

the
REFORMATION
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Vol. 50, No. 2



IS IT
TIME
YET?

God in Humanity \ Pondering the Economic Forecast \ Happy to Hear

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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

Editor D. Sureshkumar
Assistant to the Editor B. Monteiro
Creative Services D. Lee

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NO TIME to Larry

According to an old proverb, "He who hesitates is lost." Reluctance to take action when needed can mean a missed opportunity, a forfeited blessing—and often with serious consequences.

Timing is not only a key element in earthly success—it is a powerful factor in the eternal plan of God. Jesus came to this world "when the fulness of the time was come" (Galatians 4:4). Part of why we know that Christ was precisely who He claimed to be is due to the prophetic timeline in

Daniel 9:24–27. The longest portion of that timeline is unveiled in Daniel 8:14, after which there are no more prophecies based on time. "Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test."¹ "When probation ends, it will come suddenly, unexpectedly—at a time when we are least expecting it."²

So, why is timing important today?

If we are not to be calculating another timeline for our future, why is timing nonetheless crucial to our Christian experience?

As the return of Christ approaches, we are to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:12). Yes, our actions can actually hasten His return. That means less suffering, less pain, less turmoil than would otherwise curse this sin-sick world. Shall we not then eagerly take part in that hastening?

"The most signal victories and the most fearful defeats have been on the turn of minutes. God requires promptness of action.

Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage. . . . The timing of things may tell much in favor of truth. Victories are frequently lost through delays. There will be crises in this cause.

Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect will result in great failures and positive dishonor to God."³

A ripening harvest

Through Christ's words in John 4:35, we learn that if we would only lift up our eyes to see, the whitening harvest will be evident. We will miss it if we fail to watch for it. Now is the time to look!

"The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith."⁴

"Our duty is not to be looking forward to some special time for some special work to be done for us, but to go forward in our work of warning the world; for we are to be witnesses of Christ to the uttermost parts of the world."⁵ ✍

References

¹ *Early Writings*, p. 75.

² *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 989.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 497, 498.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 463.

⁵ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 190.



THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

Part 1

GOD

in humanity

*A 4-part Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by Peter D. Lausevic*

The understanding and receiving of the gospel comprise the power to save humanity. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

This gospel is a mystery that has been hidden since eternity. “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25).

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of ‘the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal’ (Romans 16:25, RV). It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne.”¹

This was kept secret. But since it is so important for our salvation, what

has God done with it? “But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:26).

The mystery of the gospel is the fact that God was manifest in the flesh. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).

Yes, the eternal Word of God who created the universe became flesh. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1–4, 14).

He is the eternal Word. “Man’s need for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were aroused in behalf of human beings, fallen and bound to Satan’s chariot car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man’s instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host, the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. [John 1:14 quoted.]”²

Why did the eternal Word need to come to us and be made flesh? “Christ alone was able to represent the Deity. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone sufficient to accomplish this work. No verbal description could reveal God to the world.”³

Thus He became God with us to reveal God to us. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

God prepared a body for Christ. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Hebrews 10:5).

"Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God Himself must be revealed to humanity. In order to do this, our Saviour clothed His divinity with humanity. He employed the human faculties, for only by adopting these could He be comprehended by humanity. Only humanity could reach humanity. He lived out the character of God through the human body which God had prepared for Him. He blessed the world by living out in human flesh the life of God, thus showing that He had the power to unite humanity to divinity."⁴

So, while upon earth, Christ was still God, for He was God with us.

Christ received worship of the wise men, who inquired, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:2, 11).

There are other examples of Christ receiving worship. Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; John 9:38.

When Christ healed someone, virtue came out of Him. "And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46; see also 6:19).

The word translated here as "virtue" is the Greek word *dunamis*, meaning "strength," "power," "ability." It refers especially to inherent power,

power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth. It is power for performing miracles, moral power and excellence of soul.

Jesus could read people's minds. "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25; see also Luke 6:8).

This was not simply a normal process through the Holy Spirit revealing it, but it was actually an evidence of His divinity. "Jesus now gave the people of Nazareth an evidence of His divinity by revealing their secret thoughts."⁵



Christ actually forgave sins and had power to do so while on earth. "When [Jesus] saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house" (Luke 5:20-24).

Jesus could even send a divine "telegraphic-style" message to heal someone. "The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house" (John 4:49-53).

"Jesus responds to the demands of the centurion by commanding him, 'Go thy way; thy son liveth.' These brief and simple words thrill through the heart of the father; he feels the holy power of the speaker in every tone. Instead of going to Capernaum, Jesus, by a flash of divine telegraphy, sends the message of healing to the bedside of the suffering son. He dismisses the suppliant, who, with unspeakable gratitude and perfect faith in the words of the Saviour, turns his steps homeward with a peace and joy he has never felt before."⁶

Jesus could read people's life histories. "Jesus now abruptly changed the subject of conversation, and bade [the Samaritan woman] call her husband. The woman answered frankly that she had no husband. Jesus had now approached the desired point where he could convince her that he had the power to read her life history, although previously unacquainted with her. He addressed her thus: 'Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; in that saidst thou truly' (John 4:17, 18)."⁷ ❧

References

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

² *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 259.

³ *The Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 238.

⁶ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 154, 155.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

Christianity Is for **SINNERS**

By Tobias Stockler



If you thought Christianity is for everyone, you are right. Everyone needs God. Everyone needs salvation from himself or herself. We are all a house divided against ourselves. God alone can save us from the self-destruction that comes to a house divided against itself. God alone can save everyone.

But there is a problem with everyone. One size fits all. One size fits none. Take, for example, orchestra of everyone. Violins from Main Street. Cellos from Front Street. Violas from Winding Way. Flutes from Broadway. French horns from Breezy Lane. Sally with thousands of hours of practice. Jim with none. Johnny just trying to make some noise. No matter what kind of sounds. We are an orchestra of everyone! How much do you think a concert ticket would sell for?

We trust quality to come from minorities. A minority of excellent musicians makes a concert worth paying for. The more elite the minority, the better the quality. The more selective, the more impressive. We appreciate, we admire, we pay for the work of a few great rather than for the effort of many mediocre ones.

Something for everyone is a losing proposition. To win means selectivity.

What about the gospel? For everyone? Yes! A losing proposition? No! The gospel is for winners. It makes winners. It is selective. It makes men and women strong.

