

# Cry Aloud

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”—*Isaiah 58:1*.

What is the transgression of God’s church? Is it mismanagement of the tithe? Is it the mingling of common, worldly politics with our sacred message? Is it the deafening silence against moral evils that prevail around us? Is it the absence of brotherly love that Christ said would be a sign that we are His disciples? Yes, all these are sins, but they are like leaves on a tree. The Axe must be laid to the root, or they will grow back. We are blessed because, in our blindness, God has given us a very plain message.

“Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.”—*Isaiah 58:2-3*.

Here are people who delight in approaching God; they take great pleasure in worshipping Him. They willingly perform acts of devotion, like fasting. They seek God daily, they afflict their souls, a reference to a day of atonement. Brothers and sisters, these are worshipers who obey God, who keep his commandments and statutes. At least to all appearances, they think they do. And this is precisely what they hold before God: “did we not fast? Did we not afflict our souls?” They say, “Lord, Lord did we not?”

“It is not the wicked world, but those whom the Lord designates as “my people,” that are to be reprovved for their transgressions. He declares further, “Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God.” [Isaiah 58:1, 2.] Here is brought to view a class who think themselves righteous, and appear to manifest great interest in the service of God; but the stern and solemn rebuke of the Searcher of hearts proves them to be

trampling upon the divine precepts.”—*Great Controversy 452*.

God replies by anointing their eyes with eye salve so they can behold. He says, “Behold, you pursue pleasure in your fast, not Me. More than that, you oppress others for the purpose of gain.”

“Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.”—*Isaiah 58:4*.

Do we fast to fight with others? When God blesses us with clarity of mind, do we use it to argue or to seek understanding? Instead of loving our brothers, do we smite them? God reprovves His people because their priorities are out of order. God has not prescribed us to bow down and go about in sadness and sorrow. He has not told us to rend our clothing and sit in sackcloth and ashes. He says:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”—*Isaiah 58:6-7*.

The fast that God has chosen for His people is a fast from a self-centered lifestyle. Our sin is self-seeking. A life lived to pursue pleasure while oppressing others is a bitter, cursed existence.

“As believers in Christ we need greater faith. We need to be more fervent in prayer. Many wonder why their prayers are so lifeless, their faith so feeble and wavering, their Christian experience so dark and uncertain. Have we not fasted, they say, and “walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?” In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah Christ has shown how this condition of things may be changed. He says: “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the

2 naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Verses 6, 7. This is the recipe that Christ has prescribed for the fainthearted, doubting, trembling soul. Let the sorrowful ones, who walk mournfully before the Lord, arise and help someone who needs help."—*6 Testimonies pg, 266.*

Those who follow this prescription will receive the tremendous promise associated with it:

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am."—*Isaiah 58:8-9.*

The Lord of Hosts will watch your back. In ancient times, when the battle was set in array and the two sides met, the victor was generally the side that was able to circle behind its enemy and attack its rear. In the Lord's battles, champions are few; often, men and women must move forward with no rearguard, with nobody to watch their back, nobody to protect their reputation and motives from slander and defamation. But this is a matter of least concern to a champion of God. Nobody who throws themselves fully into the work of the Lord should be concerned. God stands at their back, perfect in discernment, righteous in recompense, and mighty to save. The Lord of Heaven's armies has decreed:

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."—*Isaiah 54:17.*

This precious promise rests on particular conditions.

"If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."—*Isaiah 58:9-11.*

What is the yoke? Ellen White uses this imagery:

"Then come words of retaliation, words of

self-justification, and it is by such words that a heavy, galling yoke is manufactured for your neck; for all these bitter words will come back in a baleful harvest to your soul."—*Adventist Home pg, 439.*

It is not these words alone that are a heavy galling yoke.

"Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same."—*Job 4:8.*

The yoke is a device that links two animals together for service. The yoke of Christ is obedience to the law of God.

