

Louis K. Dickson
Power For The
Most Important Hour - A

1 AS WE COME to the high day of the quadrennial session of this division I
2 am sure we all come with our hearts filled with expectation. We have
3 come to a new day, a day when every past achievement and
4 accomplishment in the work of God and in the experience of the Christian
5 is entirely inadequate for this hour. We have come to a time that calls for
6 more than we have ever given. We have come to the final hours, hours of
7 general uncertainty in the world. There is a rising fear gripping the hearts
8 of men everywhere. The most optimistic of them are looking out upon the
9 future as into a deep, dark chasm with no spanning bridge.

10 Thank God, the light of heaven has fallen upon this people. This is the
11 hour when God shall be glorified in His people, in a way never before
12 seen. It is at this time that His name shall be exalted. His plan of salvation
13 shall be understood. The light of truth shall come to men's hearts vividly,
14 clearly, unobstructedly. God has called us to this hour. And because of all
15 these things this is the most tremendous hour that you and I have ever
16 seen. Nothing like it can be found in the annals of human history. This
17 very hour this Sabbath morning, dear friends, is the most important hour
18 that has ever come to you or to me.

19 There is to break upon the world and upon all of our lives very, very soon,
20 wicked forces bent upon the destruction of everything that is called God,
21 or that has anything at all to do with the Lord Jesus Christ or His blessed
22 work. The enemy of Christ is determined today, and is relentlessly seeking
23 day and night to destroy God's cause. We are told by the messenger of the
24 Lord that he is seeking for the usefulness or the life of every child of God;
25 and that if he has his way there will never come to the people of God
26 another awakening, another revival.

27 That is a mighty challenge to you and me, dear friends. I don't believe we
28 are going to leave that challenge unanswered. Nothing has happened in
29 these later years of trouble and distress and danger and fear to change our
30 understanding of God's mighty power. **There is a power coming down
31 from above today to meet every onslaught of the enemy. God needs a
32 people with triumphant power from on high, who will enter in fully,
33 cooperating with every objective and purpose that He has to finish His
34 work quickly and to meet the advance of the enemy in this terrific and
35 closing conflict for the possession of the human soul.**

36 I bring to you a text that has arrested my attention repeatedly. It is found in
37 the twenty-second chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel, the fourteenth verse:
38 "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I

39 shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it." This is a
40 wonderful statement, a most solemn statement that God would have us
41 measure with, and take to our very hearts.

42 The Lord wants us to ponder well the way we are taking the experience we
43 are having. He wants us to look into our hearts and lives in terms of power
44 to abide, to continue, to endure. Repeatedly when Jesus was here on His
45 earthly ministry He expressed the thought: "He that shall endure to the
46 end, the same shall be saved."

47 The Christian life in these last days has reduced itself to an endurance
48 contest. The enemy of our souls is bent on wearing out the saints of the
49 Most High. He cares little how that shall be done, just so it is
50 accomplished. It is possible for our souls to be worn out doing good,
51 building things, advancing a movement, gathering money, perfecting an
52 organization. All of these things, good in themselves, are but secondary to
53 fortifying our souls for an hour like this. And it is a very grave question
54 that the Lord asks: "Can thine heart endure?" We all believe the message
55 will triumph; we believe that the movement will gain its objective. We
56 have no question but that the enemy will be overthrown. *But whether our*
57 *heart will endure is an open question.*

58 I would like to place with that text another one found in 1 John 2: 28:
59 "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we
60 may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."
61 Here the apostle has caught the thought that **the preparation to meet the**
62 **Lord is the recapturing of the experience of abiding, continuing in**
63 **Christ, not religious by fits and starts, not an up-and-down**
64 **experience, but an experience that is abiding and that has levelled off,**
65 **and is going straight for the kingdom of heaven. *Abide in Him. He does***
66 **not say "Abide in Him if you can."** "It would be a good thing if you were
67 to try to abide in Him."