Let us, in our imagination, stand for a moment by the temple court wall, in Jerusalem.

Christianity gives you the courage to face and conquer yourself.

Hundreds of our fellow Jews are here in late April of A.D. 28. They have come for the national reunion and holiday. They have traveled for days from all over the Roman Empire. This Roman Empire is approximately a little less than the modern U.S. with which we are familiar. With travel less rapid, local flavors stand out more. Our friends speak Greek, Hebrew, old Farsi, Arabic. (Acts 2:8–11.) Tired and anxious, they know they need a sacrifice. And now they are looking for just that. Not knowing Jerusalem, not knowing local prices and vendors, they just want a good animal.

And that is just what all the noise is about. Vendors are selling animals in the temple porches. Heifers, sheep, doves are all nervous and making noise. They are crowded into an unnatural place, and it sounds like it. We hear a cattle auction. People are arguing over prices. They are tired and desperate. And the vendors know it. Currency exchange is taking place. The very temple is the biggest business in the nation.

We aren't very surprised. Diana's temple in Ephesus is one of the biggest sources of money there. Vendors are all around selling anything people will buy. It is not very different at other temples in our peaceful Roman Empire.

It is true that a few old Jews complain about all the noise. They talk about irreverence. But the politicians are not going to pay attention. These clergy/politicians are in fact getting a big kickback from all of the sales in the temple porches. And everyone puts up with the chaos because the Torah requires a sacrifice while we are here for our national holiday.

But we all put up with it for more reasons. Many of us came for the reunion of family and friends. It is so good to see Aunt Elizabeth and Uncle John. Cousin Lazarus is full of stories. No doubt Mom and Aunt Joanna will swap recipes and gossip. And Father and Simon will discuss religion and politics and work and all the other things men talk about. And boys will

talk about girls, and girls will talk about themselves as well as about boys. And children will run and play. And we will all go home after the religious services.

We are reminded of our subjugation to Rome by all the Roman soldiers. And there have been so many fights in Jerusalem over the past that an extra garrison is stationed there. We see their impressive marches. We recognize their uniforms. And we are aware of how much they are both hated and respected locally. We also check on those pesky Galileans. They are always plotting to get rid of the Romans. But since they are such simple people, they will never succeed. Yet they serve as a check on subservience to Rome.

Jerusalem is just as we remember it. And then it happens. A poor Galilean we have never seen or heard about comes through the gate and looks down the steps and at our fun and arguing and noise. But He stops. He just stands there and looks around. At first He looks like just another peasant. But He stands so long. There is something different. He stands so erect and noble. In fact, He stands like a king but is dressed like a peasant. And He is looking, and looking. The look on His face changes. Now I see anger. I see authority. I see power and influence. I see determination. Something is so different about Him. No one has ever stood there and looked like He does. He looks like He is in charge. He looks like He has complete control of Himself and this place also. Is this one of the clergy/politicians disguised? Who is this? Why does He keep looking so stern, so angry, so incensed?

We are not the only ones to notice. Every vendor and customer is silently staring at the Man. Business is at a complete standstill. No one is even trying to keep track. We are all just staring at the Man on the steps. And He is looking at us. I never saw anyone who could say so much with His face. I never saw someone who felt like He was reading inside of me, knew who I was, what I had done, what I was thinking. But there He is. Even

the animals are quiet. The silence is awkward, even painful. No one knows what to do. The Man on the steps has the complete attention of everyone.

Finally He speaks. Pointing to the animals, He says, "Take these things away." He speaks so firmly, so definitely, so authoritatively, no one even stops to think. Suddenly the nation's most important businessmen and top politicians and all the vendors start grabbing animals and leaving. It is simply amazing. These clergy, politicians, and businessmen never obeyed anyone else's orders before. To leave their own capitol hill? Unthinkable! Impossible! One Man tells them to go. What? This was their place. They spent years of networking to get here. They control this place. They are in charge. Or are they? The Man on the steps says, "Go." And not one of these powerful men thinks of staying. Why doesn't He go? Why all of the nation's most powerful men, and not the Man on the steps?

Suddenly an unknown Galilean takes on the most powerful men of Judea and all of the dispersed Jews throughout the Roman Empire. And in one sentence He demonstrates that He is their King. He is in control.

Jesus did not wait until He was popular. No. Jesus began with a big bang. He began by taking over Jerusalem and running it. He was like Elijah walking in before Ahab and telling the king there would be no more rain until Elijah personally told him differently.

Jesus was confrontational. Jesus stopped the politicians and told them to do something different. It was like he walked into the Capitol during the State of the Union address and told the President, Vice-President, Supreme Court Justices, and Congress to leave, and to leave right now.

And all of this Jesus did with one sentence: "Take these things hence" (John 2:16). There was no campaign, no advertising, no gimmicks, no lecture, no publicity. Just one look and one sentence.

And that one look, that one sentence took more courage than most



people have. We do not like the noise in the chapel. We do not like the injustice of extortion. We do not like clergy and politicians taking advantage of people. We do not like businessmen stealing or lying. We do not like ministers marrying couples who do not have instruction and character to make a happy home. We do not like couples saying "I love you" one day and "I hate you" the next. We do not like children being torn from parents that argue over them. We do not like business that sells cheap and worthless products. We do not like rape and gangs and theft and murder. We do not like lies about Santa Claus, evolutionism, and pornography.

Our world is in worse chaos and confusion than the temple court of two thousand years ago was. And the ministers of all churches, even of our own church, quietly stand by. None has the courage to say, "Take all this away." We are like the old Jews who did not like the noise in the temple. Like Eli, we remonstrate, we chide, we complain, but we do not demand. Jesus had the courage to order. It did not take a speech. He did not need to be fluent in any language. He did not need a degree. He did not need an introduction. All it took was one look and one sentence. And He had the character and the courage for both.

And just in case you are sitting here, saying, "I do not have what it takes to be like that, for Jesus had that look and that sentence because He was God," think again. Jesus was God and Man. And Christians are like Christ.

Jesus' followers also are courageous. Elijah stood before Ahab, and three years later he stood before all Israel. What Elijah said on Carmel would be repeated to all the nations where Ahab searched for him. What Elijah did on Mount Carmel could be seen by many Israelites at home, as well as all of the people present.

