

Health Quotes 'n' Notes™

Fasting



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Fasting

**A compilation of E.G. White,
Bible texts, and more.**

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DISCLAIMER: This booklet is intended to offer general information which is subject to change. We do not make any diagnosis or personal treatment suggestions. This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or cure any disease. We urge you to learn about health so that you can make informed decisions to preserve or regain the vibrant good health you deserve.

Fasting

The true fast is no mere formal service. The Scripture describes the fast God has 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;” to “draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul.” Isaiah 58:6, 10 Here is set forth the very spirit and character of the work of Christ. His whole life was a sacrifice of Himself for the saving of the world. Whether fasting in the wilderness of temptation or eating with the publicans..., He was giving His life for the redemption of the lost. Not in idle mourning, in mere bodily humiliation and multitudinous sacrifices, is the true spirit of devotion manifested, but it is shown in the surrender of self in willing service to God and man. DA 278

Why Should We Fast

To Prepare Our Hearts: For certain things, fasting and prayer are recommended and appropriate. In the hand of God they are a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind. We obtain answers to our prayers because we humble our souls before God. CD 187

For Faith: “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Mt 17:21 Instead of strengthening their faith by prayer and meditation on the words of Christ, they had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances...In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith-faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work--can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers. DA 431

For Spiritual Enlightenment: The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. TM 24 There are in the Scriptures some things which are hard to be understood, and which, according to the language of Peter, the unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction. We may not, in this life, be able to explain the meaning of every passage of Scripture; but there are no vital points to practical truth that will be clouded in mystery. When the time shall come, in the providence of God, for the world to be tested upon the truth for that time, minds will be exercised by His Spirit to search the Scriptures, even with fasting and with prayer, until link after link is searched out, and united in a perfect chain. Every fact which immediately concerns the salvation of souls will be made so clear that none need err, or walk in darkness. Difficult points of present truth have been reached by the earnest efforts of a few who were devoted to the work. Fasting and fervent prayer to God have moved the Lord to unlock His treasures of truth to their understanding. CD 187 God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting... Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God, so that when the testing time shall come, and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith, they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. CW 40

To correct appetite: If they cannot at first enjoy plain food, they should fast until they can. That fast will prove to them of greater benefit than medicine, for the abused stomach will find that rest ... and real hunger can be satisfied with a plain diet. It will take time for the taste to recover from the abuses which it has received, and to gain its natural tone. CD 190

For certain things fasting and prayer are recommended and appropriate. In the hand of God they are a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind. We obtain answers to our prayers because we humble our souls...If our appetites clamor for the flesh of dead animals, it is a necessity to fast and pray for the Lord to give His grace to deny fleshly lusts which war against the soul. MM 283

For Victory over Sin: We have faith, my brethren and sisters, that if you will walk humbly with God, you will see of his salvation. It is the desire of my heart that you shall know the power of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have an all-sufficient Helper. He understands our weakness and our needs. Let there be fasting and prayer. Let self be humbled. Let the heart be cleansed from all impurity. Confess your sins, and plead with God day and night for the victory, and you will walk in the light as Christ is in the light. RH, Mar 23, 1905 When his heritage shall conscientiously follow the word of the Lord, his blessing will rest upon them in answer to their prayers. “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness...” **Joel 2: 12,13** RH, Feb 9, 1897

For Our Character: The word of God sets a high mark before you. Will you, through fasting and prayerful effort, attain to the completeness and consistency of Christian character? GW92 19 Have you not a work to do, to seek the Lord with humiliation of soul, with fasting and prayer? ... Set your heart and house in order. God sees the defects in your character, and he desires that you should see them, and feel your great need of the help...RH, Dec 18, 1888 You greatly need to experience a deeper heart work. It is your privilege to receive more of the Spirit of God, as you engage in fasting and earnest prayer. You need to accept the promises and assurances of God and walk out on them in faith. You need to learn how to present the truths of the Word to those around you in all their binding force and in all their encouragement, that the unconverted may feel the influence of the Spirit of God upon heart and mind and character. RH, Jan 13, 1910

