

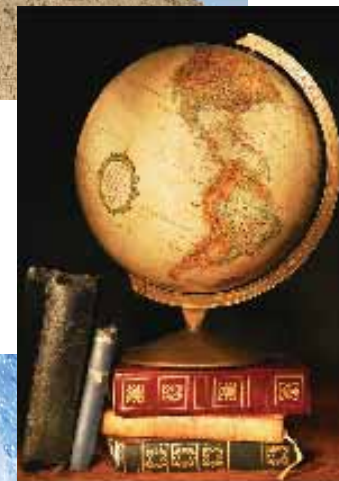


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The **World**
on the Verge
of a **Great Crisis**

The Creator's Plan \ Deliverance From Sin \ Forsaking the Idols of Egypt



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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
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Coveting *the Best*

D. Sureshkumar

The best things in life are not things.

For those familiar with the three angels' messages, what is the best thing on earth we could ever imagine receiving? What is the most wonderful experience we could ever enjoy on this fallen planet? Would it not be to partake of the Holy Spirit in its fullness and receive the latter rain—to meet the stupendous challenges and crises of the last days in a great spiritual victory? We are encouraged to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31). What is the best gift we could ever receive for ourselves and our children? "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

In general, how often it is that we seek to obtain blessings by using wrong methods. The Bible gives some examples of this type of mistake:

In the wilderness

The children of Israel rejected the message of the two faithful spies who had been sent out to view the Promised Land. They chose instead to listen to the doubting ten who had brought a dismal report. As a result, Moses informed them that they would have to

wander in the wilderness for the next 40 years.

What did they do then? They "rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised." "We will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us" (Numbers 14:40; Deuteronomy 1:41). Suddenly they decided it was time to believe God's word and claim His promise. There was one small problem, however. They were refusing to believe the other part that God had told them the day before. They were determined to try to snatch the blessing in their own strength, and by their own method. The result was a disaster. Do we sometimes do the same by picking and choosing which parts of God's word we want to believe while casting aside other aspects of His plain utterances?

In the times of the apostles

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But

Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:14–20).

Simon longed for power. He had money, and he wanted more power and influence—and the greatest power seen on earth at that time was the power of the Holy Spirit. But it can never be acquired by wrong methods and means.

A more excellent way

The Bible tells us clearly what we should not covet: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (Exodus 20:17). But it also tells us that we should: "covet earnestly the best gifts."

Much instruction is given on how not to obtain the desires of our heart. But this same verse which starts with saying we should covet the best gifts concludes with the writer telling us he will show us "a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31). How does he do that? He immediately proceeds with 1 Corinthians chapter 13. There is the method.

"The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless."¹

Reference

¹ *The Review and Herald*, July 21, 1904.

Pure Religion

*I*f any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:26, 27).

There are few other verses in the Bible mentioning the word "religion" (Acts 26:5, and Galatians 1:13, 14). However, only in James 1:26, 27 do we find a definition of pure and undefiled religion.

Many Christian writers have said that being religious is not synonymous with being a Christian. When I was attending an English course in Roanoke, Virginia, the teacher, an American lady, said: "The American people are very religious people, but this doesn't mean that they are Christians." I shall never forget her words.

When we think about religious people, it immediately comes to our mind that they are persons who attend church on regular days and at specific times. They may carry the Bible with them, wear special clothing, fulfill specific rules, and give a good impression about themselves. At church they behave properly, sing hymns, and listen to some beautiful sermons, and so on.

Is this an accurate depiction of religious people? Yes. Are they Christians?

Well, it depends on their relationship with Christ.

When, where, and how did this word "Christian" come into existence?

In Acts 11:26 we find the following information: "And when [Barnabas] had found [Paul], he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year [Paul and Barnabas] assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

We do not find in the Bible an undue concern about the title of the Christian church. They did not have a sign in front of the houses where they would meet. They could not do that because they were an underground church. They were persecuted by the Jews, who called them "the sect." But the pagans began calling the believers "Christians" for a reason.

E. G. White explains why they were called "Christians":

"It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. The name was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, their teaching, and their conversation. Continually they were recounting the incidents that had occurred during the days of His earthly ministry, when His disciples were blessed with His personal presence. Untiringly they dwelt upon His teachings and His miracles of healing. With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of His agony in the garden, His betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which He had endured the contumely and torture imposed upon



by Davi P. Silva

Him by His enemies, and the Godlike pity with which He had prayed for those who persecuted Him. His resurrection and ascension, and His work in heaven as the Mediator for fallen man, were topics on which they rejoiced to dwell. Well might the heathen call them Christians, since they preached Christ and addressed their prayers to God through Him.

"It was God who gave to them the name of Christian. This is a royal name, given to all who join themselves to Christ. . . .

"The believers at Antioch realized that God was willing to work in their lives 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). Living, as they were, in the midst of a people who seemed to care but little for the things of eternal value, they sought to arrest the attention of the honest in heart, and to bear positive testimony concerning Him whom they loved and served. In their humble ministry they learned to depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to make effective the word of life. And so, in the various walks of life, they daily bore testimony of their faith in Christ.

"The example of the followers of Christ at Antioch should be an inspiration to every believer living in the great cities of the world today. While it is in the order of God that chosen workers of consecration and talent should be stationed in important centers of population to lead out in public efforts, it is also His purpose that the church members living in these cities shall use their God-given talents in working for souls. There are rich blessings in store for those who surrender fully to the call of God. As such workers endeavor to win souls to Jesus, they will find that many who never could have been reached in any other way are ready to respond to intelligent personal effort.

"The cause of God in the earth today is in need of living representatives of Bible truth."¹

There are many points in the above quotation that must be emphasized:

Antioch was the place where the believers were first called "Christians."

1. The reasons why they were thus called are mentioned as follows:

In the various walks of life, the believers bore testimony of their faith in Christ.

- a. Christ was the main theme of their preaching, their teaching, and their conversation.
 - b. They dwelt upon His teachings, and His miracles of healing.
 - c. They spoke of His agony in Gethesemane, His betrayal, trial, and execution, His forbearance and humility with which He endured His sufferings.
 - d. His resurrection, ascension, and intercession received special attention from their.
2. It was God who gave them the name of Christians, a royal name given to all who join themselves to Christ.
 3. They sought to arrest the attention of the honest in heart.
 4. They depended upon the power of the Holy Spirit to make effective the word of life.
 5. In the various walks of life, they bore daily the testimony of their faith in Christ.
 6. The example of the followers of Christ in Antioch should be an inspiration to every believer today living in the great cities of the world.
 7. The cause of God in the earth today needs living representatives of Bible truth.

"The watchful Christian is a working Christian, seeking zealously to do all in his power for the advancement of the gospel. As love for his Redeemer increases, so also does love for his fellow men. He has severe trials, as had his Master; but he does not allow affliction to sour his temper or destroy his peace of mind. He knows that trial, if well borne, will refine and purify him, and bring him into closer fellowship with Christ. Those who are partakers of Christ's sufferings will also be partakers of His consolation and at last sharers of His glory."²

"A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does

not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ."³

Controlling the tongue

In James 1:26, 27, the apostle mentions three basic aspects of true Christian life.

In verse 26 it is written that if a person "seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." The apostle continues with this point in chapter 3, verses 2-12.

In verse 2, he declares that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Here we find a very essential aspect of Christian life. If, by God's grace, we control our tongue, then we have power to control the whole body. James follows his explanation by exemplifying it with the bit that controls the horse and the helm that controls the great ships.

In verse 8 he says that no man can control his tongue. Without God's grace, man has no power to control himself. Christ said in John 15:5: "Without me ye can do nothing." On the other hand, Paul wrote that we "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us (Philippians 4:13).

"Through the help that Christ can give, we shall be able to learn to bridle the tongue. Soresly as [Christ] was tried on the point of hasty and angry speech, He never once sinned with His lips. With patient calmness He met the sneers, the taunts, and the ridicule of His fellow workers at the carpenter's bench. Instead of retorting angrily, He would begin to sing one of David's beautiful psalms; and His companions, before realizing what they were doing, would unite with Him in the hymn. What a transformation would be wrought in this world if men and

“The Saviour devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching.”

women today would follow Christ’s example in the use of words!”⁴

To visit the fatherless and widows

The second and a very important point James mentions about “pure religion” is the practical side of religion. The Holman Christian Standard Bible thus translates James 1:27: “Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

“The pure religion of Jesus is the fountain from which flow streams of charity, love, self-sacrifice.