"Take My yoke upon you," Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him. The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God."—*Desire of Ages pg, 329.*

When we disobey the perfect law of love, we become yoked with satan. The process of preparing a garden is used as an allegory. When we are drawn away by temptation, we become yoked, and plow the soil with our wicked thoughts till we eventually sow a sin. But the sowing of sin is only the beginning of the experience; eventually, those seeds yield a harvest. It is a harvest nobody wants to reap. God is not only telling us to put away our sins, but also to put the temptation to death. We should not allow wicked thoughts to linger in our minds.

What is the putting forth of the finger?

"Every unkind criticism of others, every thought of self-esteem, is "the putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity." This lifting up of self in pride, as if you were faultless, and magnifying the faults of others, is offensive to God. It is breaking his law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Be kindly affectioned one toward another." We have no right to withdraw our confidence from a brother because of some evil report, some accusation or supposition of wrong. Frequently the report is made by those who are at enmity with God, those who are doing the enemy's work as accusers of the brethren."—*Manuscript 11, 1888, par. 5.*

Putting forth the finger is condemning, criticizing, and blaming others. The speaking of vanity is not just speaking of the greatness of self, but thoughts of self-esteem, for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. If we are to be

effective workers for Christ self is to be crucified. Have you wondered why harsh criticisms, blame, and faultfinding are praised by the congregation? Because worldly minds can appreciate worldly principles when they are at work. Praise and admiration often follow worldly principles, as long as the topic doesn't reach the cherished sins of the hearts of those listening.

We are now living in a time when there is a famine for the Word of God in the land. A famine of understanding. The prerequisite to receive these blessings is to practice what the Word of God teaches. Herein lies the reason for much speculation about what the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy mean. Because few ponder on the Word of God and practice what it teaches.

"All over the field of revelation are scattered glad springs of heavenly truth, peace, and joy. These fountains of joy are within the reach of every seeker. The words of Inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as living streams flowing from the river of the water of life. Our Saviour prayed that the mind of His followers might be opened to understand the Scriptures. Whenever we study the Bible with a prayerful heart, the Holy Spirit is near to open to us the meaning of the words we read. The man whose mind is enlightened by the opening of God's Word to his understanding will not only feel that he must more diligently seek to understand that Word, but that he must have a better understanding of the sciences. He will feel that he is called to a high calling in Christ Jesus."—*The Bible Echo*, October 15, 1892

Now we arrive at the sin that must be spoken about more than any other. The sin of Sabbath breaking.

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."—*Isaiah 58:12-14*.

Do you make the Sabbath appear honorable? Many health professionals have chosen this field because "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Often, they make little to no effort to ensure they

don't work on the Sabbath. In doing this, they dishonor the Sabbath in the eyes of the world. The Sabbath does not appear honorable because no effort was made to honor it. How do we make something appear honorable? Imagine the person you admire most decides to visit your house. What would you do to prepare? Would you let work get in your way? Would you ask them to leave halfway through the meeting so you can take a nap? Would you take a shower while they are there? Would you prefer to have your meals prepared, or would you take the time to cook? When the God of heaven and earth walks into your house on the Sabbath, does He receive less honor?

How much respect do we give God? Do we respect earthly judges more than the heavenly judge? We are not permitted to wear hats in a courtroom, nor are we allowed to whisper. Phones are silenced. People appear in their best clothes. In the sanctuary of the Lord, there is everyday talk. Brothers and sisters enthusiastically greet one another and converse freely during the service. Children are allowed to play, scream, cry, and interrupt the message. People's phones go off, and some even answer them. Have we lost respect for God because we see Him as loving?

Do we follow our own way? Some spend the sacred hours sleeping. Some use the day to travel and visit friends or family, excusing the purchase of gas as a necessity. Others cook because they spent the preparation day occupied with other things. In all this, they tell God they are too busy for His presence. We seek God, but when He is present, we ignore Him.