For Healing: Intemperate eating is often the cause of sickness, and what nature most needs is to be relieved of the undue burden that has been placed upon her. In many cases of sickness, the very best remedy is for the patient to fast for a meal or two, that the overworked organs of digestion may have an opportunity to rest... Many times a short period of entire abstinence from food, followed

by simple, moderate eating, has led to recovery through nature's own recuperative effort. ...the path of self-denial is the path to health. CD 189 There are some who would be benefited more by abstinence from food for a day or two every week than by any amount of treatment or medical advice. To fast one day a week would be of incalculable benefit to them. CD 189 The sufferers in such cases can do for themselves that which others cannot do as well for them. They should commence to relieve nature of the load they have forced upon her. They should remove the cause. Fast a short time, and give the stomach a chance for rest. CD 190 In cases of severe fever, abstinence from food for a short time will lessen the fever, and make the use of water more effectual. But...not allow him to be restricted in diet for a great length of time until his system becomes enfeebled. While the fever is raging, food may irritate and excite the blood; but as soon as the strength of the fever is broken, nourishment should be given in a careful, judicious manner. If food is withheld too long, the stomach's craving for it will create fever, which will be relieved by a proper allowance of food of a right quality...If there is a great desire expressed for food, even during the fever, to gratify that desire with a moderate amount of simple food would be less injurious than for the patient to be denied. CD 190

For the Latter Rain: Before the power of the Holy Ghost rested upon the disciples, they spent ten days before God in prayer and fasting and confession of sin. After they had come into unity, the heavens were opened, the glory of God was revealed, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Then they went forth to proclaim the gospel with power, and under the influence of the Spirit five thousand were converted in one day. PCP 33

Ministers and Gospel Workers should: When they were alone with Jesus they asked him why it was that they were unable to cast out the devil. Jesus answered that it was because of their unbelief, and the carelessness with which they regarded the sacred work that had been committed to them. They had not fitted themselves for their holy office by fasting and prayer ... they should go to him in humiliation and self-sacrifice and plead for strength to conquer the enemy of souls. 2SP 335 "And when they had ordained

them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” Acts 14:23 “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6 “Ye are...the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14 What a responsibility! There is need of fasting, humiliation, and prayer over our decaying zeal and languishing spirituality. The love of many is waxing cold. The efforts of many of our preachers are not what they should be...If these teachers were connected closely with Christ, they would have divine wisdom to know how to approach the people. GW92 37

To Prepare for the End: Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food. CD 188 We are living in the most solemn period of this world’s history...Our own future well-being and also the salvation of other souls depends upon the course which we now pursue. We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth. Every follower of Christ should earnestly inquire, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon his word, especially upon the scenes of the Judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are transpiring around us; we are on Satan’s enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God; the foe is lurking near, ready at any moment, should you become lax and drowsy...4SP 419

To Prepare for a Debate or Conflict: “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” 1Cor 7:5 Whenever it is necessary for the advancement of the cause of truth and the glory of God, that an opponent be met, how carefully, and with what humility should they [THE ADVOCATES OF TRUTH] go into the conflict. With heart searching, confession of sin, and earnest prayer, and often

fasting for a time, they should entreat that God would especially help them, and give His saving, precious truth a glorious victory, that error might appear in its true deformity, and its advocates be completely discomfited. . . Never should you enter upon a discussion, where so much is at stake, relying upon your aptness to handle strong arguments. Ev 165

For Serious Church Matters: When Peter also was imprisoned, the entire church engaged in fasting and prayer. AA 144 It is in the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another and to pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart. Unitedly make known your troubles to God...Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally. CD 188 All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart. 4SP 264 The work of a united, converted church, with prayer and fasting for the Holy Spirit of God to be revealed, will bring the angelic agencies very near. As the disciples “ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Acts 13:2 God will work just as much in our day, if we will individually cooperate with him. AU Gleaner, Jan 8, 1902 When declension and danger threaten the church, there will be more praying, more fasting, by the faithful few, and the Lord will answer the prayers offered to him in sincerity, and at the same time he will come forth as an avenger because of the guiltiness of the evil-workers. He will be a protector; for he will “avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them.” Luke 18:7 RH, Dec 11, 1888

Examples of Those Who Fasted:

Jesus Christ: When Christ bore the test of temptation upon the point of appetite He did not stand in beautiful Eden, as did Adam, with the light and love of God seen in everything His eye rested upon; but He was in a barren, desolate wilderness, surrounded with

wild beasts. Every thing around Him was repulsive. With these surroundings, He fasted forty days and forty nights, “and in those days he did eat nothing.” Luke 4:2 He was emaciated through long fasting and felt the keenest sense of hunger. His visage was indeed marred more than the sons of men. Con 37 Many who profess godliness do not inquire into the reason of Christ’s long period of fasting and suffering in the wilderness. His anguish was not so much from the pangs of hunger as from His sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race. He knew that appetite would be man’s idol and would lead him to forget God and would stand directly in the way of his salvation. Our Saviour showed perfect confidence that His heavenly Father would not suffer Him to be tempted above what He should give Him strength to endure, but would bring Him off conqueror if He patiently bore the test to which He was subjected. Con 51

Moses: ...Christ was without food forty days. Moses had, on especial occasions, been thus long without food. But he felt not the pangs of hunger. He was not tempted and harassed by a vile and powerful foe, as was the Son of God. He was elevated above the human. He was especially sustained by the glory of God which enshrouded him. 5BC 1079 (see Ex 24:18 and 34:4-6)

Esther and people: “...in every province, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting...Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.” Es 4:3, 16 At a time when it seemed that no power could save them, Esther and the women associated with her, by fasting and prayer and prompt action, met the issue, and brought salvation to their people. CC 245

New Testament Gospel Workers: “Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, . . .Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted..” Acts 13:2 Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were

solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus they were authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority. AA 160

King Darius: “Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.” Daniel 6:18-21

Daniel and Friends: When the king was troubled in regard to his dream, these men, with Daniel, had fasted and prayed, that they might understand the dream. YI, Mar 8, 1904 p 6 “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession..” Dan. 9:3, 4 Daniel studied the prophecies. He earnestly sought to know their meaning. He prayed and fasted for heavenly light. RH, February 9, 1897 par. 13

Paul and the Soldiers: Let him read of that scene on the sea, when the tempest-tossed soldiers and seamen, worn with labor and watching and long fasting, Paul the prisoner, on his way to trial and execution, spoke those grand words of courage and hope: “Be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you. . . In the faith of this promise Paul assured his companions, “There shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.” So it came to pass. Because there was in that ship one man through whom God could work, the whole shipload of heathen soldiers and sailors was preserved. “They escaped all safe to land.” Ed 255

Nineveh: The case of Jonah was presented before me. God commanded him to go into Nineveh and deliver the message that he gave him...’Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’ The

city was a marvel of wealth and magnificence; yet the king believed the warning and humbled himself and his people before the Lord in fasting and sackcloth. A merciful God accepted their repentance and lengthened the days of their probation. He turned away his fierce anger and awaited the fruits of Nineveh's humiliation. LS88 203 (see Jonah 3:4-10)

Nehemiah: How much anguish of soul this needed severity cost the faithful workers for God, the Judgment alone will reveal. Every advance step was gained only by fasting, humiliation, and prayer. There was a constant struggle with opposing elements... The servants of God today encounter difficulties very similar to those against which Nehemiah contended. Human nature is still the same. And Satan is as active, earnest, and persevering now as at any period in the past. Nay, rather, the word of God declares that his power and enmity increase as we near the close of time. ST, Jan 24, 1884 Neh 9:1-3

David: "David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. ..." 2 Sam 12:16-23 When his child was stricken, David, with fasting and deep humiliation, pleaded for its life. He put off his royal robes, he laid aside his crown, and night after night he lay upon the earth, in heartbroken grief interceding for the innocent one suffering for his guilt. "The elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not." Often when judgments had been pronounced upon persons or cities, humiliation and repentance had turned aside the blow, and the Ever-Merciful, swift to pardon, had sent messengers of peace. Encouraged by this thought, David persevered in his supplication so long as the child was spared. Upon learning that it was dead, he quietly submitted to the decree of God ... David, trusting in God's mercy, was not without comfort. PP 722.