It took real courage. It took courage to stand in front of the same politicians that had been behind the murder of Jesus and tell them to their face, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

It took courage for Paul to appeal to Agrippa until he almost became a Christian. It took courage to continue after thrice being beaten, being imprisoned, being stoned.

It took courage for Samuel to tell Israel that they had sinned. It took courage for Nathan to tell David he had sinned.

And we have just begun. Christianity is for the strong.

Christianity gives you the courage to face and conquer yourself. Elijah, Nathan, Samuel, Peter, Esther, Mary,

Martin Luther, were all men and women of passions like ourselves. They were just sinners. But in Jesus they found the courage to face sin and demand surrender. No one can ever demand a full surrender to God while he or she continue boasting of sin.

Pseudo-Christians make the word "Christianity" to stink by their attempt to control others while they do not have the courage to face themselves. O friend, if you are not surrendered to Christ, if you do not have the courage to face the beam in your own eye, please do not curse the mote in another's eye.

It took Jesus one look, one sentence. If it takes you two sentences, watch out. Probably you are doing a work you should not do. Satan loves to use many sentences. God doesn't waste His words. He saves His words for comforting, strengthening, teaching, confirming. Learn from Him.

But maybe you do not have this courage. You are not alone. We are together. We are all weak. We are all sinners.

And thank God, Christianity is just for us. It is for the weak. It is inclusive.

Uriah was one of David's trusted and close friends in the caves. Uriah stood by David, risked his life for David. Uriah was part of the elite that helped David become king. (1 Chronicles 11:41.) Yet David ordered the murder of his own friend just to hide an adulterous affair with Uriah's attractive wife.

When David would not kill Saul while he slept in the cave, you thought David was strong. When David killed Goliath, you thought he was strong. When David mourned the death of Abner, you thought David was strong. And you were right. But prosperity weakens any of us. The more we prosper, the weaker we are likely to be. Poverty and hardship make one strong. David became weak when he was king.

David had to ask around to find whose wife this attractive lady was anyway. And when he heard she was Uriah's wife, David was too weak to spare the life of his friend. Sex and pleasure meant more to him than any of his own employees or even his close friend's eye. Christianity was just what weak David needed most.

In fact, “the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

Listen to David as a weak sinner: “To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then

will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.” (Psalm 51:1-16).

Jonah in the belly of the whale was a weak man. Mary of whom Jesus cast out seven devils was a weak woman. The woman caught in adultery was a weak woman. The man let down through the roof, knowing his own sin was the cause of his sickness, was a weak man. The thief on the cross was a weak man. Jesus loves to help weak men and weak women. Christianity is just for us who are weak.

In fact, “the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13).

But then, I never met a totally strong or a totally weak person. Elijah stood

on Carmel one day and ran from Jezebel the next. David faced Goliath one year and fell the victim to sex another. “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:19).

“As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man’s experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Cooperation with that power is man’s greatest need.”¹

We are born as a house divided against itself. We are born weak, struggling people. Through the sorrows and challenges of life, if we turn to God, we can become strong in Him. His strength is made perfect in overcoming our weakness. And that is Christianity.

Christianity demands that we become strong. It finds us and saves us when we are weak. Christianity is for us who are sinners. May God help us to be Christians. Amen. *✠*

Reference

¹ *Education*, p. 29.

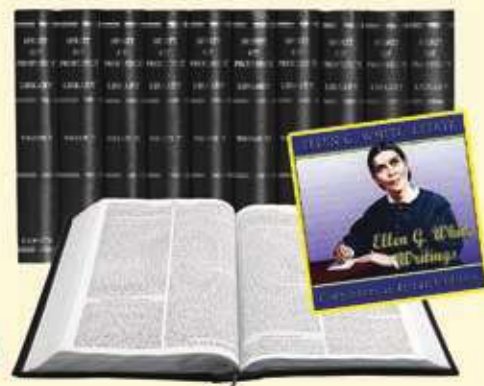
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From the Depths Part 1 of the Heart

By Abel Karife Barraza

Often you hear people saying, “What God really considers is the heart.” But the question then arises: Do they really know what that means? Just seeing how they eat, drink, dress, talk, and behave is enough to know whether or not they understand the meaning of what they are saying.

It is evident that true knowledge is necessary to correct and even transform the lifestyles many believers have. This knowledge is available only through God’s Word. It is taught by His true church, where souls are enabled to grow constantly and consistently, as the apostle Paul wrote: “We . . . do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might 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).

This goal is achieved through the deeply devout study of the Word of God, for “by obtaining a knowledge of God’s word, and giving heed thereto, men may rise from the lowest depths of ignorance and degradation, to become the sons of God, the associates of sinless angels.”¹

Some may still err because they do not really understand what “conversion” means, but they are even reluctant to submit themselves to the Word of God. They are limited to making a mere outward display of the Christian

life, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5).

Such make evident that a thorough work must be done from within their heart.

The significance of one’s outward appearance

It is true conversion that works from within the heart. “As the leaven, when mingled with the meal, works from within outward, so it is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this or that bad habit, and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart. . . .”²

Some are tempted to think that because they know the truth they are already converted. “A profession of faith and the possession of truth in the soul are two different things. The mere knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts may not be changed. The heart must be converted and sanctified.”³

In fact, when the heart is not truly converted, God declares: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” and adds, “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:9, 10).

This reminds us of the Pharisees. Jesus made it clear that they knew what

was truth, yet they did not live up to it. Christ admonished His disciples in regard to the Pharisees: “All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matthew 23:3).

To the Pharisees themselves Christ said: “Woe unto you, . . . Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:27, 28).

So, a mere outward appearance may seem to be fine before other people, but it never works before God. It is due to the fact that we are not entirely converted, that we find our Christian life a constant failure. “The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. . . . This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.”⁴

Such is the essence of the words of the apostle Paul as he makes the appeal, “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).

"The great truth of the conversion of the heart by the Holy Spirit is presented in Christ's words to Nicodemus: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he can not see the kingdom of God' (John 3:3)."⁵

Brethren and sisters, unless we are thoroughly converted, dangerous things can come out from our heart that could affect our life and the life of others.

Pollution from within

Upon the shores of Gennesaret, Jesus explained: "Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:10, 11).

This is one of the most wonderful principles of true conversion ever taught upon the earth.

To some today, this truth is as offensive as it was to the Pharisees in Jesus' time. The disciples came and said to Jesus; "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying" (verse 12)?

