses they make are feeble and weak and will bring destruction to their own souls and the souls of others....

“Upon those who have taken upon them the work of shepherds of the flock, will be visited the heaviest judgments, because they have presented to the people fables instead of truth. Children will rise up and curse their parents. Church members, who have seen the light and been convicted, but who have trusted the salvation of their souls to the minister, will learn in the day of God that no other soul can pay the ransom for their transgression. A terrible cry will be raised, ‘I am lost, eternally lost.’ Men will feel as though they could rend in pieces the ministers who have preached falsehoods and condemned the truth. The pure truth for this time requires a reformation in the life, but they separate themselves from the love of the truth, and of them it can be said, ‘O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.’ The Lord sends a message to the people, ‘Set a trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law.’ ”—The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1157.

c. How did idolatry and counterfeit worship undermine Israel—and what was the result? Hosea 8:5, 6.

Hosea 8:5, 6

Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? **6** For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

“The ten tribes of Israel were now to reap the fruitage of the apostasy that had taken form with the setting up of the strange altars at Bethel and at Dan.”—Prophets and Kings, p. 285.

5. PERILOUS TIMES

Thu, Jan 15

a. What lesson is taught by the principle of sowing and reaping? Hosea 8:7; Galatians 6:7, 8.

Hosea 8:7

For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

Galatians 6:7, 8

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. **8** For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

“The unbelieving world . . . have despised and trampled upon the truths of God’s word. They have indulged in extravagant dress, and have spent their lives in hilarity and glee. They have sown to the wind; they must reap the whirlwind. In the time of distress and perplexity of nations there will be many who have not given themselves wholly to the corrupting influences of the world and the service of Satan, who will humble themselves before God and turn to Him with their whole heart and find acceptance and pardon.

“Those among Sabbathkeepers who have been unwilling to make any sacrifice, but have yielded to the influence of the world, are to be tested and proved. The perils of the last days are upon us, and a trial is before the young which they have not anticipated. They are to be brought into most distressing perplexity. The genuineness of their faith will be proved. They profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man, yet some of them have been a miserable example to unbelievers. . . .

“A day of heart-rending anguish is before us. I was shown that pointed testimonies should be borne, and that those who will come up to the help of the Lord will receive His blessing.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 268–270.

b. Why is it time for us to pay closer attention to God’s will? Hosea 8:12.

Hosea 8:12

I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

“Shall the warnings from God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? Shall the world’s scorn, the pride of reason, conformity to human customs and traditions, hold the professed followers of Christ from service to Him? Will they reject God’s word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel’s sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 306.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jan 16

- 1. Why is it essential to live up to all the light we have in these last days?**
- 2. Just as in ancient times, what may be distracting us from our mission?**
- 3. What precious end-time promise can change my life—and why?**
- 4. When and why does God come as an eagle against the house of the Lord?**
- 5. In what areas of life do I need to sever some lingering ties with the world?**

Suggested Reading: The Ministry of Healing, pp. 177-182.

Those who work for the fallen will be disappointed in many who give promise of reform. Many will make but a superficial change in their habits and practices. They are moved by impulse, and for a time may seem to have reformed; but there is no real change of heart. They cherish the same self-love, have the same hungering for foolish pleasures, the same desire for self-indulgence. They have not a knowledge of the work of character building, and they cannot be relied upon as men of principle. They have debased their mental and spiritual powers by the gratification of appetite and passion, and this makes them weak. They are fickle and changeable. Their impulses tend toward sensuality. These persons are often a source of danger to others. Being looked upon as reformed men and women, they are trusted with responsibilities and are placed where their influence corrupts the innocent. (MH 177.2)

Even those who are sincerely seeking to reform are not beyond the danger of falling. They need to be treated with great wisdom as well as tenderness. The

disposition to flatter and exalt those who have been rescued from the lowest depths sometimes proves their ruin. The practice of inviting men and women to relate in public the experience of their life of sin is full of danger to both speaker and hearers. To dwell upon scenes of evil is corrupting to mind and soul. And the prominence given to the rescued ones is harmful to them. Many are led to feel that their sinful life has given them a certain distinction. A love of notoriety and a spirit of self-trust are encouraged that prove fatal to the soul. Only in distrust of self and dependence on the mercy of Christ can they stand. (MH 178.1)

All who give evidence of true conversion should be encouraged to work for others. Let none turn away a soul who leaves the service of Satan for the service of Christ. When one gives evidence that the Spirit of God is striving with him, present every encouragement for entering the Lord's service. "Of some have compassion, making a difference." Jude 22. Those who are wise in the wisdom that comes from God will see souls in need of help, those who have sincerely repented, but who without encouragement would hardly dare to lay hold of hope. The Lord will put it into the hearts of His servants to welcome these trembling, repentant ones to their loving fellowship. Whatever may have been their besetting sins, however low they may have fallen, when in contrition they come to Christ, He receives them. Then give them something to do for Him. If they desire to labor in uplifting others from the pit of destruction from which they themselves were rescued, give them opportunity. Bring them into association with experienced Christians, that they may gain spiritual strength. Fill their hearts and hands with work for the Master. (MH 178.2)