Saul (Paul): The faith of Saul was severely tested during the 3 days of fasting and prayer at the house of Judas, in Damascus. He was

totally blind, and in utter darkness of mind as to what was required of him. He had been directed to go to Damascus, where it would be told him what he was to do. In his uncertainty and distress he cried earnestly to God...Ananias...addressed him: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost; and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith...and was baptized." Acts 9:9-18 3SP 315

Hezekiah: "But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one.." 2 Chronicles 30:18 It is the wisdom of minister and people to hold themselves always in a spiritual readiness for anything that may occur. Let all follow the example of Hezekiah. Let us pour out the soul in humiliation and fasting and prayer. BTS, July 1, 1910 par. 6

Tribe of Judah: "Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah...Then upon Jahaziel...came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation...Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To morrow go ye down against them...Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you." 2 Chronicles 20:3

Ezra: They realized that if they wilfully chose to violate even one precept of the Decalogue, they would be like a soldier without a breastplate,--unprotected from the assaults of Satan. "So we fasted," said Ezra, "and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us." By prayer and fasting, by self-examination and confession of sin, they sought to come into harmony with God and his holy law. They pleaded with the Lord to purge them from their sins. All harshness and impatience of spirit were put away. Self was crucified; the Lord God was exalted, and he alone. RH, Feb 13, 1908 par. 12 (Ezra 8:21-23)

When Fasting is not Appropriate

When We do not choose right: The only hope for those who practice vile habits is to forever leave them if they place any value upon health here, and salvation hereafter. When these habits have been indulged in for quite a length of time, it requires a determined effort to resist temptation, and refuse the corrupt indulgence. The Mr. -, mentioned, had practiced these habits so long he seemed to have lost the control of himself... This man had gone so far he seemed to be left of God. He would go into the woods and spend days and nights in fasting and prayer that he might overcome this great sin, and then would return to his old habits. God did not hear his prayers. He asked God to do for him what had been in his power to do for himself. He had vowed to God, time and again, and had as often broken his vows, and given himself up to his own corrupt lust, until God had left him to work his own ruin. ApM 27

Those who have an impoverished diet: I have been informed that you have taken but one meal a day for a period of time; but I know it to be wrong in your case, for I have been shown that you needed a nutritious diet, and that you were in danger of being too abstemious. Your strength would not admit of your severe discipline... I think that you have erred in fasting two days. God did not require it of you. I beg of you to be cautious and eat freely good, wholesome food twice a day. You will surely decrease in strength and your mind become unbalanced unless you change your course of abstemious diet. CD 191

Too Long or improper: It is true that there are unbalanced minds that impose upon themselves fasting which the Scriptures do not teach, and prayers and privation of rest and sleep which God has never required. Such are not prospered and sustained in their voluntary acts of righteousness... These are almost sure to become sickly. But Christ and true godliness are health to the body and strength to the soul. 1T 556 You are not called upon to fast forty days. The Lord bore that fast for you in the wilderness of temptation. CD 189

The heart must be right: Deep humility of soul before God is

necessary, and firm, humble reliance upon the merits of the blood of Christ alone. Fasting and prayer will accomplish nothing while the heart is estranged from God by a wrong course of action. Read **Is 58:6-11**. It is heart work that the Lord requires, good works springing from a heart filled with love. All should carefully and prayerfully . . . investigate their motives and actions. The promise of God to us is on condition of obedience...with all His requirements. CH 377 The outward signs of fasting and prayer, without a broken and contrite spirit, are of no value in God's sight. The inward work of grace is needed. Humiliation of soul is essential...He will graciously receive those who will humble their hearts before Him. He will hear their petitions and heal their backslidings. 3BC 1132

The Wrong Spirit: Mrs. C. was talking quite eloquently in regard to backbiting. She was very severe, for she had heard that speeches had been made against her fanatical proceedings. Just then Sr. B. entered saying, "Will you please walk out to dinner?" Mrs. C. instantly replied, saying, "This kind goeth not out save by fasting and prayer. I do not wish any dinner." In a moment my husband was upon his feet. The power of God was upon him, and the color had left his face. Said he, "I hope it will go out! In the name of the Lord, I hope it will go out!" and said to Mrs. C., "That evil spirit is in you, and I hope it will go out! I rebuke it in the name of the Lord!" She seemed to be struck dumb. Her glib, smart tongue was stilled for once. 2SG 157.