Such an attitude reveals two major things. One is that we are dealing with an evil plant, for, as Jesus said, only "a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . . So Jesus said, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:17, 20).

Another problem associated with this is spiritual blindness. Jesus said of the Pharisees that they were "blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:14). They could not see how misleading their actions were. They forgot that "actions speak louder than the most positive profession of godliness."⁶ Even to the disciples this truth was brand new. They, desiring an understanding of it, made the request to Jesus: "Declare unto us this parable" (Matthew 15:15; Mark 7:17).

When Jesus explained that "there is nothing from without a man, that en-

tering into him can defile him" (Mark 7:15), He was stating a truth that could not pass unnoticed by the disciples. If the believer is born of God, born anew, nothing from outside can defile him or her. The apostle James states, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of *his own lust*, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:14-16).

It is then that Satan's temptations are effective upon poor, tempted, deceived souls, bringing forth that which is already within the heart. If the heart were pure, as Jesus stated, nothing could tempt or defile them.

Christ Himself "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrew 4:15).

He could say out of His own experience that "the prince of this world cometh, and **hath nothing in me**" (John 14:30).

"There was in [Jesus] 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. . . . 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."⁷

Thus Jesus' words are true still today. Whenever we see souls yielding to worldliness and sin, it is a sign of their separation from Christ.

Only pollution can bring forth such a heart. Therefore Jesus said, "The things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man." "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart. . . . For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." "Covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye . . . pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:15; Matthew 15:18, 19; Mark 7:22).

These things are the fruits of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-21. "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man," Jesus concluded. Mark 7:23.

Our sacred duty

In view of all these facts, we need a daily experience of self-denial as the apostle Paul described, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31).

We need to take heed of God's counsels as He says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. . . . Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Proverbs 4:23, 25-27).

"Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life. . . . Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them" (Deuteronomy 4:9; 11:16).

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

Let's remember that "God does not deal with actions so much as with the heart that prompts them. How vitally important it is that all who claim to believe the truth, make the truth fragrant by a life like that of Him who is truth."⁸

Thus, "from the depths of sin's degradation, we may be exalted to become heirs with Christ, the sons of God, and kings and priests unto the Most High. Every repentant, obedient soul may stand as did Adam, free from the condemnation of the law. He may 'come boldly unto the throne of grace,' and 'obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need' (Hebrews 4:16)."⁹ *R*

References

- ¹ *Christian Education*, p. 37.
- ² *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 97.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- ⁶ *Christian Education*, p. 219.
- ⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.
- ⁸ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 440.
- ⁹ *The Review and Herald*, February 28, 1888.

PONDERING THE Economic Forecast

By B. Monteiro

It seems that everywhere you turn nowadays, everybody appears to be talking about the economy. As eager students of Bible prophecy, we might ask: Are economic issues included in the final unfolding of events? Are they relevant to the end-time prophecies? Let us see for a moment in the book of James:

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud,

crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter” (5:1–5).

Does this passage refer to these last days? The context is clear beginning at verse 7: “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for **the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: **behold, the judge standeth before the door**” (verses 7–9, emphasis supplied).

What does prophecy declare about the economy?

Material wealth is fleeting, for the day is soon coming when the cry will be heard: “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more” (Revelation 18:10, 11).

Ultimately the scene will unfold: “The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life. They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence



shall devour him. But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. **They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord:** they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity” (Ezekiel 7:12–19, emphasis supplied).

The Advent movement began in sacrifice and will close in sacrifice. When we read the early experiences of our pioneers, we can only be deeply impressed with their level of unselfish dedication to the cause of present truth. Are we following in their footsteps—or do we find ourselves caught up in the general habits of our day? Remember, sooner or later, even gold and silver will be valueless. Where are we placing our affections? Where are our priorities? The apostle bids us, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1–3).

At this point in history, we are living in a hedonistic, materialistic, self-indulgent society whose permeating influence has, to some extent, infected nearly all. Shopping is felt and savored as an entertaining sport, and buying on credit is considered the norm. Governmental leaders hope to restore the economic woes through desperate efforts to continue fostering the same cycle. Yet it is all a form of slavery, as the Bible makes it clear in Proverbs 22:7, “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.” This interesting verse immediately follows the well-known verse often quoted, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old,

he will not depart from it” (verse 6). Christian parents, grandparents, and teachers seek to train the next generation, yet how many of us have given them much of a warning about the serious peril of debt?

Learning from a past depression

While Ellen White was living in Australia in the 1890’s, the country faced a period of economic depression. We read about this experience in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12. Times were difficult. The Lord’s messenger describes a scenario similar to that of today—and provides clear advice as to the solution:

“Australia needs the leaven of sound, solid, common sense to be freely introduced into all her cities and towns. There is need of proper education. Schools should be established for the purpose of obtaining not only knowledge from books, but knowledge of practical industry. Men are needed in different communities to show the people how riches are to be obtained from the soil. The cultivations of land will bring its return.

“Through the observance of holidays the people both of the world and of the churches have been educated to believe that these lazy days are essential to health and happiness, but the results reveal that they are full of evil, which is ruining the health and the morals, and demoralizing the country. The youth generally are not educated to diligent habits. Cities and even country towns are becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah, and like the world as it was in the days of Noah. The training of the youth in those days was after the same order as children are being educated and trained in this age, to love excitement, to glorify themselves, to follow the imagination of their own evil hearts. Now as then, depravity, cruelty, violence, and crime are the results. . . .

“The land boom has cursed this country. Extravagant prices have been paid for lands **bought on credit**; then the land must be cleared, and more money is hired. A house to be built calls for more money, and then interest with open mouth swallows up all the profits. **Debts accumulate, and**

then come the closings and failures of banks, and the foreclosures of mortgages. Thousands have been turned out of employment; families lose their little all. They borrow and borrow, and then have to give up their property and come out penniless. Much money has been put into farms, bought on credit or inherited with an incumbance. **The occupants lived in hope of becoming real owners, and it might have been so, but for the failure of banks throughout the country. . . .**

“Men take you to their orchards of oranges and lemons and other fruits, and tell you that the produce does not pay for the work done in them. It is next to impossible to make ends meet, and parents decide that children shall not be farmers. They have not the courage and hope to educate them to till the soil.