68 All of the promises that God has given us relative to these things are
69 dependent upon our preparation to be sealed with the seal of the living
70 God. **The outpouring of God's Spirit in latter-rain power can never**
71 **come to this people until it comes to a prepared people. Do not**
72 **differentiate between preparedness for the latter rain and**
73 **preparedness to meet the Lord. They are identical.** It would be a
74 wonderful thing, wouldn't it, if under present conditions, present
75 experiences, and present attitudes on our part, we should find ourselves in
76 possession of mighty power beyond anything this world has ever seen in
77 the church of God. But that is not the plan, dear friends. ***God does not***
78 ***intend to send His power upon an unprepared people.***

79 When Christ was here upon earth, walking and talking with men, how
80 often we hear Him say, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men";
81 "Come after Me"; "He that will come after Me, let him take up his cross
82 daily and follow Me." But as we come down nearer to the day when He
83 was to hang between heaven and earth and shed His precious blood for
84 you and me, He seemed to put aside that expression of "Follow Me" and
85 we find Him using another expression—"Abide in Me." And how often He

86 said it in that one passage of the fifteenth chapter of John, and what
87 wonderful promises He made based upon the experience of abiding in
88 Him! You remember He made this statement: "Herein is My Father
89 glorified." What is He speaking of?

90 What is our message as a people? "Fear God, and give glory to Him." How
91 can we give glory to the Father who is the possessor, the centre, of all
92 glory? "Herein," He says, "is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."
93 And so someone says, "We must get very busy. We must multiply our
94 efforts. We must multiply our facilities. We must gather money. We must
95 have, a great army of workers. We must erect many buildings and go to the
96 ends of the earth." All that is true.

97 But, my dear friends, we need to know what He says concerning this
98 matter of bearing fruit for Him. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that
99 abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for
100 without Me ye can do nothing." It makes no difference how many facilities
101 we may have, or how large our number of workers, believers, institutions,
102 or monetary coins. He that would bear much fruit is "he that abideth in
103 Me." Over and over again He impresses the thought upon our minds; and
104 this beloved apostle, who was so near the heart of our blessed Master,
105 comes forth very early in his epistle and tells us, "My little children, abide
106 in Him." If you would be prepared to meet God, abide in Him. Now we
107 use that expression very often. It is a familiar one to Christians.

108 But I want to say, dear friends, with all the solemnity I can muster, **There**
109 **are few Seventh-day Adventists who understand that statement. There**
110 **is a high percentage of church members today who do not know what**
111 **that means and have never entered into that experience.** And I believe it
112 is time, preachers, for you and me to get into some of these things that are
113 so glibly spoken of among Christians and get them down into words; into
114 thoughts that we can understand and assimilate into our lives and
115 experience, and lead our people into an experience of abiding in Christ, for
116 it is the preparation to meet the Lord. Don't be afraid of it. It is
117 characteristically simple, as everything is that has to do with the gospel of
118 Jesus Christ.

119 It is a terrible thing in an hour like this, when we should be prepared, to be
120 forced to make the preparation, to stand embarrassed before the call of
121 God, before the hour of our visitation, the great need and the beckoning
122 hand of our Master leading away on beyond what we have been able to
123 enter into, because we have failed to enter fully into the experience by
124 which to meet that challenge.

125 The Apostle Paul understood this and emphasized it in many places. Turn
126 with me to the first chapter of Colossians and the twenty-first verse: "And
127 you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked
128 works, yet now hath He reconciled." Notice, he is talking here to a group
129 of men and women who were once alienated from God. They did not know
130 the truth, but now the light has come to them. To them have been revealed
131 the great truths of God's will and they are reconciled to that revelation of
132 His will. We need to ask ourselves the question, Am I reconciled to the

133 revelation of God's will for my life?

