

# Preparation for Baptism

**A Weakness in Our Evangelism.** -- The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. {Ev 319.3}

Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness, and to have one's name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition. It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian's path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and His disciples trod,--the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice. -- *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 172. (1882) {Ev 319.4}

**Our Goal--Truly Converted Members.** -- Ministers who labor in towns and cities to present the truth should not feel content, nor that their work is ended, until those who have accepted the theory of the truth realize indeed the effect of its sanctifying power, and are truly converted to God. God would be better pleased to have six truly converted to the truth as the result of their labors, than to have sixty make a nominal profession, and yet not be thoroughly converted. These ministers should devote less time to preaching sermons, and reserve a portion of their strength to visit and pray with those who are interested, giving them godly instruction, to the end that they may "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." {Ev 320.1}

The love of God must be living in the heart of the teacher of the truth. His own heart must be imbued with that deep and fervent love which Christ possessed; then it will flow out to others. Ministers should teach that all who accept the truth should bring forth fruit to the glory of God. They should teach that self-sacrifice must be practiced every day; that many things which have been cherished must be yielded; and that many duties, disagreeable though they may appear, must be performed. Business interests, social endearments, ease, honor, reputation, in short, everything, must be held in subjection to the superior and ever-paramount claims of Christ. -- *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 317. (1879) {Ev 320.2}

**Conversion, Not Just Baptism.** -- Salvation is not to be baptized, not to have our names upon the church books, not to preach the truth. But it is a living union with Jesus Christ to be renewed in heart, doing the works of Christ in faith and labor of love, in patience, meekness, and hope. Every soul united to Christ will be a living missionary to all around him. -- *Letter 55*, 1886. {Ev 319.1}

**A Caution to Evangelists and Pastors.** -- Our ministering brethren make a decided failure of doing their work in a manner directed by the Lord. They fail to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. They have not gained an experience through personal communion with God, or a true knowledge of what constitutes Christian character; therefore many are baptized who have no fitness for this sacred ordinance, but who are knit to self and the world. They have not seen Christ or received Him by faith. -- *Review and Herald*, Feb. 4, 1890. {Ev 319.2}

**Ministers should give each candidate plain instruction regarding baptism's meaning.** -- Our churches are becoming enfeebled by receiving for doctrines the commandments of men. Many are received into the church who are not converted. Men, women, and children are allowed to take part in the solemn rite of baptism without being fully instructed in regard to the meaning of this ordinance. Participation in this ordinance means much, and our ministers should be careful to give each candidate for baptism plain instruction regarding its meaning and its solemnity. -- *Review and Herald*, Oct. 6, 1904. {PaM 163.2}

**Church membership of little value without conversion.** -- All, high or low, if they are unconverted, are on one common platform. Men may turn from one doctrine to another. This is being done,

and will be done. Papists may change from Catholicism to Protestantism; yet they may know nothing of the meaning of the words, "A new heart also will I give you." Accepting new theories, and uniting with a church, do not bring new life to any one, even though the church with which he unites may be established on the true foundation. Connection with a church does not take the place of conversion. To subscribe the name to a church creed is not of the least value to any one if the heart is not truly changed. -- RH Feb. 14, 1899. {PaM 163.3}

**Baptism should follow, not only instruction and belief, but also practice.** -- There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, "I believe," but to practice the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character, that we prove our connection with Him. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the Word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments, and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts. -- 6T 91. {PaM 163.4}

**Evidence of change must precede baptism.** -- The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether those who profess to be converted are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventist, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord's side, to come out of the world and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. When they give evidence that they fully understand their position, they are to be accepted. But when they show that they are following the customs and fashions and sentiments of the world, they are to be faithfully dealt with. If they feel no burden to change their course of action, they should not be accepted as members of the church. The Lord wants those who compose His church to be true, faithful stewards of the grace of Christ. -- TM 128. {PaM 164.1}

**Examination of Candidates.** -- Before baptism, there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism. {Ev 311.2}

One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need instruction is the subject of dress. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress. {Ev 312.1}

**Instructions on Dress and Pleasure.** -- The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. Faithful, Christian men and women should have an intense interest to bring the convicted soul to a correct knowledge of righteousness in Christ Jesus. If any have allowed the desire for pleasure or the love of dress to become supreme, so that any portion of their mind, soul, and strength is devoted to selfish indulgences, the faithful believers should watch for these souls as they that must give an account. They must not neglect the faithful, tender, loving instruction so essential to the young converts, that there may be no half-hearted work. -- *Manuscript 56*, 1900. {Ev 268.1}

