

Key Fasting Documents in the Writings of Ellen G. White

1T 253 White The North and the South - God Despised National Fast in Civil War

“As this war was shown to me, it looked like the most singular and uncertain that has ever occurred. A great share of the volunteers enlisted fully believing that the result of the war would be to abolish slavery. Others enlisted intending to be very careful to keep slavery just as it is, but to put down the rebellion and preserve the Union. And then to make the matter still more perplexing and uncertain, some of the officers in command are strong proslavery men whose sympathies are all with the South, yet who are opposed to a separate government. It seems impossible to have the war conducted successfully, for many in our own ranks are continually working to favor the South, and our armies have been repulsed and unmercifully slaughtered on account of the management of these proslavery men.” {1T 256.1}

2T 24 White Doing For Christ - Isa 58 on practical basis

“From what has been shown me, Sabbathkeepers are growing more selfish as they increase in riches. Their love for Christ and His people is decreasing. They do not see the wants of the needy, nor feel their sufferings and sorrows. They do not realize that in neglecting the poor and the suffering they neglect Christ, and that in relieving the wants and sufferings of the poor as far as possible, they minister to Jesus.” {2T 24.1}

2T 145 White Preparing to Pray for the Sick

“In the case of Sister F, there needed to be a great work accomplished. Those who united in praying for her needed a work done for them. Had God answered their prayers, it would have proved their ruin. In such cases of affliction, where Satan has control of the mind, before engaging in prayer there should be the closest self-examination to discover if there are not sins which need to be repented of, confessed, and forsaken. 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.” {2T 145.1}

Daniells A Day Of Personal Fasting And Prayer

“He set aside Sabbath, March 21, preceding the General Conference session as a day of special personal fasting and prayer. He felt he must know his duty. He went to one of the offices in the Pacific Press publishing house where he could spend the day in study, meditation, and prayer, longing for some omen that would give him courage to move into the session. Through the day and into the evening he remained there. As he knelt in a final prayer, the burden that he might get into true relationship with God’s great work on earth rolled upon his heart. {5BIO 239.4}

Lt 52, 1891 White Lt 52, 1891 - Do more than fast

“My guide has shown me that fasting and the prayers will not come up before God in

acceptance and receive His favor until things are set in order in institutions and in our churches.” {Lt 52, 1891, par. 33}

Lt1d-1890 White Abbey - Ira Fasting of wife

“There has been, by your wife, fasting and prayer and humiliation for many years. For notwithstanding her hereditary tendencies to complain and find fault, she has ever listened to the voice of God in chiding and reproof and humbled her soul in the dust at His feet. Others have hoped and prayed for you, Oh so earnestly, that God would restore to you the joys of His salvation; that you might be restored to sight, restored to yourself, rescued from the terrible blindness of sin which has blackened your soul.” {Lt1d-1890.}

Lt2-1872 White Bates Letter on Extreme Diet

“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 [of] 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.” {Lt2-1872.}

Lt16-1868 White Taylor, Brother - oppression like Isa. 58

“Dear Brother, there exist, I saw, sufficient reasons in yourself. You have a work to do to set your own heart in order. You should realize that the work must begin with yourself. You have oppressed, you have taken advantage of the necessity of the destitute to advantage yourself. In regard to means, you have been close and have dealt unjustly. You have not possessed a kind, noble, and generous spirit which should ever characterize the life of a minister of Jesus Christ.” {Lt16-1868.}

Lt54-1906 White Farnsworth Lt 54, 1906 on Seeking God’s Counsel with Fasting and Prayer

“I am encouraging souls to examine their own hearts and to seek counsel most earnestly from God. Now is the time for us to afflict our souls by fasting and prayer. We cannot lay out the way in which the Lord will work, but we can follow the leadings and drawings of His Holy Spirit. We shall gain nothing by lifting up our souls unto vanity and in self-confidence.” {Lt54-1906.1}

Lt73-1896 White Maxson, Brother and Sister Lt 73, 1896 Indulgence and fasting

“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.” {Lt73-1896.}

Lt 62, 1900, par. 1 White Letter on 1 Kings 19 and Elijah Going To Horeb

"After Elijah had partaken of the refreshment prepared for him, he slept again. A second time the angel came. Touching the exhausted man, he said, with pitying tenderness: “Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and

drink;” and **in the strength of that food he was able to journey “forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God,”** where he found refuge in a cave.” {RH October 16, 1913, par. 22}

Lt159-1903 White Magan, P. T. Letter July 30, 1903 Christ in Wilderness - Christ was insensible to hunger

“In the wilderness He had held close communion with God. Then the storm of temptation fell upon Him. {Lt 159, 1903, par. 16} Is it not thus with us? After the Lord has bestowed on us the richest blessings, does not some sore trial come to us, to darken our souls, and cause us to doubt God’s goodness? Let us, at such times, remember that Christ was tempted in all points like as we are tempted and that in His strength we can overcome. Let us by prayer and fasting draw near to God.” {Lt 159, 1903, par. 17}