“**What is needed are schools to educate and train the youth so that they will know how to overcome this condition of things. There must be education in the sciences, and education in plans and methods of working the soil. There is hope in the soil, but brain and heart and strength must be brought into the work of tilling it.**”¹

The above proposal may not sound easy or convenient. It depicts an undertaking that may not be so desirable to many of us who are baby boomers and members of Generations X, Y, and Z. Though we may not realize it, the vast majority of us are pitifully handicapped when it comes to agricultural matters. Yes, we may be quite a clever generation overall when it comes to electronic computing devices and such—and there’s nothing wrong with that. But how soon will the day come when putting so much mental and economic energy and faith in silicon chips (basically sand) may end up like the kind-of-building on sand to which Jesus famously referred? No one knows how soon, for sure. Meanwhile, real, literal soils are rapidly being depleted of minerals while garden pests are becoming increasingly more difficult to manage than ever before, “for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”

(Romans 8:22). We need to wake up from our slumber and, as the above statement says, put some “brain and heart and strength” into following the counsel so graciously, mercifully given by the Lord’s messenger especially to help us make it through these last days. We need to keep the big picture in perspective and encourage ourselves to remember:

“A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. **The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth.** For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off” (Psalm 37:16–22, emphasis supplied).

When tempted to be preoccupied with worldly investments and self-centeredness,

“Christ calls upon everyone to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: ‘What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul’ (Mark 8:36)?

“God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment. He would give encouragement to our loftiest aims, security to our choicest treasure. . . . When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ’s followers can rejoice in their

heavenly treasure, the riches that are imperishable.

“Better than all the friendship of the world is the friendship of Christ’s redeemed. Better than a title to the noblest palace on earth is a title to the mansions our Lord has gone to prepare. And better than all the words of earthly praise will be the Saviour’s words to His faithful servants, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Matthew 25:34).

“To those who have squandered His goods, Christ still gives opportunity to secure lasting riches. He says, ‘Give, and it shall be given unto you.’ ‘Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth’ (Luke 6:38; 12:33). ‘Charge them that are rich in this world, . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life’ (1 Timothy 6:17–19).

“Then let your property go beforehand to heaven. Lay up your treasures beside the throne of God. Make sure your title to the unsearchable riches of Christ.”²

Sound investment strategies

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19–21).

“The money that is locked up in worldly investments is no blessing, even to the one who claims to be its owner. The true owner of all our gifts is keeping a reckoning, estimating the good that might be done to suffering humanity if they were wisely used in the service of God, to build up His kingdom in the world. Money wisely invested in the enterprise of saving souls would yield a large return in the end. Not only would men have

increased ability to gain wealth, but they would be laying up treasure in heaven.”³

“The wants of the cause are laid before us; the empty treasuries appeal to us most pathetically for help. One dollar now is of more value to the work than ten dollars will be at some future period.

“Work, brethren, work while you have the opportunity, while the day lasts. Work, for ‘the night cometh, when no man can work’ (John 9:4). How soon that night may come, it is impossible for you to tell. Now is your opportunity; improve it. If there are some who cannot give personal effort in missionary work, let them live economically and give of their earnings.”⁴

The Lord is eager to reap His final harvest of souls from the earth. Will we be part of the picture, as those whom He entrusts with the precious privilege of serving as His valued seed sowers and reapers? “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Psalm 50:3–5). Of what does this sacrifice consist? Every entrusted talent—including our time, effort, money, and undivided attention.

Fellow pilgrims, let us ever keep before our eyes the One who “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). The riches that Christ is offering us are the only ones that will truly endure. Let us strive for that incorruptible inheritance. “It is not money or lands or position, but the possession of a Christlike character, that will open to us the gates of Paradise.”⁵ ✎

References

¹ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, pp. 89–91. [Emphasis supplied.]

² *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 374, 375. [Emphasis supplied.]

³ *The Youth’s Instructor*, February 6, 1896. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 732.

⁵ *The Southern Watchman*, April 16, 1903.

IS IT TIME YET?

Compiled from the writings of
E. G. White, with annotations
by Pam Stemmler

[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

Several years ago the Sabbath Bible Lessons quarterly was entitled *Country Living*. What a blessing to learn more of God's will for His children. We learned that God's plan was for us to be in places where we could raise our families, and, even if alone, we could commune with God in nature, apart from the hustle and bustle of the cities and the sights and sounds of humanity's works.

We learned that this is one of the means for us to develop Christlike characters, that by beholding the beautiful scenes of nature, we can be imperceptibly changed into the same image. We learned more of the specifics of what to look for and how to locate our necessities. However, one of the main objections given regarding moving to the country is that the time has not come yet. Many are waiting for events to take place that will really motivate them to move and to move quickly.

Our purpose here is not to rewrite the Sabbath Bible Lessons, but to address this objection. We are told that there will come a time when many will try to leave the cities and will not be able. I pray that we have not reached that time yet, though I believe we are very close.

In our study of this subject, we will use the biblical principle of Isaiah 28:10, line upon line, precept upon precept. We will let the clear counsel of God explain the statements that may perplex the understanding. We need to heed the warning given in 2 Peter 3:16 regarding the wresting of the Scriptures which are hard to understand, for this principle applies to the Spirit of Prophecy as well,

and if we take the messages and wrongly understand them, we will not be benefited by their counsels.

Let us now look into what Inspiration has given us. Prayerfully take note of the time when the counsel was given.

Written in 1885:

"The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains."¹

Many have read the above statement and are waiting to see the National Sunday Law as the fulfillment of this prophecy and the sign to move out of the large cities. Let us analyze the statement further, letting Inspiration define what is given here. "The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture."²

First, let us examine more of the siege of Jerusalem. We just read above: "The siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians."

In Matthew 24:15–18 and Luke 21:20, 22 we find the warning of what was going to happen, so that the disciples could be spared. In *The Great Controversy*, pp. 26–30, is the description of what happened in that historic event. Please read the passages for clearer details than what could be written here.

In Matthew we find the warning that when they would see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, then they were to flee. At a first-glance reading, one might assume that when the Roman armies were within the temple, then it would be time to flee. But that would have been too late!

The Great Controversy, p. 26, describes the holy ground to be some furlongs outside the city walls. When the “idolatrous standards” were to be set up there, it was the signal for flight. In AD 66, the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem, led by Cestius, and then that army mysteriously withdrew for a time. This was God’s opportunity for His faithful disciples to flee from Jerusalem, while all around was clear, to go to the small city of Pella. What mercy God extends to His children!