“A Christian is a Christlike man, a Christlike woman, who is active in God’s service, who is present at the social meeting, whose presence will encourage others also. Religion does not consist in works, but religion works; it is not dormant.

“Many seem to feel that religion has a tendency to make its possessor narrow and cramped, but genuine religion does not have a narrowing influence; it is the lack of religion that cramps the faculties and narrows the mind. When a man is narrow, it is an evidence that he needs the grace of God, the heavenly anointing; for a Christian is one whom the Lord, the God of hosts, can work through, that he may keep the ways of the Lord of the earth and make manifest His will to men.”⁵

In Matthew 25:31–46 is presented two classes of people compared to sheep and goats, and Christ says that the sheep will be at His right side and the goats at His left side.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was

in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

“The Saviour devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching. His last injunction to His apostles, His representatives on earth, was to lay hands on the sick that they might recover. When the Master shall come, He will commend those who have visited the sick and relieved the necessities of the afflicted.

“The tender sympathies of our Saviour were aroused for fallen and suffering humanity. If you would be His followers, you must cultivate compassion and sympathy. Indifference to human woes must give place to lively interest in the sufferings of others. The widow, the orphan, the sick and the

dying, will always need help. Here is an opportunity to proclaim the gospel—to hold up Jesus, the hope and consolation of all men. When the suffering body has been relieved, and you have shown a lively interest in the afflicted, the heart is opened, and you can pour in the heavenly balm. If you are looking to Jesus and drawing from Him knowledge and strength and grace, you can impart His consolation to others, because the Comforter is with you.”⁶

“There are those who would think it lowering to their dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. Others neglect the poor from a different motive. They are working, as they believe, in the cause of Christ, seeking to build up some worthy enterprise. They feel that they are doing a great work, and they cannot stop to notice the wants of the needy and distressed. In advancing their supposedly great work they may even oppress the poor. They may place them in hard and trying circumstances, deprive them of their rights, or neglect their needs. Yet they feel that all this is justifiable because they are, as they think, advancing the cause of Christ.

“Many will allow a brother or a neighbor to struggle unaided under adverse circumstances. Because they profess to be Christians he may be led to think that in their cold selfishness they are representing Christ. Because the Lord’s professed servants are not in cooperation with Him, the love of God, which should flow forth from them, is in great degree cut off from their fellow men. And a large revenue of praise and thanksgiving from human hearts and human lips is prevented from flowing back to God. He is robbed of the glory due to His holy name. He is robbed of the souls for whom Christ died, souls whom He longs to bring into His kingdom to dwell in His presence through endless ages.”⁷

“Christ regards all acts of mercy, benevolence, and thoughtful consideration for the unfortunate, the blind, the lame, the sick, the widow, and the orphan as done to Himself; and these works are preserved in the heavenly

records and will be rewarded. On the other hand, a record will be written in the book against those who manifest the indifference of the priest and the Levite to the unfortunate, and those who take any advantage of the misfortunes of others and increase their affliction in order to selfishly advantage themselves. God will surely repay every act of injustice and every manifestation of careless indifference to and neglect of the afflicted among us. Everyone will finally be rewarded as his works have been."⁸

“Unspotted from the world”

The last portion of James 1:27 gives us another very essential characteristic of true Christians: They keep themselves “unspotted from the world.”

The apostle Paul wrote: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14).

Before uniting with Christ, humans are “dead in trespasses and sins,” walking “according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” and “by nature” they are among “the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:1–3). After their surrender to the Lord, they are “quicken[ed]” “together with Christ” (verse 5). Now he or she becomes alive to Christ and dead to sins and to the world.

Paul also affirms that Christ “died

for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Having been justified, the believer knows that the “old man is crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth” he or she “should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6).

About those early Christians, we read that they “were united in sentiment and action. Love for Christ was the golden chain that bound them together. They followed on to know the Lord more and still more perfectly, and in their lives were revealed the joy and peace of Christ. They visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and kept themselves unspotted from the world, realizing that a failure to do this would be a contradiction of their profession and a denial of their Redeemer.”⁹

“When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world. It is at this time that God has promised to avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them.”¹⁰

“It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7). We are in a most trying position, waiting, watching for our Lord’s appearing. The world is in darkness. ‘But ye, brethren,’ says Paul, ‘are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief’ (1 Thessalonians 5:4). It is ever God’s purpose to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and rest out of weariness for the waiting, longing soul.

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven. . . . Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.”¹¹

References

- ¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 157, 158.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 261.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 317.
- ⁴ *Our High Calling*, p. 291.
- ⁵ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 935.
- ⁶ *Counsels on Health*, p. 34.
- ⁷ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 382, 383.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 512, 513.
- ⁹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 579.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 210.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 215, 216.



Lessons From the *Preparation of Soil*

In our last study we examined the importance which Christ places on the parable of the sower (found in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8). We discussed also the importance of soil preparation, a breaking up of the fallow ground of the human heart. This is paralleled in our preparation for the latter rain.

Soil preparation was one of the first lessons given to the first man. In Genesis 3:23 it is written that “the Lord God sent [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.” In the same manner, our sinful, hardened heart need to be softened—tilled as it were, that the thick, permeating crusts of sin may be broken up. Faithful, responsible leadership can facilitate this essential process among God’s people.

The example of Moses

In response to the spiritual crisis of the Israelites’ worshipping the golden calf, Moses beseeched God in behalf of His people, “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:32, 33).

As a leader, Moses here gives us the example of intercession for the people,

of self-sacrificing love, of being willing to lay down his life, if necessary, for his sheep.

“Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people. Where is their God?” (Joel 2:17).

In the sanctuary service, what was between the porch and the altar? The laver! What was the laver used for? It was the final place of washing, **the last minute preparation of cleanliness.**

“The sacred tent was enclosed in an open space called the court, which was surrounded by hangings, or screens, of fine linen, suspended from pillars of brass. . . . In the court, and nearest the entrance, stood the brazen altar of burnt offering. Upon this altar were consumed all the sacrifices made by fire unto the Lord, and its horns were sprinkled with the atoning blood. **Between the altar and the door of the tabernacle was the laver, which was also of brass, made from the mirrors that had been the freewill offering of the women of Israel.** At the laver the priests were to wash their hands and their feet whenever they went into the sacred apartments, or approached the altar to offer a burnt offering unto the Lord.”¹

Notice, this study is not about the sanctuary, but it includes it. We are talking here about a preparation. What else is to be done?



Part 2

By Les Gibson

Soil preparation was one of the first lessons given to the first man.

Joel's explanation

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, **sanctify** a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, **sanctify** the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet" (Joel 2:15, 16).

Here the Lord is saying that the entire congregation is to be consecrated to Him—sanctified or set apart for His service. "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, and repenteth him of the evil" (Joel 2:12, 13).

The example of the disciples

Did the early disciples have to do anything before the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost?

"The first disciples went forth preaching the word. They revealed Christ in their lives. And the Lord worked with them, 'confirming the word with signs following' (Mark 16:20). **These disciples prepared themselves for their work.** Before the day of Pentecost they met together, **and put away all differences.** They were **of one accord.** They believed Christ's promise that the blessing would be given, and **they prayed in faith.** They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely; **they were weighted with the burden for the salvation of souls.** The gospel was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, and **they claimed the endowment of power** that Christ had promised. **Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out,** and thousands were converted in a day."²

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with **one accord** in one place" (Acts 2:1).

It is amazing to realize that these disciples were now of one mind—the same disciples that at one time had argued over which of them would be the greatest. Among them were the same disciples who had once wanted to bring fire down from heaven to con-

sume some people. Yet now they were **consecrated, they were abiding in Christ. Abiding within consecration, they all had the mind of Christ.**

Paul's exhortation

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). "And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,** that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

"Man, fallen man, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that he can 'prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God' (Romans 12:2). How does he prove this? **By the Holy Spirit taking possession of his mind, spirit, heart, and character.** Where does the proving come in? 'We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men' (1 Corinthians 4:9). A real work is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen."³

"Our great High Priest who has passed into the heaven, says, 'I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever' (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit abides with consecrated laborers who in any locality are seeking to advance the cause."⁴

Joel calls this the rending of your hearts (Joel 2:13).