134 Let me say that I am talking to a people not confined to Australia, but
135 representative of a people around the circle of the earth upon whom has
136 been bestowed the most detailed revelation of God's will that any
137 generation of His people have enjoyed in the history of the church. Not
138 only has He thrown the light of heaven upon the Scripture in no uncertain
139 terms, but He has called forth a messenger of flesh and blood like unto us,
140 who has written down for us very carefully and minutely all that was given
141 to her. Focussed upon God's Word are all these marvellous statements of
142 God's messenger, like a mighty telescope looking down upon God's Word
143 and amplifying it in terms of human life, so that we are able to see more in
144 it than we ever saw before. **We are the most privileged people of any
145 generation in the history of the world. The Lord has revealed His will
146 to this church. The searching question is, Are we reconciled to that
147 revelation of His will in every detail? Are we intelligent as to that
148 revelation of His will? or are we neglecting in our lives to read and to
149 understand and to study and to ponder upon the things that God has
150 revealed to us?**

151 Well, the Apostle Paul is talking to those who are reconciled. "Now hath
152 He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy
153 and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight." Isn't that wonderful?
154 Oh, how we should rejoice to be led to that place where we are
155 unreprouvable, unblameable, and holy in God's sight! Don't be afraid of it.
156 This comes through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to a reconciled life.

157 (To be concluded)

158

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160 Power For

161 The Most Important Hour - B

162

163 But this isn't all He says. He adds: "If ye continue in the faith grounded
164 and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." In other
165 words He is saying, If ye endure, if ye continue, if ye abide. And here is
166 the secret, dear friends, of the abiding life in Christ. It is going on,
167 following on to know the Lord. How often I have heard the messenger of
168 the Lord speak upon that text! We shall know if we follow on to know the
169 Lord. **The difficulty with most of our lives is that we are holding on to
170 an experience that has leaked out, that has long lost its power.** "Abide
171 in Him," says the apostle; "Abide in Me," says the Master.

172 Turn again with me, if you will, to the third chapter of 1 John, verse 24:
173 "And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him.
174 And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath
175 given us." Here is something that is very real in the life. There are some
176 things that you and I can know. "Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by
177 the Spirit He hath given us"— that is the Holy Spirit. Here is a conscious

178 knowledge of the abiding presence of the Spirit of God in the life. Paul
179 made a very strong statement to young Timothy, found in 2 Tim. 1: 12:
180 "For I know whom I have believed." This is very important knowledge. Do
181 you know God? Are you increasing in your knowledge of God? We are
182 not talking of your knowledge *about* God. The devil knows a great deal
183 about God, but he's far from a holy being, isn't he?

184 Here is an experience of personal acquaintance with God that is impressed
185 over and over again throughout the epistles. You will remember the
186 Apostle Peter, when he pictures those tremendous scenes of the last days,
187 says: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which
188 the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt
189 with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be
190 burned up." One translator speaks of the heavens being in flame, of the
191 stars being on fire. We have no conception of the scene that Peter is
192 describing here, but we come down to the fourteenth verse: "Wherefore,
193 beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be
194 found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

195 We have been looking for these fearful events for a long time. We have
196 been telling the world about them for more than a hundred years. We
197 believe them with all our hearts, don't we, brethren and sisters? Surely we
198 do! "Wherefore . . . be diligent." In other words, "Get down to business
199 (for that is a business term). "Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in
200 peace. . . . Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before,
201 beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from
202 your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our
203 Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

204 The Apostle Paul declares, "I know Him." He doesn't say, "I know about
205 Him (though that would be wonderful)." He doesn't say, "I know what I
206 believe." He doesn't say, "I know why I believe;" but he affirms, "I know
207 whom I believe." That is a wonderful testimony. It needs to be the
208 testimony today of every Seventh-day Adventist—"I know God." There
209 should be no misunderstanding or question at that point. At the beginning
210 of our Christian lives what was it that we heard that made us Christians?
211 Above everything else was it not that wonderful promise, "If we confess
212 our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us
213 from all unrighteousness"? **When we believed it and followed it we
214 became Christians, didn't we? We not only were convinced, but we
215 acted upon the revealed will of God to our hearts at that time.** True
216 enough, we did not have all the understanding of the revelation of His will
217 that we have today; but with our whole hearts we yielded ourselves to
218 Christ—to what we knew His will was for us.