“When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay. Throughout the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction.”³

In AD 70, another general, Titus, appeared with his armies and surrounded Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple. However, not one Christian perished. Why? They took the warning seriously

and had already departed 3–4 years previously. It is an interesting note that the first siege was the signal, the second siege was the destruction.

Back to the prophecy for our time. Is there a parallel?

“As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us.”

1888

In 1888, Ellen White warned that an amendment to the Constitution would bring with it Sunday legislation that will oppress the followers of God.”

“The National Reform movement, exercising the power of religious legislation, will, when fully developed, manifest the same intolerance and oppression that have prevailed in past ages. Human councils then assumed the prerogatives of Deity, crushing under their despotic power liberty of conscience; and imprisonment, exile, and death followed for those who opposed their dictates. If popery or its principles shall again be legislated into power, the fires of persecution will be rekindled against those who will not sacrifice conscience and the truth in deference to popular errors. **This evil is on the point of realization.**

“When God has given us light showing the dangers before us, how can we stand clear in His sight if we neglect to put forth every effort in our power to bring it before the people? Can we be content to leave them to meet this momentous issue unwarned?”⁴

1889

In 1889, Ellen White wrote the following warning.

“We must show to the world that we recognize, in the events that are now taking place in connection with the National Reform movement, the fulfillment of prophecy. That which we have, for the last thirty or forty years, proclaimed would come, is now here; and the trumpet of every watchman upon the walls of Zion should raise the alarm.”⁵

Why should this raise such a warning? Because this was an assumption of power that belongs only to God, not to humans. Please note *The Signs of the Times*, November 22, 1899, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 88, and *The Review and Herald*, December 20, 1898. In these references we find that the act of compelling others to worship God and to keep His laws is wrong. To change God’s law and His time is also wrong. See Daniel 7:25.

The prophet of God, under His Inspiration, was given understanding of what was going on and of the warnings that needed to be given.

“The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.”⁶



“The time has come, when, as God opens the way, families should move out of the cities.”

1897

Please note what Ellen White wrote in Letter 90, **1897**.

“The Protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God’s Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy. For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country [places].”⁷

In order to rightly understand what is written, we need a little background history as well. You will notice in the quote above, that the Protestant world in **1897 had set up** an idol sabbath. Prior to this time, various States had Sunday laws with different degrees of enforcement already on their books, but in 1888, a Sunday bill was brought before the U.S. Congress by Senator H.W. Blair of New Hampshire, seeking that Congress enforce Sunday as a ‘Day of Worship,’ as well as an amendment to the religious education portion of the Constitution. Supported by the National Reform Association, organized in 1863, which declared the country a “Christian Nation,” changes were being suggested.

1900

“Before the overflowing scourge shall come upon the dwellers of the earth, the Lord calls upon all who are Israelites indeed to prepare for that event. To parents He sends the warning cry, Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the large cities as fast as possible. Establish church schools. Give your children the word of God as the foundation of all their education.”⁸

“As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen

deities will manifest their signal power and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and **this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled**. By a variety of images the Lord Jesus represented to John the wicked character and seductive influence of those who have been distinguished for their persecution of God’s people. All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth’s history. . . . **In the very time in which we live**, the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin who has made **the Sunday law a distinctive power**, who has thought to change times and laws, and to oppress the people of God who stand firmly to honor Him by keeping the only true Sabbath, the Sabbath of creation, as holy unto the Lord.

“The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message. We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and crowd in the clear-cut

truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways. But be not too ready to take a controversial attitude. There will be times when we must stand still and see the salvation of God. Let Daniel speak, let the Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, ‘the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star’ (Revelation 22:16).”⁹

“I do hope that the trumpet will give a certain sound in regard to **this Sunday-law movement**. I think that it would be best if in our papers the subject of the perpetuity of the law of God were made a specialty. Should there not be a paper or a pamphlet issued to take the place of the *Sentinel*? I have not been able to think that it was the wise thing to do to let that paper drop. It was a voice that was constantly speaking in defense of religious liberty. The truth should be presented in short articles, in clear, distinct lines, giving special points in regard to the Lord’s Sabbath, and showing that those who frame laws to compel the observance of the first day of the week, are disloyal to the Lord of heaven, who placed His sanctity upon the seventh day. Are we doing all we can to exalt the law of Jehovah?

“We should now be doing our very best to defeat **this Sunday law**. The best way to do this will be to lift up the law of God and make it stand forth in



“Parents can secure small homes in the country, with land for cultivation.”

all its sacredness. This must be done if the truth triumphs.”¹⁰

“The decree enforcing the worship of this first day [of the week] is to go forth to all the world. **In a limited degree, it has already gone forth.** In several places the civil power is speaking with the voice of a dragon, just as the heathen king spoke to the Hebrew captives.”¹¹

“I could not sleep past two o’clock this morning. During the night I was in council. I was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God’s appointed means, and get away from the cities to save their children, Some were loitering, making no determined efforts. The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife



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would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. Let us not be like him. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean." Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide awake for himself, and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next.”¹²

1902

“God will help His people to find such homes outside the cities.”¹³

1903

“The time has come, when, as God opens the way, families should move out of the cities. The children should be taken into the country. The parents should get as suitable a place as their means will allow. Though the dwelling may be small, yet there should be land in connection with it, that may be cultivated.”¹⁴

1906

“More and more, as time advances, our people will have to leave the cities. For years we have been instructed that our brethren and sisters, and especially families with children, should plan to leave the cities as the way opens before them to do so. Many will have to labor earnestly to help open the way.”¹⁵

Lessons from the past

“Before the destruction of Sodom, God sent a message to Lot, ‘Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.’ The same voice of warning was heard by the disciples of Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem: “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Luke 21:20, 21). They must not

tarry to secure anything from their possessions, but must make the most of the opportunity to escape.

“There was a coming out, a decided separation from the wicked, an escape for life. So it was in the days of Noah; so with Lot; so with the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so it will be in the last days. Again the voice of God is heard in a message of warning, bidding His people separate themselves from the prevailing iniquity.”¹⁶

“Let it be your study to select and make your homes as far from Sodom and Gomorrah as you can. Keep out of the large cities. If possible make your homes in the quiet retirement of the country, even if you can never become wealthy by so doing. Locate where there is the best influence.