Lt206-1908 White Hirschmiller Letter 1908 fasting and discouragement

“Ever remember that God has a people prepared for His name. There are victories for you to gain, and these you are to have through your faith in Christ. When you feel discouraged, disappointed, go to God in prayer. Trust in Him, and do His will. 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.] {Lt206-1908.7}

Lt301-1903 White Letter 301, 1903 to Kellogg on needing to fast and come to God

“I am now to lift the note of warning and give the trumpet a certain sound. Wake up, brethren; wake up from your peace and safety attitude and seek the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is now nigh, in every church, with fasting, with confession and true repentance of heart. I am instructed to say that those who, “being often reprov’d,” hardeneth their hearts, “shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy,” meaning that there will be no chance for repentance, no chance to redeem the past. [Proverbs 29:1.] They are passed beyond the time, and the word is given, “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.” Hosea 4:17. {Lt301-1903.5}

MH 256 White Mind Cure Excerpt

“If those who are suffering from ill-health would forget self in their interest for others; if they would fulfill the Lord's command to minister to those more needy than themselves, they would realize the truthfulness of the prophetic promise, “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily.” MH 258.1

Ms3-1898 White Matthew’s Feast - True Fast

“There are times before us that will try the souls of men, and there will be need of watchfulness, of the right kind of fasting. This will not be like the fasting of the Pharisees. Their seasons of fasting were occasions of outward ceremony. They did not humble their hearts before God. They were filled with bitterness, envy, malice, strife, selfishness, and self-righteousness. While their heads were bowed in pretended humiliation, they were covetous, full of self-esteem, self-importance. They were

oppressive, exacting, [and] proud in spirit.” {Ms3-1898.}

Ms28-1900 White Obedience or Disobedience Fasting

“In our work we shall find a high profession of piety, and much outward exactness bound up with great inward wickedness. The people represented in (Isaiah 58) complain that the Lord allows their services to go unnoticed. This complaint is the expression of hearts unsubdued by grace, rebellious against the truth. Those who receive the truth which works by love and purifies the soul are loyal to God, honoring Him by obedience to His law, which is holy, just, and good. The spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God.” {Ms 28, 1900, par. 7}

Ms48-1900 White A Warning for This Time - Is this the fast.

“These fasts are only outward show, mere pretense, a mockery of humility. These worshipers, while mourning and lamenting, retain all their objectionable traits of character. Their hearts are not humbled, nor cleansed from spiritual defilement. They have not received the softening showers of the grace of God. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit, destitute of the sweetness of the heavenly influence. They manifest no repentance, nor faith that works by love and purifies the soul. They are unjust and selfish in their dealings, mercilessly oppressing those whom they regard as their inferiors. Yet they charge God with a neglect to manifest His power to them and exalt them above others because of their righteousness. The Lord sends them a message of positive reproof, showing why they are not visited by His grace.” {Ms 48, 1900, par. 3}

Ms145-1899 White Give, and It Shall be Given Unto You - Isa. 58

“God’s cause embraces every needy, suffering saint. We are not selfishly to single out a few relatives and friends and help them, letting our work end here. All the needy who come to our notice are to be helped, but especially those who are suffering for the truth’s sake. If we neglect this work, God will hold us accountable. Shall we not, as a people who work righteousness, follow the conditions God has laid down, and be doers of His Word?” {Ms145-1899.}

RH December 16, 1884 White The New Year - Confession

“If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters,—if envy, malice, bitterness, evil surmisings, have existed, confess these sins, not in a general way, but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender. Take them by the hand, let your heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and say, “Will you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want to make right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against me in the books of heaven. I must have a clean record.” {RH December 16, 1884, par. 7}

RH February 9, 1897 White Prayer That God Accepts

“Daniel knew that the appointed time for Israel’s captivity was nearly ended; but he did

not feel that because God had promised to deliver them, they themselves had no part to act. With fasting and contrition he sought the Lord, confessing his own sins and the sins of the people.” {RH February 9, 1897, par. 4}

RH June 5, 1894 White Appearances and Reality - Isa 58

“It is possible to manifest apparent zeal in the service of God, to offer prayers and observe fasts, and yet not be acknowledged of the Lord. When our prayers are offered in self-confidence, when we fail to watch, and bring our actions into harmony with our prayers, we are not accounted worshipers in the sight of heaven. We are destitute of the faith that works by love and purifies the soul; for genuine faith will lead the possessor to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and crucify selfishness, self-love, impatience, and self-righteousness. Those who would truly follow Christ must daily learn lessons in meekness and lowliness of heart, that they may speak guardedly, manifest courtesy and kindness, have tender hearts, and bring sympathy and sunshine into the home. All strife, all debate, all smiting with the tongue and the fist of wickedness, must be put away. The overbearing will must be subdued, and gentleness and a disposition to be easily entreated must be cultivated.” {RH June 5, 1894, par. 5}