Paul says it is the "renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

Peter refers to it as repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

The Spirit of Prophecy describes it as a humbling of our heart.

Understanding the principle

This principle is nothing new; it has been around from the time sin first came to the earth. In Genesis 3:23 we find that "the Lord God sent [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden, to **till the ground** from whence he was

taken."

What does tilling the soil have to do with the subject at hand? How can we understand this principle?

"By the parable of the sower, Christ illustrates the things of the kingdom of heaven, and the work of the great Husbandman for His people. Like a sower in the field, He came to scatter the **heavenly grain of truth.** . . . **Because of its simplicity the parable of the sower has not been valued as it should be. From the natural seed cast into the soil, Christ desires to lead our minds to the gospel seed,** the sowing of which results in bringing man back to his loyalty to God. He who gave the parable of the tiny seed is the Sovereign of heaven, and **the same laws that govern earthly seed sowing govern the sowing of the seeds of truth.**"⁵

We need to grasp this idea! This is like the law of gravity; it is unchangeable!

"As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth" (Isaiah 61:11). **"As in the natural, so in the spiritual sowing; the teacher of truth must seek to prepare the soil of the heart; he must sow the seed; but the power that alone can produce life is from God."**⁶

Brethren and sisters, we need to break up the fallow ground of our heart. Only then can the seeds of truth spring forth and flourish in new, productive life—even life eternal. We will study more on this in our next article in this series.

References

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 347, 348.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 827.

³ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1080.

⁴ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 218.

⁵ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 33.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

The issues at stake and the
great conflict surrounding us

Deliverance *From* Sin



The visible and the invisible world are in close contact. Could the veil be lifted, we would see evil angels pressing their darkness around us and working with

all their power to deceive and destroy. Wicked men are surrounded, influenced, and aided by evil spirits. The man of faith and prayer has yielded his soul to divine guidance, and angels of God bring to him light and strength from heaven."¹

"More clearly than we do we need to understand the issues at stake in the great conflict in which we are engaged. We need to understand more fully the value of the truths of the word of God and the danger of allowing our minds to be diverted from them by the great deceiver.

"The infinite value of the sacrifice required for our redemption reveals the fact that sin is a tremendous evil. Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul. Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet turn imperceptibly toward evil.

"As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. No act of wickedness will the law of God excuse; no unrighteousness can escape its condemnation. The ethics of the gospel acknowledge no standard but the perfection of the divine character. . . .

"Wrongs cannot be righted, nor can reformations in conduct be made by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown.

"The strongest evidence of man's fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, hour by hour. In one moment, by a hasty, unguarded act, we may place ourselves in the power of evil; but it requires more than a moment to break the fetters and attain to a holier life. The purpose

may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, perseverance, patience, and sacrifice.

"We cannot allow ourselves to act from impulse. We cannot be off guard for a moment. Beset with temptations without number, we must resist firmly or be conquered. Should we come to the close of life with our work undone, it would be an eternal loss."²

Our only hope: the indwelling of Divinity

As mentioned earlier, "in our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God."³

"Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal."⁴

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him ["We," that is, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost], and make Our abode with him' (John 14:23)."⁵

"The mortal bodies are quickened by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. Christ claims all those as His who have believed in His name. The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God."⁶

A selection from
the writings of
E. G. White with
annotations by
S. Barat

[Emphasis supplied
throughout]

We need to be completely restored from sin's defilement—not just halfway.

"The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen."⁷

"The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was 'full of leprosy.' Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, Jesus received no defilement. His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin—deep-rooted, deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power. 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores' (Isaiah 1:5, 6). But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution. His presence has healing virtue for the sinner. Whoever will fall at His feet, saying in faith, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,' shall hear the answer, 'I will; be thou made clean' (Matthew 8:2, 3, RV)."⁸

"Men whom God favored, and to whom He entrusted great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sin, even as we at the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. Their lives, with all their faults and follies, are open before us, both for our encouragement and warning. If they had been represented as without fault, we, with our sinful nature, might despair at our own

mistakes and failures. But seeing where others struggled through discouragements like our own, where they fell under temptation as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness. As they, though sometimes beaten back, recovered their ground, and were blessed of God, so we too may be overcomers in the strength of Jesus."⁹

Our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete

"As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete."¹⁰

"By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah."¹¹

"Sin brings physical and spiritual disease and weakness. Christ has made it possible for us to free ourselves from this curse. The Lord promises, by the medium of truth, to renovate the soul. The Holy Spirit will make all who are willing to be educated able to communicate the truth with power. It will renew every organ of the body, that God's servants may work acceptably and successfully. Vitality increases under the influence of the Spirit's action. Let us, then, by this power lift ourselves into a higher, holier atmosphere, that we may do well our appointed work."¹²

"Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening,

recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness."¹³

"The sanctification set forth in the Scriptures embraces the entire being—spirit, soul, and body. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that their 'whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Again he writes to believers: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God' (Romans 12:1)."¹⁴

"Dwell upon the marvelous plan of salvation, the great sacrifice made by the King of glory that you might be elevated through the merits of His blood and by obedience finally be exalted to the throne of Christ. This subject should engage the noblest contemplation of the mind. To be brought into favor with God—what a privilege! To commune with Him—what can more elevate, refine, and exalt us above the frivolous pleasures of earth? To have our corrupt natures renovated by grace, our lustful appetites and animal propensities in subjection, to stand forth with noble, moral independence, achieving victories every day, will give peace of conscience which can arise alone from right-doing."¹⁵

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). This expression, 'bought with a price,' means everything to us. In consideration of the price paid for us, shall we not yield our bodies and souls up to Him who has bought us with His blood? Shall not that which He has redeemed be kept in as wholesome and pure and holy a condition as possible? Christ has redeemed us; our very flesh He has saved at an infinite cost, giving His own flesh for the life of the world. The lower passions have their seat in the body, and work through it. The words, 'flesh' or 'fleshy' or 'carnal

lusts' embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul. The love of God must reign supreme, Christ must occupy an undivided throne. Our bodies are to be regarded as Christ's purchased possession. The members of the body are to become the instruments of righteousness."¹⁶

"The prince of this world cometh,' said Jesus, 'and hath nothing in Me' (John 14:30). There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character."¹⁷

Please read *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 467-476, especially p. 472 to the end. It is referring to the restoration of God's character in man, lost through sin.

The finishing touch of immortality

"Shall any of us be as unappreciative as were the Jews, or shall we look upon Christ as a perfect specimen of our perfected humanity uniting in Himself the attributes of Deity with our human nature? The only-begotten Son of God made manifest what humanity may become. In His sanctified human nature He revealed what man must be. Through Him mercy was enabled to deal justly in punishing the transgressor of the law, and justice was enabled to forgive without losing its dignity or purity. At the cross mercy and truth embraced each other, righteousness and peace kissed each other. O, what a wonderful provision was made for man!"¹⁸



"None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality."¹⁹

"The anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. . . ."

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments' from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment' (Zechariah 3:4). The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar.

Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. 'A fair miter' is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God."²⁰

The seal of the living God is related to the character of God, the new garment of Zechariah 3:4, and the wedding garment of Matthew 22:11. These verses refer the full restoration of God's character in men and women. May the Lord help us that this may be our experience! ✠

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 199.
- ² *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 451, 452.
- ³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 122.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 388.
- ⁵ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 12. [Words in brackets are the original author's.]
- ⁶ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 271.
- ⁷ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.
- ⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 266.
- ⁹ *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 255.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 312.
- ¹¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.
- ¹² *The Review and Herald*, January 14, 1902.
- ¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 267.
- ¹⁴ *The Great Controversy*, p. 473.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 504.
- ¹⁶ *The Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 209.
- ¹⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.
- ¹⁸ *The Signs of the Times*, June 18, 1896.
- ¹⁹ *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 291.
- ²⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 474, 475.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

Part 2

By A. Balbach

The greatest crisis that the world has ever known is about to come. Trouble—the worst that has ever existed in the world—will soon involve every nation. The hearts of men and women will be giving up for fear of what is ahead of them. Luke 21:26. At that time, which is not far off, the remnant people of God—all those whose names remain in the book of life—will be delivered. Here is a comprehensive picture of what is going to happen:

The day of wrath, often foretold by the prophets, will be ushered in before the coming of Christ. Job 20:28; Psalm 110:5; Isaiah 13:9; Zephaniah 1:15; Matthew 3:7; Romans 2:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 6:17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:1, 19. The wrath of God will be unleashed in the seven last plagues, right after the close of proba-

tion. Revelation 16. As it happened before the Flood, the inhabitants of the world have again become so depraved that they have finally exhausted God's patience. And since they refused to listen to Him when He spoke to them in a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12) in His mercy, He will finally speak to them in His indignation through the instruments of His wrath, which will cause devastation everywhere. The remnant people of God will be protected from the effect of the plagues (Psalm 46:1, 2, 6–8), while the enemies of God will have no protection.