“I am instructed by the Lord to warn our people not to flock to the cities to find homes for their families. To fathers and to mothers I am instructed to say, Fail not to keep your children within your own premises.

“Take your families away from the cities is my message. . . .

“Parents can secure small homes in the country, with land for cultivation, where they can have orchards and where they can raise vegetables and small fruits.”¹⁷

Missionary families needed

“We see the great need of missionary work to carry the truth not only to foreign countries, but to those who are near us. Close around us are cities and towns in which no efforts are made to save souls. Why should not families who know the present truth settle in these cities and villages, to set up there the standard of Christ, working in humility, not in their own way, but in God’s way, to bring the light before those who have no knowledge of it?”¹⁸



APOSTOLIC LETTER
DIES DOMINI
 OF THE HOLY FATHER
 JOHN PAUL II
 TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY AND FAITHFUL
 OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
 ON KEEPING THE LORD'S DAY HOLY

*My esteemed Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,
 Dear Brothers and Sisters!*

1. The Lord's Day—as Sunday was called from Apostolic times(1)—has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery. In fact, in the weekly reckoning of time Sunday recalls the day of Christ's Resurrection. It is *Easter* which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfilment in him of the first creation and the dawn of "the new creation" (cf. *2 Cor* 5:17). It is the day which recalls in grateful adoration the world's first day and looks forward in active hope to "the last day", when Christ will come in glory (cf. *Acts* 1:11; *1 Th* 4:13-17) and all things will be made new (cf. *Rev* 21:5). . . . Rightly, then, the Psalmist's cry is applied to Sunday: . . .

(1) Cf. *Rev* 1:10: "Kyriake heméra"; cf. also the *Didaché* 14, 1, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Magnesians* 9, 1-2; *SC* 10, 88-89.

and in a very few minutes the entire block of buildings was falling and the screeching and mournful groans came distinctly to my ears. I cried out, in my raised position, to learn what was happening: Where am I? And where are our family circle? Then I awoke. But I could not tell where I was for I was in another place than home. I said, Oh Lord, where am I and what shall I do? It was a voice that spoke, 'Be not afraid. Nothing shall harm you.' I was instructed that destruction hath gone forth upon cities. The word of the Lord will be fulfilled."²¹

Brethren and sisters, what is now happening in our day? Look at the last pope's "Dies Domini" for the agenda to be dealt with. Study to find out what the "moral agenda" is for our time today in the Christian world. It is time to move out of the cities, **before it is too late.**

"Our restaurants must be in the cities; for otherwise the workers in these restaurants could not reach the people and teach them the principles of right living. And for the present we shall have to occupy meetinghouses in the cities. **But ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues. This is the light that is given me.**"²² *R*

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- ² *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 42.
- ³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 26.
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 712.
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, January 1, 1889.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 464, 465.
- ⁷ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 359.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 195.
- ⁹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 117, 118.
- ¹⁰ *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 97, 98.
- ¹¹ *The Signs of the Times*, May 6, 1897.
- ¹² *The Advocate*, December 1, 1900.
- ¹³ *The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906.
- ¹⁴ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 360.
- ¹⁵ *The Review and Herald*, September 27, 1906.
- ¹⁶ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 166.
- ¹⁷ *The Adventist Home*, p. 139.
- ¹⁸ *Christian Service*, p. 180.
- ¹⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 244.
- ²⁰ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 253.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 361.
- ²² *The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1903.

"It is not the purpose of God that His people should colonize or settle together in large communities. The disciples of Christ are His representatives upon the earth, and God designs that they shall be scattered all over the country, in the towns, cities, and villages, as lights amidst the darkness of the world. They are to be missionaries for God, by their faith and works testifying to the near approach of the coming Saviour."¹⁹

This statement is from 1903. Please note the time it was given, as well as

the fact that it would have still been in accordance with the counsel to leave the larger cities and still work the smaller ones. Now we are over one century later. We are closer to the end of the prophecy than to its beginning. Now, she repeats, "Take your families away from the cities, is my message."²⁰

We must remember that the Sunday law is progressive, working behind the scenes. Now it is time to work the cities, from the outposts.

The warnings include that the cities shall be consumed with fire.

"In the night I was, I thought, in a room but not in my own house. I was in a city, where I knew not, and I heard expression after expression. I rose up quickly in bed and saw from my window large balls of fire. Jetting out were sparks, in the form of arrows, and buildings were being consumed,



Are You Prepared to Give the Loud Cry?

*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by Kathie Bauer*

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:1, 2).

"The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. For it is the work of everyone to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men. Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of Him.

"If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner."¹

"Brightness, glory, and power are to be connected with the third angel's message, and conviction will follow wherever it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit."²

"The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel's message, 'another angel' is to 'come down from heaven, having great power,' and the earth is to be 'lighted with his glory.' The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with his unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea."³

"While the Protestant world is becoming very tender and affectionate toward the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3), shall [not] God's people take their place as bold and valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ to meet the issue which must come, their lives hid with Christ in God? Mystic Babylon has not been sparing in the blood of the saints and shall we [not] be wide awake to catch the beams of light which have been shining from the light of the angel who is to brighten the earth with his glory?"⁴

Who will these men, women, and children be that are to reflect God's glory?

"Those who have held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be wide-awake during the time that the third angel's message is proclaimed with great power. During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her

exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere."⁵

This outpouring is what we are all waiting for and what we should be praying for and preparing for—yet there are some who will not be prepared to receive it.

"There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of their heart by confession and repentance."⁶

Who among those chosen to officiate in sacred things will be the ones to do this great work?

"When men who handle sacred things will humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, the Lord will lift them up. He will make them men of discernment—men rich in the grace of His Spirit. Their strong, selfish traits of character, their stubbornness, will be seen in the light shining from the Light of the world. 'I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent' (Revelation 2:5). If you seek

the Lord with all your heart, He will be found of you."⁷

From these words we can see that it is only those who are humble and teachable that will receive the power to give the loud cry.

"God meant that the watchmen should arise and with united voices send forth a decided message, giving the trumpet a certain sound, that the people might all spring to their post of duty and act their part in the great work. Then the strong, clear light of that other angel who comes down from heaven having great power, would have filled the earth with his glory. We are years behind."⁸

Who else will be crying out?

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28, 29).