219 **We gave up sin. We gave up evil associations. We renounced worldly**
220 **ambitions. We forsook everything that was displeasing to God. We**
221 **courageously gave them up. We cared not for the consequences. We**
222 **lost every hard feeling. We loved everybody. We loved God's service.**
223 **We were determined to follow Him all the way, if He would only**
224 **reveal to us His will. As we were baptized we buried the old life. We**

225 **did something about it, didn't we? We turned our backs upon the old**
226 **life of selfishness and sin, and worldliness and error, and we turned**
227 **our faces toward Zion. We cared not what happened—we were going**
228 **through with God.**

229 Now the apostle says, "Let that therefore abide in you." What is he telling
230 us? He is telling us that that experience on the shores of our baptism
231 should remain in us; that we should be just as honest with Him and just as
232 full of faith now as we were back there. But as we look into our lives what
233 do we see? We find all along the way that the original experience, which
234 brought us such joy and ecstasy and enthusiasm and sacrificial service for
235 God has somehow leaked away. And we must look back upon our first
236 love that we would like to recapture, for we hear God saying, "I have
237 somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." And we hear
238 Him say, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and
239 have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and
240 miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," "because thou art lukewarm,"
241 a half-and-half Christian, "I will spue thee out of My mouth."

242 **God hates a half-and-half Christian. If you want to provoke Him to**
243 **anger, be called by His name with a half-baked Christian experience. I**
244 **want to read you a warning statement from *Testimonies*, vol. 6, page**
245 **408: "The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot**
246 **offer up your prayers or your expression of love to God. He cannot**
247 **endorse your teaching of His Word or your spiritual work in any wise.**
248 **He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace**
249 **be given you. Your service, your sacrifice, your prayer, your**
250 **profession, are all distasteful to God until you cease to be a half-and-**
251 **half Christian." No, we must get back to the shores of our baptism.**
252 **We must get back to the place where we gave our whole hearts to God,**
253 **willingly, lovingly, courageously; willing to go anywhere God would**
254 **send us; shutting our eyes to relationships, associations, worldly**
255 **attractiveness; fixing our eyes upon the One who hung between**
256 **heaven and earth that we might have the opportunity to be saved,**
257 **purposing to walk with Him, and to follow and obey Him and take His**
258 **revealed will into our hearts.**

259

260 A Creeping Paralysis Overtaking Us

261 There is a complacency that has crept over God's people in these late
262 hours. We take for granted that we are God's people and that we are just
263 about all right. At least our actions reveal that sort of attitude. But let us
264 remember that when God looks down on His people in these days, the
265 Laodicean church, He points out that we are in an unconscious state, that
266 we lack understanding, that we can't see straight. We think we are rich and
267 increased with goods and have need of nothing, while we are wretched and
268 miserable and poor and blind and naked before Him.

269 What then shall we do? There is nothing that can be done, dear friends, but
270 to follow Him implicitly, to find out what He has said and to walk in the

271 light of what He has told us. **"I was shown that a most solemn work is**
272 **before us," we are told. "Its importance and magnitude are not**
273 **realized. As I marked the indifference which was everywhere**
274 **apparent I was alarmed for ministers and people. There seemed to be**
275 **a paralysis about the cause of truth. The work of God seemed stayed."**
276 *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 466