At that time, two religio-political powers, represented by the first and second beasts of Revelation 13, will dominate the world. The position of the second beast will be an image (an imitation, a copy) of the intolerant course followed by the first beast in the past. These two powers will not grant liberty of religious conscience in areas where they think that their interests are at stake. To safeguard their cause they will issue a decree (or a series of de-

The World on the Verge of a Great Crisis

crees) forcing men and women to obey their requirements in conflict with the law of God. Revelation 13:1-17.

Practically the whole world will yield to the antibiblical demands of these two powers, who will be acting hand in hand. A faithful minority of true Christians, however, will be an exception. As they have decided to obey the Lord rather than human beings, they will be accused of displeasing God and provoking His anger.

In the days of king Ahab, Elijah the prophet and the little remnant of faithful servants of God were held responsible for the severe drought and famine. And the prophets of Baal declared that it was necessary to eliminate them in order to appease the anger of the offended god (Baal) and bring the national calamity to a stop. This conclusion is suggested by the following passages: 1 Kings 17:1, 7; 18:1, 2, 13, 17, 18. In the near future, similar declarations will be made against the faithful few by the representatives of the nominal churches that will be "riding" on the earthly governments. Revelation 13:5-8, 11-17; 17:5-7, 12-14. Those who keep the commandments of God will then be cruelly persecuted (Matthew 24:9; Revela-

tion 12:17) by those who wish to put them out of existence. Multitudes will be brainwashed to believe that this wholesale destruction of human lives will please God and persuade Him to stop the plagues. God, however, will intervene in behalf of His people and deliver them.

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7).

Christians in general know that there is a great tribulation before us, but many do not understand that this tribulation begins with the close of probation and ends with the coming of Christ, when the wicked inhabitants of the earth will be destroyed. Revelation 6:15-17.

The Bible teaches that once the door of probation is shut, those who are unsaved will remain unsaved. Matthew 25:1-12; Luke 13:23-27; Revelation 22:11. They will have no second

chance. They will all perish—if not under the seven last plagues or in the last international war (Armageddon), then at the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke 17:26-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Isaiah 24:1-6. The only few survivors that will be saved from the coming destruction are those who have made preparations for the coming of the Lord. Luke 21:36; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Isaiah 25:8, 9. These will then be translated (taken up from the earth) to be with Christ in the kingdom of glory. Matthew 25:34; Romans 8:16-18; Revelation 7:13-17; 20:4; 21:1-4.

Let us turn back to our days and to the time of trouble.

The remnant people of God, who will have the seal of protection and deliverance, will be identified with the following characteristics:

1. They have the name of God (His character) written in their foreheads. Revelation 14:1 (compare

The day of wrath, often foretold by the prophets, will be ushered in before the coming of Christ.

While we still have a chance to turn to Him wholeheartedly, God wants to save us from our sins.

Exodus 34:5-7).

2. They are partakers in the patience of the saints; they keep the commandments of God; they have the faith of Jesus; and they uphold the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy. Revelation 14:12; 12:17; 19:10.
3. They are not defiled by any connection with the fallen churches. Revelation 14:4; 18:1-5. They may have been connected with Babylon (either the mother or her daughters: Revelation 17:5) before they heard the call, "Come out of her, My people." But they were free from any defilement when they received the seal of God.
4. There is no deception (false doctrine) in their mouth. Revelation 14:5.
5. They follow Christ whithersoever He goeth. Revelation 14:4.
6. They are victorious over the antibiblical requirements of the two religio-political powers that will persecute those who conscientiously obey God rather than men and women when there is a conflict between a "Thus saith the Lord" and a "Thus saith the state." Revelation 15:2.
7. They are the only ones that can

sing the song of victory (Revelation 14:3; 15:3), which is similar to the song that was sung by the people of Israel after they had been delivered from the Egyptians. Exodus 14:27-31; 15:1-19.

8. "These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14, New King James Version).

The robes of our character must be washed in the merits of Christ's blood now, while the door of probation is open, so that, at His coming, we "may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).

Now, while our Mediator is making intercession for us in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 7:25; 8:1; 1 John 2:1, 2), it is our privilege and duty to find acceptance before God and get the needed preparation to stand in the time of trouble (the coming tribulation). Before it is too late, let us heed the invitation:

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon

him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6, 7).

Now, while the door of mercy and opportunity is still open, and while we still have a chance to turn to Him wholeheartedly, God wants to save us from our sins so that we may be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). If we think that the Lord will make us blameless at His coming, we will be disappointed. Matthew 7:21-23; 25:11, 12; Luke 13:24, 25. We are to be made blameless now (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), and "preserved" in the state of blamelessness throughout the coming time of trouble, so that, upon Christ's return, we "may be found" blameless and without spot (2 Peter 3:14; 1 Corinthians 1:7, 8).

If we accept the provisions that the Lord has made for our salvation, then, and only then, can we claim His promise:

"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10, NKJV).

"He who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13, NKJV).

✍

The Creator's *Plan*

Part 2 of 3 in a series on Education

By Pam Stemmler

[In the previous article we were admonished to learn from the history of Israel and to prepare for the things that are about to happen on the earth.]

*A*s we look at society around us, the lowered morality, the crime and despair, the struggling and fighting, we must honestly admit that something has gone wrong somewhere. Many of us want something different for our children, for ourselves and for the world in which we live. This is only possible if we follow a tried-and-true plan of education.

We must realize that there has been a plan, from the beginning of the creation of this planet called Earth, for education designed for our very best. It has been and continues to be the responsibility of parents to train up their children in the way they should go. (See Proverbs 22:6.)

Instead of the commotion around us, we want to participate in the restoration of the family as it was intended to be. The Lord's promise is that "he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

Our goal should be that we may "be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"; that we may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9, 10).

As some have so fervently stated: "I want my children to be useful members of society, not criminals." "I want my children to help their neighbors and honor the God who made them." "I want them to learn and to teach."

We are called to be a light in this dark world. We are to follow the example of Abraham, whom the Lord knew would command his household after him. What a help and example he was to the world around him! May the Lord help us to do the same! Notice what is needed in our time:

"Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God."¹

What is the true science of education?

Education as defined in the Noah Webster Dictionary (1828) is: "the bringing up, as of a child; instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give

them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties."

"In the highest sense **the work of education and the work of redemption are one**, for in education, as in redemption, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'"²

"True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character. The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle."³

"**True education** means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. . . . **It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.** It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."⁴

Education = physical + mental + spiritual

Why are three parts of the being mentioned here? Because they are all interrelated, connected far more than we realize. We cannot have a healthy body without a balanced mind and correct spiritual nature. We cannot have a balanced mind, without good physical habits and a strong spiritual nature. We cannot have a close walk with our Creator without the strength of the physical and the ability to think and to choose with our mind.

In proper education, we must see that all parts are covered. Someone has stated that true education is knowing and doing, while false education is saying and not doing. We want to teach our children to be real people—honest, trustworthy, truthful, helpful, cheerful, and responsible. This will be the result of true education.

The goal

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is

the goal to be reached."⁵

"One well-ordered, well-disciplined family is a greater power in demonstrating the efficiency of Christianity than all the sermons in the world. When fathers and mothers realize how their children copy them, they will watch carefully every word and gesture"⁶

In 1 Corinthians 10:31, the apostle states so beautifully: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This is what we should want to teach our children and have in our own experience. The goal is moral purity.

The Bible gives us quite a picture of true and false education, **not by their approach but by their results. "By their fruits ye shall know them"** (Matthew 7:20). "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:13–18).