RH October 13, 1891 White Isaiah’s Warning

“The house of Jacob, at the time this warning was given to Isaiah, appeared to be a very zealous people, seeking God daily, and delighting to know his ways; but in reality they were filled with presumptuous self-confidence. They were not walking in the truth. Goodness, mercy, and love were not practiced. While presenting an appearance of sorrow for their sins, they were cherishing pride and avarice. At the very time when they were showing such outward humiliation, they would exact hard labor from those under them or in their employ. They placed a high estimate on all the good that they had done, but a very low estimate on the services of others. They despised and oppressed the poor. And their fasting only gave them a higher opinion of their own goodness. {RH October 13, 1891, par. 5} There are sins of this same character among us today, and they bring the rebuke of God upon his church. Wherever such sins are found, 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. “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?” {RH October 13, 1891, par. 6}

RH October 24, 1893 White Brotherly Love Needed

“We have had seasons for fasting and prayer, beseeching that the Lord would raise up laborers to go into his harvest-field, and yet, when laborers have been raised up, and sent

to different fields, many of them have not been appreciated, even those who have given full proof of their devotion to, and interest in, the work. Envious tongues have spoken against them, evil surmisings have been cherished, and tares have been sown by those who would not like to reap the bitter harvest that will result. Before we appoint another day for fasting and prayer that the Lord shall raise up laborers, let us see to it that we treat those who have already been sent, with respect and love, as God would have them treated. Let us not treat them in such a distrustful manner that their prayers will ascend to God for deliverance from the evil surmisings and evil reports of their brethren. As long as those who are doing a good work for the Master, are not appreciated, but accused, condemned, and oppressed by the false tongue, how can we consistently ask God to raise up more laborers? There needs to be a turning away from talebearing and talebearers, and a drawing toward our brethren,—a coming near, even heart to heart, that the grace of Christ may be manifested in large measure through his people. The church should be bound together with the golden chain of love, and then it would be terrible as an army with banners.” {RH October 31, 1893, par. 4}

ST April 22, 1880 White Israel Arrives at Sinai - practical on how fasting and other preparations took place

“Three days the people were before the mount. During this time, they had ample opportunity to review their past course of murmuring and impatience, and to repent. God had given them his gracious promise that they should become a peculiar treasure unto him, on condition of obedience; but if they were disobedient he would reject them, and choose another people.” {ST April 22, 1880, par. 12}

ST December 3, 1896 White The Prayer that God Approves

"Nothing is so repulsive to Christ as insincere devotion, voluntary humility, and hypocritical almsgiving. He said, “When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;” appear comfortable and cleanly. It is a great mistake to suppose that the unwashed face and tangled locks proclaim your sanctity.” {ST December 3, 1896, par. 4}

ST January 10, 1884 White Nehemiah Causes the People to Be Instructed in the Law of Go

“When this festival was past, one day only having intervened, the children of Israel kept a solemn fast. This was held not merely at the command of the rulers, but by the desire of the people. As they had from day to day listened to the words of the law, they had been deeply convicted of their own transgressions, and also of the sins of their nation in past generations. They saw that it was because of their departure from God that his protecting care had been withdrawn from them, and they had been scattered in foreign lands. And they now determined to seek God’s mercy, and to pledge themselves to walk hereafter in his commandments.” {ST January 10, 1884, par. 9}

ST July 7 & 14 1898 White True Fasting

“The disciples were not to fast and mourn after the ascension of Christ; for this was just

what the prince of darkness wanted. He desired that they should give to the world the impression that they had been deceived and disappointed, that their expectations had not been realized. Before His ascension Christ had declared: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.” {ST July 14, 1898, par. 1}

SW June 7, 1904 White A Solemn Fast

“When the Feast of Tabernacles was past, one day only having intervened, the children of Israel kept a solemn fast. This was held not merely at the command of the rulers, but by the desire of the people. As they had from day to day listened to the words of the law, they had been deeply convicted of their own transgressions, and also of the sins of their nation in past generations. They saw that it was because of their departure from God that his protecting care had been withdrawn from them, and they had been scattered in foreign lands. And they now determined to seek God’s mercy and to pledge themselves to walk hereafter in his commandments.” {SW June 7, 1904, par. 1}

WM 29 White Isaiah 58—A Divine Prescription

“The fast which God can accept is described. It is to deal thy bread to the hungry and to bring the poor which are cast out to thy house. Wait not for them to come to you. The labor rests not on them to hunt you up and entreat of you a home for themselves. You are to search for them and bring them to your house. You are to draw out your soul after them. You are with one hand to reach up and by faith take hold of the mighty arm which brings salvation, while with the other hand of love you reach the oppressed and relieve them. It is impossible for you to fasten upon the arm of God with one hand while the other is employed in ministering to your own pleasure.” WM 30.2