When light flashes into the soul, some who appeared to be most fully given to sin will become successful workers for just such sinners as they themselves once were. Through faith in Christ some will rise to high places of service and be entrusted with responsibilities in the work of saving souls. They see where their own weakness lies, they realize the depravity of their nature. They know the strength of sin, the power of evil habit. They realize their inability to overcome without the help of Christ, and their constant cry is, "I cast my helpless soul on Thee." (MH 179.1)

These can help others. The one who has been tempted and tried, whose hope was well-nigh gone, but who was saved by hearing a message of love, can understand the science of soulsaving. He whose heart is filled with love for Christ because he himself has been sought for by the Saviour and brought back to the fold, knows how to seek the lost. He can point sinners to the Lamb of God. He has given himself

without reserve to God and has been accepted in the Beloved. The hand that in weakness was held out for help has been grasped. By the ministry of such ones many prodigals will be brought to the Father. (MH 179.2)

For every soul struggling to rise from a life of sin to a life of purity, the great element of power abides in the only “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. “If any man thirst” for restful hope, for deliverance from sinful propensities, Christ says, “let him come unto Me, and drink.” John 7:37. The only remedy for vice is the grace and power of Christ. (MH 179.3)

The good resolutions made in one’s own strength avail nothing. Not all the pledges in the world will break the power of evil habit. Never will men practice temperance in all things until their hearts are renewed by divine grace. We cannot keep ourselves from sin for one moment. Every moment we are dependent upon God. (MH 179.4)

True reformation begins with soul cleansing. Our work for the fallen will achieve real success only as the grace of Christ reshapes the character and the soul is brought into living connection with God. (MH 180.1)

Christ lived a life of perfect obedience to God’s law, and in this He set an example for every human being. The life that He lived in this world we are to live through His power and under His instruction. (MH 180.2)

In our work for the fallen the claims of the law of God and the need of loyalty to Him are to be impressed on mind and heart. Never fail to show that there is a marked difference between the one who serves God and the one who serves Him not. God is love, but He cannot excuse willful disregard for His commands. The enactments of His government are such that men do not escape the consequences of disloyalty. Only those who honor Him can He honor. Man’s conduct in this world decides his eternal destiny. As he has sown, so he must reap. Cause will be followed by effect. (MH 180.3)

Nothing less than perfect obedience can meet the standard of God’s requirement. He has not left His requirements indefinite. He has enjoined nothing that is not necessary in order to bring man into harmony with Him. We are to point sinners to His ideal of character and to lead them to Christ, by whose grace only can this ideal be reached. (MH 180.4)

The Saviour took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us “partakers of the divine nature,”(2 Peter 1:4) and His life declares that humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin. (MH 180.5)

The Saviour overcame to show man how he may overcome. All the temptations of Satan, Christ met with the word of God. By trusting in God’s promises, He received power to obey God’s commandments, and the tempter could gain no advantage. To every temptation His answer was, “It is written.” So God has given us His word wherewith to resist evil. Exceeding great and precious promises are ours, that by these we “might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4. (MH 181.1)

Bid the tempted one look not to circumstances, to the weakness of self, or to the power of temptation, but to the power of God’s word. All its strength is ours. “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”(Psalm 119:11) “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” Psalm 17:4. (MH 181.2)

Talk courage to the people; lift them up to God in prayer. Many who have been overcome by temptation are humiliated by their failures, and they feel that it is in vain for them to approach unto God; but this thought is of the enemy’s suggestion. When they have sinned, and feel that they cannot pray, tell them that it is then the time to pray. Ashamed they may be, and deeply humbled; but as they confess their sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness. (MH 181)

Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. (MH 182.1)

These precious words every soul that abides in Christ may make his own. He may say: (MH 182.2)

“I will look unto the Lord;

I will wait for the God of my salvation:
My God will hear me.
Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy:
When I fall, I shall arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The Lord shall be a light unto me.” Micah 7:7, 8. (MH 182.3)

“He will again have compassion on us,
He will blot out our iniquities;
Yea, Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea!”
Micah 7:19, Noyes. (MH 182.4)

God has promised: (MH 182.5)

“I will make a man more precious than fine gold;
Even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” Isaiah 13:12. (MH 182.6)

“Though ye have lain among the pots,
Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver,
And her feathers with yellow gold.” Psalm 68:13. (MH 182.7)

Those whom Christ has forgiven most will love Him most. These are they who in the final day will stand nearest to His throne. (MH 182.8)

“They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.” Revelation 22:4. (MH 182.9)