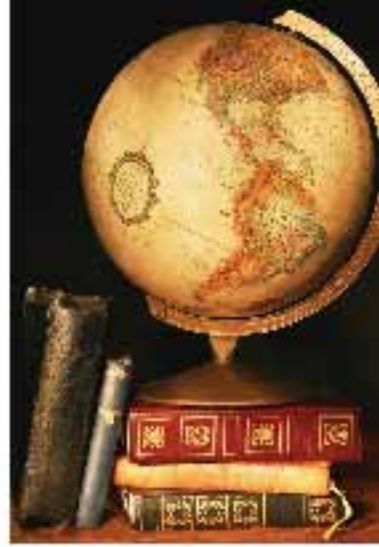
Examine the fruits

True: Good conversation, works with meekness, pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy.

False: Bitter envying, strife, lying against the truth, earthly, sensual, devilish, confusion.

There are several tools which the Lord has given us to help us in this endeavor. He reminds us to "set no wicked thing" before our own eyes or those of our children (Psalm 101:3). He tells us what we should think about, what we should talk about, and what we should teach. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are

The Bible gives us quite a picture of true and false education, not by their approach but by their results. "By their fruits ye shall know them."



honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

If we would keep these things in mind in our home, and in the choice of our curriculum and of our associations, we would be much farther ahead in obtaining our objective.

What does all this mean practically? It means that there should be first of all a strong spiritual foundation, not just in theory, but lived out in the life of the parents. Then in the choosing of the curricula and our associations, we must test and see if the results of either will help produce the good fruit we desire to see.

There are many different types of educational helps available and we may cover many of them in other articles. But anything which teaches falsehood, striving to be better than others, prejudice in whatever forms, violence, or spiritualism, is not going to be part of true education.

Next, true education involves the practical. It is not enough to fill the minds with facts that have no value. If they cannot be put to use, they are not useful and are usually forgotten. Take the academic precepts and put them to work. Provide for yourself and your children what is needed to put knowledge into action. A study/work program has worked wonderfully for years and years and years. It is the original plan. By many it was lost sight of for hundreds of years, but especially in the 1800's there was a revival of this method of education. In fact, this is what prepared some of the people of that time to give and receive the first angel's message. The results are wonderful.

The child learns, and then uses what he or she has learned. This helps in retaining of the knowledge, but also in the development of character that will show what we have been discussing so far. How much more useful do individuals feel when they know that through their own effort they have accomplished some productivity that is worth something. This gives them a foundation of self-worth, responsibility, and tools to use to reach out and help others. No price can be put on this type of education.

"Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who



bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen."⁷

A child or youth who grows up enjoying the learning time and the working time will be valued by many more than just his or her own family. Such children will indeed have an effect on the neighborhood around them and the world in which they live. They can and will be used of God to fulfill His great and grand purpose on this earth and in eternity. May this be our desire and our accomplishment—to be teachers and helpers of this type of children. May God grant us His grace.

How do I recognize true education?

1. It is based upon truth:

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:3) or before the eyes of my children.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

2. It trains students to be thinkers:

"An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control."⁸

"Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions."⁹

"The Lord desires us to obtain all the education possible, with the object in view of imparting our knowledge to others. None can know where or how they may be called to labor or to speak for God. Our heavenly Father alone sees what He can make of men. There are before us possibilities which our feeble faith does not discern. We should not let slip even one opportunity of qualifying ourselves intellectually to work for

God."¹⁰

3. It trains for service and self-sacrifice:

"To gain the higher education means to follow [the word of God] implicitly; it means to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to practice His virtues. It means to give up selfishness and to devote the life to the service of God."¹¹

This is opposite to the spirit of competition so prevalent in our society in its subtle and not-so-subtle forms. The Bible teaches that rivalry or competition as a motivating power for Christians is wrong.

"Jesus called [His disciples] to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

4. Overcoming sin:

"Higher education calls for some-

To gain the higher education means to walk in the footsteps of Christ. This is the opposite to the spirit of competition so prevalent in our society.

thing greater, something more divine, than the knowledge to be obtained merely from books. It means a personal, experimental knowledge of Christ; it means emancipation from ideas, from habits and practices, that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness, and which are opposed to loyalty to God. It means to overcome stubbornness, pride, selfishness, worldly ambition, and unbelief. It is the message of deliverance from sin."¹²

The tools

From *Studies on Christian Education*, by E. A. Sutherland, we find 8 principles to implement in order to have true education:

1. The Bible as the textbook.
2. No honors, emulations or degrees.
3. Health reform.
4. Simplicity in buildings and dress.
5. Manual labor as part of the training.
6. Country living.
7. Elective courses of study.
8. Godly teachers.

Future articles will explain some of these principles. ☞

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- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ⁶ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1118.
- ⁷ *Education*, p. 17.
- ⁸ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 335.
- ⁹ *Education*, p. 18.
- ¹⁰ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 333, 334.
- ¹¹ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 11. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12. [Emphasis supplied.]

Sleep

The Body's Daily Tune-up

Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." "The beginning of health is sleep." "Sleep is better than medicine." We have learned these sayings since we have children.

What is sleep?

"Sleep is a physiologic state of relative unconsciousness and inaction of the voluntary muscles, the need for which recurs periodically."¹

It seems as if sleep is a big waste of time for many. They think of all they could be doing if they would not sleep. Nevertheless, sleep is very necessary. Yet, there is a continuing debate about why we sleep and how much sleep is required.

Every creature needs to sleep. It gives our body a rest and allows it to prepare for the next day. It's like giving our body a mini-vacation. Until the 1950's, most people thought of sleep as a passive, dormant part of our daily life. We now know that our brains are very active during sleep. Moreover, sleep affects our daily functioning and

our physical and mental health in many ways. Scientists say that sleeping time is when the brain sorts and stores information, replaces chemicals, and solves problems.

Why is sleep important?

Our body is like an automobile. A car cannot keep going smoothly without a tune-up or an oil change. Sleep is our body's daily tune-up. Sleep provides our body physical and mental rest and restores mental energy. We use up our energy stores through such activities as thinking and creating. Sleep is the time when we revitalize our system, recharge and reenergize our "power-pack." While we are sleeping, our body does most of its repair work; muscle tissue is rebuilt and restored. Rest maximizes the regenerative and repair processes for our cells in the body. Adequate sleep keeps the wrinkles at bay. People who lack sleep grow older and look older prematurely. The growth hormone is secreted during sleep. This hormone is important for growth in children as well as throughout adulthood in rebuilding tissues.

Tune-up your brain

Lack of sleep seriously affects our thinking and cognitive processes. Skipping one night's sleep makes a



By Janet Sureshkumar

One hour of sleep before midnight is worth two hours of sleep after midnight.



person cranky and clumsy. After missing two nights of sleep, a person will have problems thinking and doing things. After five nights without sleep, a person will hallucinate (this means seeing things that aren't actually there). Eventually, it becomes impossible for the brain to give its directions to the rest of the body. If the person tries to be creative, the brain doesn't work well. He or she can perform calculations, but is much more likely to make errors, because the brain's engine hasn't been replenished.²

Yes, sleep is very essential for health and happiness and longevity. No one can live without sleep and remain healthy. Sleep is also important in keeping one looking good, hence the phrase "beauty sleep."

Where and when should we sleep?

One of the first requirements for sleep is not to overtax the nerves. There should be darkness and quiet. We should sleep early, because "early sleep is beauty sleep." Early hours are most valuable for rest and body building. One hour of sleep before midnight is worth "two hours" of sleep after midnight. The more rest we can get before midnight, the better.

If you are in a fine state of health, you should sleep with the windows open in a well-ventilated place with

comfortable temperature. Avoid extreme mental or physical stimulation just before bedtime. A good night's sleep allows you to be awake and alert throughout the day. Tackling big problems or mental challenges just before you go to bed can interfere with the relaxed mood.

"Proper periods of sleep and rest and an abundance of physical exercise are essential to health of body and mind. To rob nature of her hours for rest and recuperation by allowing one man to do the work of four, or of three, or even of two, will result in irreparable loss."³

How much sleep is needed?