Do we speak our own words? Some occupy their Sabbath speaking of everything that isn't spiritual. They have much to discuss that relates to their work and personal pursuits, but nothing to share about their spiritual lives. They have no Christian joys, sorrows, or cares. They have nothing spiritual to offer others. Their worldly conversation shows what is in their hearts.

Do we pursue our pleasures? Some spend the Sabbath playing games or pursuing other recreational pleasures. Some take lengthy hikes, walking more on the day of rest than on any other day of the week. Others spend it on exercise. Do we find no pleasure in the worship of God? The Sabbath is a day of worship, and for those who genuinely love God, it is a source of great joy and fulfillment. The Bible tells us that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts. When we follow the Sabbath pre-

4 scription in Isaiah 58:12-14, we receive just that. The Sabbath is the highest delight, a foretaste of heaven in this dark world. Actual Sabbath observance prepares us for heaven. It can only be kept holy by those who are holy. Those who can discern the difference between the sacred and the common. When the Lord comes, many will be lost because they lightly regarded the Sabbath. This does not have to be our experience.

“December 25, 1865, I was shown that there has been too much slackness in regard to the observance of the Sabbath. There has not been promptness to fulfill the secular duties within the six working days which God has given to man and carefulness not to infringe upon one hour of the holy, sacred time which He has reserved to Himself. There is no business of man’s that should be considered of sufficient importance to cause him to transgress the fourth precept of Jehovah. There are cases in which Christ has given permission to labor even on the Sabbath in saving the life of men or of animals. But if we violate the letter of the fourth commandment for our own advantage from a pecuniary point of view we become Sabbath-breakers and are guilty of transgressing all the commandments, for if we offend in one point we are guilty of all. If in order to save property we break over the express command of Jehovah, where is the stopping place? Where shall we set the bounds? Transgress in a small matter, and look upon it as no particular sin on our part, and the conscience becomes hardened, the sensibilities blunted, until we can go still further and perform quite an amount of labor and still flatter ourselves that we are Sabbath-keepers, when, according to Christ’s standard, we are breaking every one of God’s holy precepts. There is a fault with Sabbathkeepers in this respect; but God is very particular, and all who think that they are saving a little time, or advantaging themselves by infringing a little on the Lord’s time, will meet with loss sooner or later. He cannot bless them as it would be His pleasure to do, for His name is dishonored by them, His precepts lightly esteemed. God’s curse will rest upon them, and they will lose ten or twentyfold more than they gain. “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me, ... even this whole nation.” God has given man six days in which to work for himself, but He has reserved one day in which He is to be specially honored. He is to

be glorified, His authority respected. And yet man will rob God by stealing a little of the time which the Creator has reserved for Himself. God reserved the seventh day as a period of rest for man, for the good of man as well as for His own glory. He saw that the wants of man required a day of rest from toil and care, that his health and life would be endangered without a period of relaxation from the labor and anxiety of the six days. The Sabbath was made for the benefit of man; and to knowingly transgress the holy commandment forbidding labor upon the seventh day is a crime in the sight of heaven which was of such magnitude under the Mosaic law as to require the death of the offender. But this was not all that the offender was to suffer, for God would not take a transgressor of His law to heaven. He must suffer the second death, which is the full and final penalty for the transgressor of the law of God.”—*1 Testimonies pg, 532.*

“I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, “Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.” I asked who this company were. The angel said, “These are they who once kept the Sabbath, and have given it up.” I heard them cry with a loud voice, “We have believed in Thy coming, and taught it with energy.” And while they were speaking, their eyes would fall upon their garments and see the writing, and then they would wail aloud. I saw that they had drunk of the deep waters, and fouled the residue with their feet,—trodden the Sabbath under-foot,—and that was why they were weighed in the balance and found wanting.”—*Early Writings pg, 36.*

Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. *For more on Sabbath observance see 2 Testimonies pg, 701.*

*For a finished work*



**Jonathan Taylor**

*Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35*

*More Food for the Little Flock —*