277 "Ministers and people." Oh, those are sad words, aren't they? There seems
278 to be no difference made here—ministers and people are unprepared for
279 the time in which they live, and nearly all—notice that —"nearly all who
280 profess to believe present truth are unprepared to understand the work of
281 preparation for this time. They are wholly unfitted to receive the latter
282 rain." **Let's not talk about the showers of the latter rain, dear friends,**
283 **until we are prepared for them. Many of the things we attribute to the**
284 **latter rain are merely the demonstration of God's power under the**
285 **former rain. You and I have no conception whatever of what is**
286 **coming under the latter rain to a prepared people ready to be sealed, a**
287 **people who are following God's revealed will. Oh, what a revolution**
288 **would come in in the midst of the church of God if we could have that**
289 **kind of reformation!** My friends, how long shall we wait for it? What
290 great assembly or gathering or meeting or quadrennial session of God's
291 people must come before we take action to follow Him?

292

293 Assemblies Should Be Called to Seek for Holy Spirit

294 *"Nearly all* who profess to believe present truth are unprepared to
295 understand the work of preparation for this time." We need to get down
296 before God and seek Him with our faces covered until we find Him. We
297 are told by the messenger of the Lord that assemblies should be called to
298 seek for this experience, for the Holy Spirit. It seems to be the last thing
299 we think about. We are such a busy people. We have supplanted the
300 seeking of God with business, with machinery, with accessories, with
301 everything but what God has told us.

302 What more can I say this morning? There is so much I would like to say.
303 Lest any might feel that we have not really touched this question of
304 abiding in Christ I want to read to you what the messenger of the Lord has
305 said: "Do you ask, 'How am I to abide in Christ?'—In the same way as
306 you received Him at first." In other words, you and I must have a real
307 conversion every day. That is the experience of abiding in Christ. "'As ye
308 have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' . . . You
309 gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you
310 took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins, or
311 change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believed that He
312 for Christ's sake did all this for you." You entered into an experience that
313 revolutionized your whole life.

314 My dear friends, where has that experience leaked out? Shall we not
315 recapture it right here upon these sacred grounds? God is waiting. The
316 heavenly hosts are waiting. They wonder why we are so slow. And we

317 need to ask ourselves, What are we waiting for? There must be a turning
318 back in the lives of us all, to that thorough-going experience of conversion,
319 and then we must follow on to know the Lord in that same way day by
320 day.

321 "Let that therefore abide in you which ye heard from the beginning."
322 "Abide in Me and I in you"—and this is no casual touch, no off-and-on
323 connection. "The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by
324 continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin or resist
325 one temptation. **Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His
326 Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. It is through His
327 Word that Christ abides in His followers. Living in Christ, adhering to
328 Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you
329 bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.**"

330 My dear friends, I beg of you to ponder well the call of God, "Can thine
331 heart endure?" Are YOU abiding in Christ, or do you find that you are
332 living an up-and-down experience? As you come together in a great
333 meeting like this your heart is inspired to press on. What about tomorrow?
334 What about next Sabbath? Do you not see that the primary need of the
335 people of God today is a levelling off on a high plane of spiritual living?
336 Spiritually seeking after God until we find Him? Are you finding in the
337 little things of your life what it means to have prayers answered for you?
338 Are you conscious of a new and growing power laying hold of your life
339 daily, or must you look back to some experience in your life for a better
340 life than you now experience? Do you long for that life that you once
341 experienced? You may have it, my dear friends, today, if you will yield to
342 Him whatever the cost.

343 Oh, how far we have drifted in this spiritual life! **Let us rise in this very
344 meeting and go down from this place with a shout of victory because
345 God has visited us with His power in our individual experiences; so
346 that we may go forth and be more than good givers, more than
347 efficient organizers, more than courageous men and women going out
348 to the ends of the earth to face this or that. Let us be noted wherever
349 we may be, for the abiding presence of Christ to be seen in our lives,
350 for mighty victories brought about because of consciously possessed
351 power in our lives.**

352 May God endow His people with the spirit of self-sacrifice and service,
353 that soon the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the
354 world for a witness to all nations, so that the end may come.

355 *Australasian Record*, January 24 and 31, 1955

356

357 Louis K. Dickson (1890-1963) was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor,
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