The amount of sleep a person needs depends by far on one's age. Babies sleep a lot—about 14 to 15 hours a day. Scientists tell us that, on average, humans require about eight hours of rest per night. That is one third of the entire life. But studies also show that individual needs vary dramatically.

What are the types of sleep?

While we are asleep, our brains go through different stages. There are two types of sleep. One is non-rapid-eye-movement (NREM). The other is the rapid-eye-movement (REM). In NREM, the EEG (electroencephalogram: brain waves) are slow. The muscle tone,

respiratory rate, heart rate, and blood pressure are lowered. In REM, the respiratory rate and depth are increased but the muscle tone is even less than in NREM.

Sleep debt

Today's generation tends to live in serious sleep debt, which is a major factor for the general bankruptcy such as in accidents, career failures, and broken marriages. These factors combined contribute to a reduced life span and an immune deficiency which makes one more vulnerable to ailments. Common illnesses connected with these health deficits are diabetes, heart disease, and even obesity. But many are unaware of the simple solution for this major problem.

Sleep debt can also be considered epidemic in most affluent countries. Voluntary or involuntary deprivation of sleep, which leads to minor illnesses as well as terminal illnesses, is known as sleep deficiency. The invention of modern gadgets such as communication units, the entertainment devices, and the artificial lights makes the night into day; it also makes the modern human to feel that sleep is a non-essential commodity.

"How prevalent is the habit of turning day into night and night into day. Many youth sleep soundly in the

Today's generation tends to live in serious sleep debt.

morning, when they should be up with the early singing birds, and be stirring when all nature is awake."⁴

"[By burning the midnight oil, some youth] not only waste precious opportunities, but cause additional expense."⁵

The new millennium person needs the same quantity of sleep every year as did the human 5,000 years ago, but we get less amount of sleep year by year. The March 2006 issue of *Consumer Affairs* quotes what medical scientists affirm that the modern generation gets about an hour less sleep per night than what is needed. Sleep deficiency is an epidemic which is caused by people feeling the obligation to work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. *USA Today* calls this a 24/7 syndrome and "a cultural earthquake that is changing the way [people] live."

Sleep deprivation

Sleep deprivation is almost a way of life for most students, especially as final exams loom on the horizon. In fact, much of society suffers to some extent from sleep deprivation.

"No student should form the habit of sitting up late at night to burn the midnight oil, and then take the hours of day for sleep. If they have been accustomed to doing this at home, they should seek to correct their habits and go to rest at a seasonable hour, and rise in the morning refreshed for the day's duties. In our schools the lights should be extinguished at half past nine."⁶

People who work the night shift often suffer from sleep deprivation. Night is the logical and natural time for sleep. Those on shift work are attempting to reverse the natural flow of their circadian rhythm. They may find sleeping in the day difficult if not almost impossible, and can become severely starved for sleep. It is proved that such individuals suffer for life.

"Our God is a God of order, and He desires that His children shall *will* to

bring themselves into order and under His discipline. Would it not be better, therefore, to break up this habit of turning night into day, and the fresh hours of the morning into night? If the youth would form habits of regularity and order, they would improve in health, in spirits, in memory, and in disposition."⁷

Some ministers spend late nights in committee meetings and in dealing with problems. These ministers and church workers are prone to be victims of sleep deprivation. "It is a great mistake to keep a minister constantly at work in business lines, going from place to place, and sitting up late at night in attendance at board meetings and committee meetings."⁸

Sleep deprivation is no laughing matter. It disturbs your thinking patterns; it weakens your body, making it more susceptible to disease. It reduces your reaction time. You may also fall asleep at inappropriate times. It changes the spirituality and morality.

Sleep and disease

The link between insufficient sleep and disease is nothing new. It has been known for centuries. Over 40 million Americans suffer from chronic, long-term sleep disorders each year. An additional 20 million experience occasional sleeping problems. According to Brazilian-sleep-specialist Rubens Reimão, an estimated 35 percent of the world's population suffers from sleep related problems.

"Many have made themselves sick by overtaxing their strength. Their exhausted energies compel them to cease labor, and they are brought to a bed of suffering. Rest, freedom from care, light, pure air, pure water, and spare diet, are all that they need to make them well."⁹

"Sleeping problems are common in many disorders including Alzheimer's disease, stroke, cancer, and head injury. These sleeping problems may arise

from changes in the brain regions and neurotransmitters that control sleep."¹⁰

Some of the sleeping disorders which need serious attention are listed below.

Insomnia: Insomnia is a condition of inadequate quantity or quality of sleep. Falling asleep is difficult and is the commonest complaint, followed by such difficulty as staying asleep and early a waking. It may be a symptom of a depressive illness or of anxiety disorder.¹¹

Hypersomnia: This is a condition where a person regularly sleeps more than usual, to the extent that it interferes with one's socioeconomic functions. It is a condition in which a person has trouble staying awake during the day. People who have hypersomnia can fall asleep at any time. When this abnormality increases, it must be investigated.

Narcolepsy: This is a rare syndrome of recurrent attacks of sleep, sudden loss of muscle tone, and sleep paralysis. The attacks may happen from a few to many times a day. The condition requires immediate medical attention.

Sleep Apnea/Hypopnoea: This is a condition where the person holds his or her breath for an abnormally long period, and as a result suffers a reduction in the level of oxygen in the blood. If the condition persists, some people develop a heart attack or even cardiac arrest. Often the individual feels fatigued and sleepy even as early as mid-afternoon. This is due to lack of sleep and low oxygen level in the blood, because of the breathing problem.¹²

Hallucinations: One of the symptoms of prolonged sleep deprivation is hallucinations. When a person is taught a new skill, his or her performance does not improve until he or she receives at least eight hours of sleep. One of the possible side effects of a continued lack of sleep is death. Usually this is the result of the fact that the immune system is weakened without sleep. The number of white blood cells within the body decreases, as does the activity of the remaining white blood cells. The body also decreases the amount of growth hormone

produced. The ability of the body to metabolize sugar declines. Without sleep our brains deteriorate, and if the argument that brain behavior is true, then our behavior will also suffer accordingly.

Sleep and the frontal lobe

“The brain is the citadel of the whole man, and wrong habits of eating, dressing, or sleeping, affect the brain, and prevent the attaining of that which the student desires—a good mental discipline.”¹³

“The frontal lobe is the seat of Morality, Spirituality and the will. It is also the source of judgment, reasoning and intellect.”¹⁴

The frontal lobe is the most fascinating section of the brain with relation to sleep deprivation. Its functions are associated with speech as well as creative thinking. Sleep-deprived test subjects have difficulty thinking of imaginative words or ideas. Instead, they tend to

choose repetitious words or clichéd phrases. They also may stutter, speak in a monotone voice or at a slower pace than usual. Sleep-deprived people do not have the speed or creative abilities to cope with making quick but logical decisions, nor do they have the ability to implement them well. If the frontal lobe is affected, one’s morality and spirituality is at risk. Therefore it requires serious attention.

What needs to be done?

“The public isn’t aware what normal sleep is and what good sleep practices are,” says Dr. Thomas Roth, board member of the National Sleep Foundation and director of research at the Henry Ford Hospital sleep clinic. Sleep is not a voluntary act; it is a natural process which we go through each night. We need to cultivate the habit of good sleep to have good mental health, and improve spirituality. Neither sleep deprivation nor excess sleep is good. A

good sleep is good health and a good health is good happiness and prosperity of life.

“It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so [the Lord] giveth his beloved sleep” (Psalm 127:2). *✠*

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- ⁴ *My Life Today*, p. 143.
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- ⁷ *Child Guidance*, p. 112.
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Vegetable Noodle Soup

By Jelena Gavric

Tasty Kitchen Tidbits

Ingredients:

2 carrots 2 celery stalks 1 onion 2 large sprigs of parsley
 2 potatoes 2 cloves of garlic 2 large cauliflower pieces
 Pasta (brown-rice elbows or similar noodles for a whole grain choice)



Preparation:

Cut the vegetables in very small pieces and add them to five liters of water. Add your favorite cooking herbs to the water and cook the broth until the vegetables have finished cooking. Remove the carrots from the broth and mash them with a fork and add two tablespoons of olive oil. Strain the broth so that the rest of the vegetables are removed. Add the carrots back to the broth, and add parsley leaves according to taste. Continue to cook the broth for a few more minutes. Add the soup noodles and keep cooking the soup until the noodles are soft.