**Judge by the Fruit of the Life.** -- There is one thing that we have no right to do, and that is to judge another man's heart or impugn his motives. But when a person presents himself as a candidate for church membership, we are to examine the fruit of his life, and leave the responsibility of his motive with himself. But great care should be exercised in accepting members into the church; for Satan has his specious devices through which he purposes to crowd false brethren into the church, through whom he can work more successfully to weaken the cause of God. -- *Review and Herald*, Jan. 10, 1893. {Ev 313.3}

**Preparing Young People for Baptism.** -- Candidates who have grown to manhood and womanhood should understand their duty better than do the younger ones; but the pastor of the church has a duty to do for these souls. Have they wrong habits and practices? It is the duty of the pastor to have special

meetings with them. Give them Bible readings, converse and pray with them, and plainly show the claims of the Lord upon them. Read to them the teaching of the Bible in regard to conversion. Show what is the fruit of conversion, the evidence that they love God. Show that true conversion is a change of heart, of thoughts and purposes. Evil habits are to be given up. The sins of evil-speaking, of jealousy, of disobedience, are to be put away. A warfare must be waged against every evil trait of character. Then the believing one can understandingly take to himself the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Matt. 7:7. -- *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 95. (1900) {Ev 311.1}

**Parents should play a significant role in the baptism of their children.** -- Parents whose children desire to be baptized have a work to do, both in self-examination and in giving faithful instruction to their children. Baptism is a most sacred and important ordinance, and there should be a thorough understanding as to its meaning. It means repentance for sin, and the entrance upon a new life in Christ Jesus. There should be no undue haste to receive the ordinance. Let both parents and children count the cost. In consenting to the baptism of their children, parents sacredly pledge themselves to be faithful stewards over these children, to guide them in their character building. They pledge themselves to guard with special interest these lambs of the flock, that they may not dishonor the faith they profess. -- 6T 93. {PaM 164.2}

**Instructing New Converts.** -- A laborer should never leave some portion of the work undone because it is not agreeable to perform, thinking that the minister coming next will do it for him. When this is the case, if a second minister follows the first, and presents the claims that God has upon His people, some draw back, saying, "The minister who brought us the truth did not mention these things." And they become offended because of the word. Some refuse to accept the tithing system; they turn away, and no longer walk with those who believe and love the truth. When other lines are opened before them, they answer, "It was not so taught us," and they hesitate to move forward. How much better it would have been if the first messenger of truth had faithfully and thoroughly educated these converts in regard to all essential matters, even if fewer had been added to the church under his labors. God would be better pleased to have six thoroughly converted to the truth than to have sixty make a profession and yet not be truly converted. {CS 104.3}

It is part of the minister's work to teach those who accept the truth through his efforts, to bring the tithe to the storehouse, as an acknowledgment of their dependence upon God. The new converts should be fully enlightened as to their duty to return to the Lord His own. The command to pay tithe is so plain that there is no semblance of excuse for disregarding it. He who neglects to give instruction on this point, leaves undone a most important part of his work. {CS 105.1}

Ministers must also impress upon the people the importance of bearing other burdens in connection with the work of God. No one is exempt from the work of benevolence. The people must be taught that every department of the cause of God should enlist their support and engage their interest. The great missionary field is open before us, and this subject must be agitated, agitated, again and again. The people must be made to understand that it is not the hearers, but the doers of the word, who will gain eternal life. And they are to be taught also that those who become partakers of the grace of Christ are not only to communicate of their substance for the advancement of the truth, but are to give themselves to God without reserve. -- GW 369-371. {CS 105.2}

**Tea & Coffee Sinful Indulgences.** -- Tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol we must present as sinful indulgences. We cannot place on the same ground, meat, eggs, butter, cheese, and such articles placed upon the table. These are not to be borne in front, as the burden of our work. The former--tea, coffee, tobacco, beer, wine, and all spiritous liquors--are not to be taken moderately, but discarded. The poisonous narcotics are not to be treated in the same way as the subject of eggs, butter, and cheese. {3SM 287.2}

The indulgence of unnatural appetite, whether for tea, coffee, tobacco, or liquor, is intemperance, and is at war with the laws of life and health. By using these forbidden articles a condition of things is created in the system which the Creator never designed. This indulgence in any of the members of the human family is sin. . . . Suffering, disease, and death are the sure penalty of indulgence. -- *Evangelism*, page 266. {Te 104.3}

Tea and coffee drinking is a sin, an injurious indulgence, which, like other evils, injures the soul. These darling idols create an excitement, a morbid action of the nervous system. -- *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 425. {Te 80.1}