When Criticism is in the Heart: Prayer and fasting, that laborers may be sent into the harvest-field, will avail nothing, while the spirit of evil surmising and criticism exists in the hearts of those to whom laborers are to be sent. We are to be doers of the words of Christ; then our fasts and prayers will be effectual in bringing upon the church the Holy Spirit. Let there be decided work done to answer the prayer of Christ, that his disciples should be one as he is one with the Father. He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one..." John 17:20, 21 RH, Oct 31, 1893 par. 5

In Self-justification: "When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites." **Mt 6:16** The Saviour ate with sinners, he spoke to them the words of

life, and many accepted him as their Redeemer. The feast of Christ was holy; but the fasting Pharisees will have their portion with the hypocrites and unbelievers, when Christ shall come in his glory, and those whom they scorned will be gathered into his kingdom. 2SP 193 Fasting was practiced by the Jews as an act of merit, and the most rigid among them fasted two days in every week. The Pharisees and John's disciples were fasting when the latter came to Jesus... "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?" Very tenderly Jesus answered them. He did not try to correct their erroneous conception of fasting, but only to set them right in regard to His own mission. (Mk 2:18,19) DA 276 Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God... Our own works can never purchase salvation. DA 280 Like other observances of a religious character, fasting, when practiced from right motives, will prove a blessing. But this, like almsgiving, had been perverted. The Pharisees put on an outward appearance of great sanctity, of humiliation and contrition, while in their hearts they cherished sins of a revolting character. They made their religion unattractive by their stern, forbidding appearance. But the true Christian will never chill the atmosphere with severe exactions and painful stiffness. He is to have a sweet, subduing, cheerful and saving influence upon those with whom he comes in contact. ST, Dec 3, 1896 par. 2

Must have Trust: All the fasting in the world will not take the place of simple trust in the word of God. "Ask," He says, "and ye shall receive." John 16:24 ...You are not called upon to fast forty days. The Lord bore that fast for you in the wilderness of temptation. There would be no virtue in such a fast; but there is virtue in the blood of Christ. CD 189

How to Fast

Eat sparingly of simple food: The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance. Men need to think less about what they

shall eat and drink of temporal food, and much more in regard to the food from heaven, that will give tone and vitality to the whole religious experience. CD 188 Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food. CD 188 (*see also page 5 on “For Healing”*)

Abstinence from food: When Christ was the most fiercely beset by temptation, He ate nothing. He committed Himself to God, and through earnest prayer, and perfect submission to the will of His Father, came off conqueror. Those who profess the truth for these last days, above every other class of professed Christians, should imitate the great Exemplar in prayer. CD 186

Yield the Mind: The spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God. CD 189

Need Sincere Repentance: “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 ...seasons of fasting and prayer are indeed necessary; but they must be accompanied with sincere repentance and decided reformation. Without such contrition of soul, these seasons only increase the guilt of the wrong-doer. The Lord has specified the fast He has chosen, the one He will accept. It is that which bears fruit to His glory, in repentance, in devotion, in true piety. [Isaiah 58:6, 7 quoted.] 4BC 1150

Summary

The fasting which the word of God enjoins is something more than a form. It does not consist merely in refusing food, in wearing sackcloth, in sprinkling ashes upon the head. He who fasts in real

sorrow for sin will never court display. The object of the fast which God calls upon us to keep is not to afflict the body for the sin of the soul, but to aid us in perceiving the grievous character of sin, in humbling the heart before God and receiving His pardoning grace. His command to Israel was, “Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.” Joel 2:13. It will avail nothing for us to do penance or to flatter ourselves that by our own works we shall merit or purchase an inheritance among the saints. When the question was asked Christ, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” He answered, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” John 6:28, 29. Repentance is turning from self to Christ; and when we receive Christ so that through faith He can live His life in us, good works will be manifest. Jesus said, “When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret.” Mt 6:17, 18. Whatever is done to the glory of God is to be done with cheerfulness, not with sadness and gloom. There is nothing gloomy in the religion of Jesus... Christ desires us to make His service appear attractive, as it really is. Let the self-denials and the secret heart trials be revealed to the compassionate Saviour. Let the burdens be left at the foot of the cross, and go on your way rejoicing in His love who first loved you. Men may never know of the work going on secretly between the soul and God, but the result of the Spirit’s work upon the heart will be manifest to all, for He “which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Matthew 6:6 MB 87-8.

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Fasting

Is fasting an old ritual from days gone by or does it hold merit today?

Is it for spiritual growth or for a healthier lifestyle?

Do I need sackcloth and some ashes - or is it deeper than that?

These and other questions looked at from a Biblical point of view inside.

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