Note: This recipe is for five liters of soup. If you want the soup to last a few days, do not add noodles to all of it, because it will go bad. The broth can be saved and the noodles added for every meal.

With the tremendous increase of disease among animals—and especially the worldwide concern over “bird flu”—here is a recipe you can share with folks who have long relied on chicken soup as a favorite to beat the cold weather “blues.” You certainly do not need chicken to enjoy a nice, hot soup rich in potassium and other vital nutrients—and all at an economical cost.

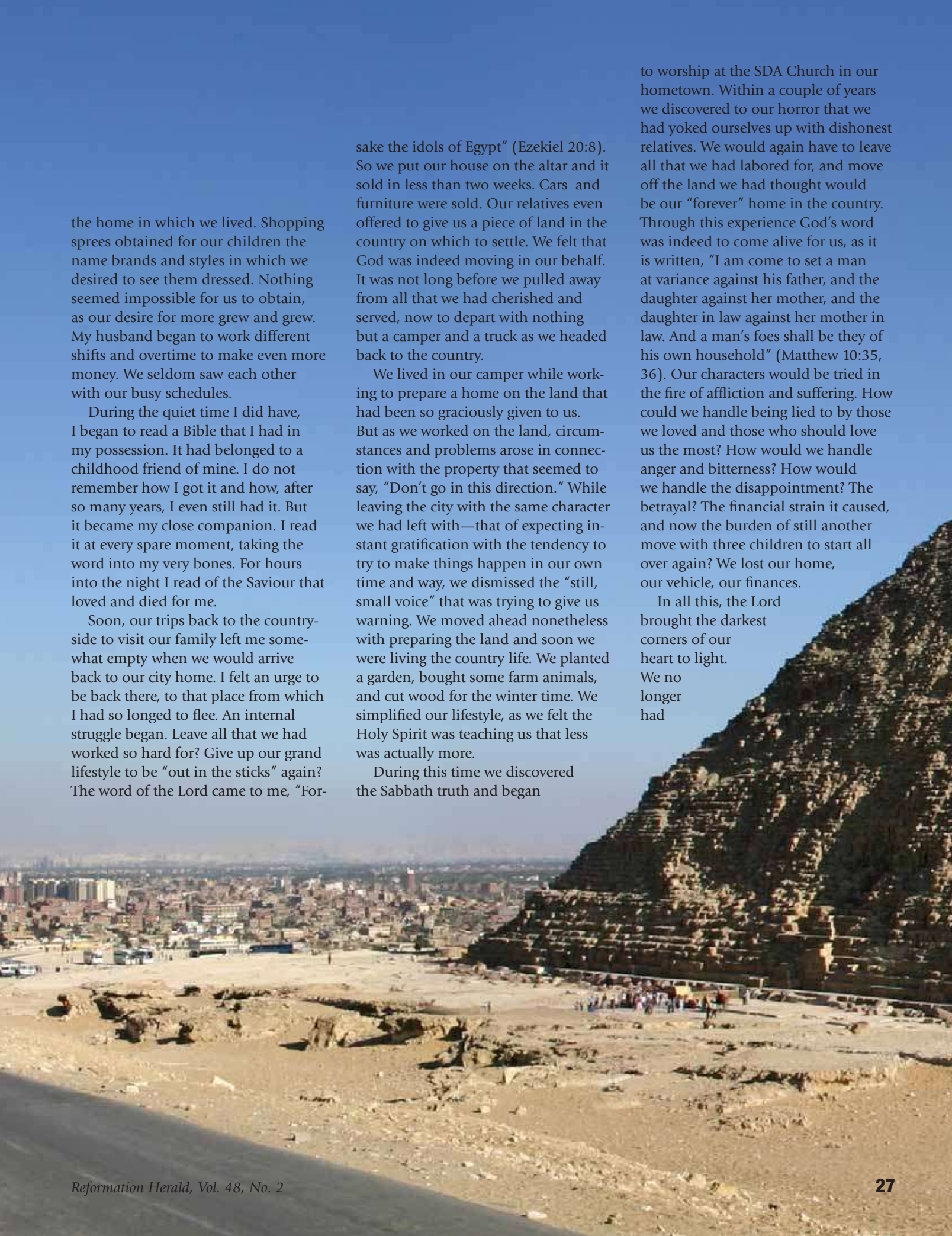
Forsaking *the* Idols *of* Egypt

A personal journey of faith

By Cheri Shelor

*“Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place”
(Exodus 13:3).*

Raised in the Blue Ridge mountains of southwest Virginia, USA, I was indeed a “country” girl. As a youth who had only faintly heard about Jesus, I was quite a rebel. It was instilled in me early on to be aggressive and to make things happen. I had one goal in mind: Obtain a college degree, move to the big city, and get what I wanted. And that’s just what my husband and I did. Our careers began to prosper and bring in the income that would provide us with the lifestyle we desired. We acquired a beautiful home in a neighborhood where all the “Who’s Who” people lived. We drove vehicles that cost as much as a fourth of the cost of



the home in which we lived. Shopping sprees obtained for our children the name brands and styles in which we desired to see them dressed. Nothing seemed impossible for us to obtain, as our desire for more grew and grew. My husband began to work different shifts and overtime to make even more money. We seldom saw each other with our busy schedules.

During the quiet time I did have, I began to read a Bible that I had in my possession. It had belonged to a childhood friend of mine. I do not remember how I got it and how, after so many years, I even still had it. But it became my close companion. I read it at every spare moment, taking the word into my very bones. For hours into the night I read of the Saviour that loved and died for me.

Soon, our trips back to the countryside to visit our family left me somewhat empty when we would arrive back to our city home. I felt an urge to be back there, to that place from which I had so longed to flee. An internal struggle began. Leave all that we had worked so hard for? Give up our grand lifestyle to be “out in the sticks” again? The word of the Lord came to me, “For-

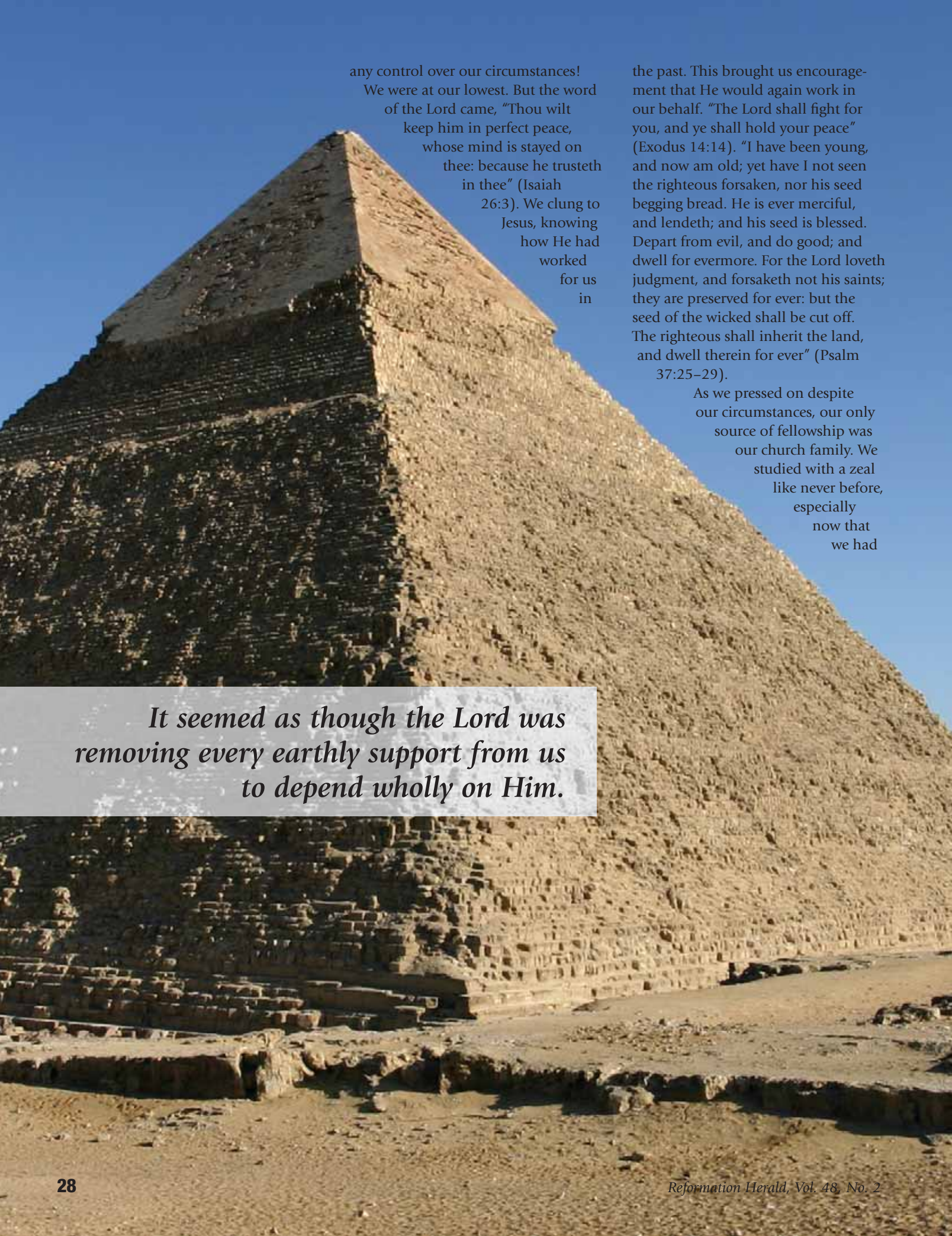
sake the idols of Egypt” (Ezekiel 20:8). So we put our house on the altar and it sold in less than two weeks. Cars and furniture were sold. Our relatives even offered to give us a piece of land in the country on which to settle. We felt that God was indeed moving in our behalf. It was not long before we pulled away from all that we had cherished and served, now to depart with nothing but a camper and a truck as we headed back to the country.

We lived in our camper while working to prepare a home on the land that had been so graciously given to us. But as we worked on the land, circumstances and problems arose in connection with the property that seemed to say, “Don’t go in this direction.” While leaving the city with the same character we had left with—that of expecting instant gratification with the tendency to try to make things happen in our own time and way, we dismissed the “still, small voice” that was trying to give us warning. We moved ahead nonetheless with preparing the land and soon we were living the country life. We planted a garden, bought some farm animals, and cut wood for the winter time. We simplified our lifestyle, as we felt the Holy Spirit was teaching us that less was actually more.

During this time we discovered the Sabbath truth and began

to worship at the SDA Church in our hometown. Within a couple of years we discovered to our horror that we had yoked ourselves up with dishonest relatives. We would again have to leave all that we had labored for, and move off the land we had thought would be our “forever” home in the country. Through this experience God’s word was indeed to come alive for us, as it is written, “I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matthew 10:35, 36). Our characters would be tried in the fire of affliction and suffering. How could we handle being lied to by those we loved and those who should love us the most? How would we handle anger and bitterness? How would we handle the disappointment? The betrayal? The financial strain it caused, and now the burden of still another move with three children to start all over again? We lost our home, our vehicle, our finances.

In all this, the Lord brought the darkest corners of our heart to light. We no longer had



any control over our circumstances!
We were at our lowest. But the word
of the Lord came, "Thou wilt
keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on
thee: because he trusteth
in thee" (Isaiah
26:3). We clung to
Jesus, knowing
how He had
worked
for us
in

the past. This brought us encourage-
ment that He would again work in
our behalf. "The Lord shall fight for
you, and ye shall hold your peace"
(Exodus 14:14). "I have been young,
and now am old; yet have I not seen
the righteous forsaken, nor his seed
begging bread. He is ever merciful,
and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.
Depart from evil, and do good; and
dwell for evermore. For the Lord loveth
judgment, and forsaketh not his saints;
they are preserved for ever: but the
seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
The righteous shall inherit the land,
and dwell therein for ever" (Psalm
37:25-29).

As we pressed on despite
our circumstances, our only
source of fellowship was
our church family. We
studied with a zeal
like never before,
especially
now that
we had

*It seemed as though the Lord was
removing every earthly support from us
to depend wholly on Him.*

found the Spirit of Prophecy. As we discovered truth, we would share it with our church family, only to find that they were unteachable and in opposition to the Word of God. Characters were soon unveiled to disclose their real “fruit.” We would go down the road of disappointment and separation again. It seemed as though the Lord was removing every earthly support from us to depend wholly on Him. This brought us great perplexity. I said to the Lord, “They worship on the Sabbath and have the Spirit of Prophecy books—this must be your church, for there’s nowhere else to go.” Yet we could not find peace about supporting with our presence the apostasy we were seeing. “We should never give sanction to sin by our words or our deeds, our silence or our presence.”¹

Psalm 27:14 came to mind: “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” And wait we did. In idleness we were not. The Spirit of Prophecy became our “food and water.” We discovered that our church may have worshipped on the Sabbath and printed all the Spirit of Prophecy books, but they were not God’s true disciples, for the Lord gives a clear condition: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31). “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13).

One sunny autumn morn-

ing we received a telephone call; a friend shared with us about her visit to the SDA Reform Movement. Just as the children of Israel were freed from the Egyptian bondage, so we felt as if we then got a chance to learn from a body composed not merely of hearers of the Word, but doers of it. Providence would have it such, “because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon

a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:14–27). “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

Waiting on the Lord was hard for us. It was not in line with our character. But, praise the Lord, that is just what Jesus wants to do for us—to change our character to the similitude of His. Is this not the purpose of the Exodus history? To prepare us for the kingdom that is not of this world? If we will only give up our idols from Egypt and head for Canaan, forsaking all for Him, the Lord will fit us for Heaven. Let us be found among the faithful few who are able to stand. “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isaiah 25:9). *R*

Reference

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 152.



North America

(From top.) Missionary students in Haiti; conference in Canada.



Europe

(Top to bottom.) Conference in France; believers in Milan, Italy; conference in Germany.



Japan

Baptism, conference, and dedication of a new house of worship.



Africa

(Clockwise from top left.) Delegation in Congo; baptism in Cameroon; believers in Rwanda.





Truthfulness

Rewarded

*L*ying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (Proverbs 12:22).

Adapted



There once was a boy named Theodore who was not afraid to tell the truth. Theodore worked for a storekeeper, Mr. Hawkins. One time Mr. Hawkins had bought several bushels of dry beans that were damaged. He also bought several bushels of good beans, and then put some of the good beans in the bottoms of barrels and filled the barrels nearly full of bad beans. At last he put some good beans on top. This way, no matter what end might be opened, good beans would be found. When the beans were all put up in barrels, Mr. Hawkins marked them, "Beans, A-1." When Theodore saw him do this, he said, "Do you think it is right, sir, to mark those beans like that?" "It's none of your business," said Mr. Hawkins in a rough, ugly tone. Theodore said no more.

One day a customer came into the store and wanted to buy several barrels of beans. A sample of the good beans was kept in a box, and the customer was pleased with them. He then asked Mr. Hawkins if he could see the beans in the barrels. "Certainly," the storekeeper answered. He then told Theodore to take the customer upstairs and open one of the barrels. They went up, and a barrel was opened. The customer examined the beans carefully and found them

to be just like the sample. He said, "These are fine beans, and I cannot get such beans anywhere else for such a low price."

Then, turning to Theodore, he said, "Young man, are these beans the same quality all the way down?"

Theodore did not know what to say at first. He knew Mr. Hawkins would expect him to say yes, but his conscience told him he ought to say no. He decided to be honest, and he said, "No, sir, they are not."

"Then, I do not want them," said the customer, and left. Theodore then went down to the office.

"Did you sell that man those beans?" Mr. Hawkins asked.

"No, sir," said Theodore.

"Why not?"

"Well, sir, the man asked me if those beans were of such good quality all the way down, and I told them they were not. Then he said that he did not want them," the boy answered truthfully.

Mr. Hawkins became angry and dismissed Theodore from his employment. Some might assume, then, it would have been better for the boy to have told a lie.

Not long afterward, however, this same Mr. Hawkins wanted a boy to fill a very important position. He wanted a person he could fully trust, and he remembered young Theodore. Now he offered him the position at much higher wages than he had been getting before. The boy accepted the position and was thus rewarded in money for his truthfulness. He also had a clear conscience, which was a still greater reward. It pays to tell the truth! ✍