These verses advocate that it is the common people who will be filled with the Spirit of God. We are also told that the children will accomplish a great work during this outpouring:

"In the closing scenes of this earth's history many . . . children and youth will astonish people by their witness

to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power. They have been taught the fear of the Lord, and their hearts have been softened by a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. In the near future many children will be endowed with the Spirit of God and will do a work in proclaiming the truth to the world that at that time cannot well be done by the older members of the church."⁹

The loud cry of the third angel, which is the final work of that other angel of Revelation 18, is also understood to be the outpouring of the latter rain. When shown in vision the way by which the final message swells into a loud cry, the servant of the Lord wrote what an angel had told her: "It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel."¹⁰

What message is contained in the loud cry?

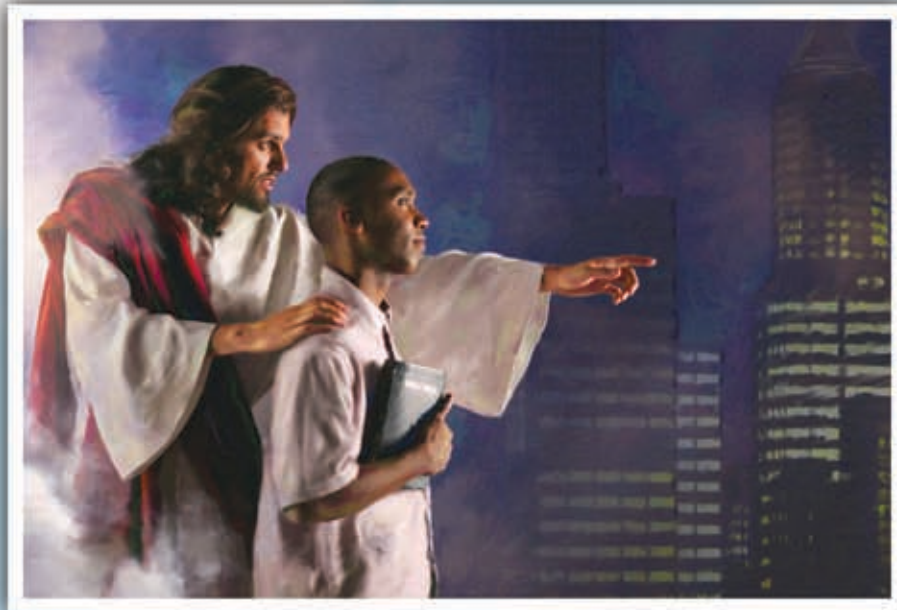
"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is **the third angel's message in verity**.' The prophet declares, 'And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory' (Revelation 18:1)."¹¹ What else is contained in the fullness of the third angel's message?

"When the third angel's message is received in its fullness, health reform will be given its place in the councils of the conference, in the work of the church, in the home, at the table, and in all the household arrangements. Then the right arm will serve and protect the body."¹²

What is required in order to receive the outpouring of the Spirit during this time?

"Many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still' (Revelation 22:11). I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all



remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence."¹³

"God has light for His people, and all who will accept it will see the sinfulness of remaining in a lukewarm condition; they will heed the counsel of the True Witness when He says, 'Be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

I would like to emphasize the word "any"; "if any man hear my voice"; the invitation belongs to "whosoever will." "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:12).

You do not have to be a special, chosen one to receive the latter rain and give the loud cry, yet there is a special condition.

"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain" (Zechariah 10:1). "He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain" (Joel 2:23).

"But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend, our prayers should ascend that at this very time, God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised."¹⁵

Does it really matter if we understand the third angel's message or not? Are we to give this message to the world?

"The Lord has been pleased to give His people the third angel's message as

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is what we are all waiting for and preparing for.

a testing message to bear to the world. John beholds a people distinct and separate from the world, who refuse to worship the beast or his image, who bear God's sign, keeping holy His Sabbath—the seventh-day to be kept holy as a memorial of the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Of them the apostle writes, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus' (Revelation 14:12)."¹⁶

God is testing His people

Everything connected with the third angel's message is a test. Those who neglect the light on dress reform, for example, and follow the indecent ways of the world, will fail in the test.

God condemns any inappropriate, outward appearance today as He condemned the immodest worldly fashions of over 100 years ago.

"God designed the reform dress as a barrier to prevent the hearts of our sisters from becoming alienated from Him by following the fashions of the world. . . . God has been testing His people."¹⁷

What else is necessary?

"The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain—'Am I my brother's keeper' (Genesis 4:9)?"¹⁸

We are in great need to pull together in our church and pray for

this outpouring; pray about it, talk about it, sing about it, live it. If we humble our heart, seriously confess and repent of our ways that are not Christlike, we will be filled. If we truly believed this message we would be preparing our children to give the loud cry; and best of all, Christ's coming would take place much sooner. Our life would be revealing the faith that we have in all of the reforms that God demands. Dress reform, health reform, education reform, the laws of God, Christ's righteousness, a contrite heart, brotherly love, and other such subjects would be our serious study and definite goal if we had in view the outpouring of the latter rain to give the loud cry (of Revelation 18).

"You must remember that this angel represents the people that have this message to give to the world. Are you among that people? Do you really believe that this work in which we are engaged is truly the third angel's message? If so, then you understand that we have a mighty work to do, and that we ought to be about it. We must sanctify ourselves by a strict obedience to the truth, placing ourselves in right relation to God and His work."¹⁹ *R*

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- ⁴ *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 426.
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, October 13, 1904.
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- ¹⁰ *Early Writings*, p. 271.
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- ¹⁶ *Evangelism*, p. 233.
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- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1885.

Where Is Your Flock?

Part 1

By Cherie Shelor

Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds" (Proverbs 27:23). This is a statement we need to consider more soberly today than in times past.

Have you ever noticed in our world today how children are going in one direction and parents in another? Even in the Christian community you see this separation of the family. We see children conversing with other children away from their parents and children playing unattended at camp meetings. Children and youth are sitting together in church or during fellowship meal. But they are not under the eyes of their parents. This is out of order in the plan of God.

Let us look into the design that the Lord had in mind for the human family. In the first chapter of Genesis we find a story of innocence, purity,

selflessness, companionship, and love. What a world to behold! God's creation masterpiece was Adam, made in His very own image, and Eve was the finishing touch of His creation. God looked upon all that He had created and said it was "very good." And indeed it was, for here we see the family circle complete. Man, woman, and God. This is the original design intended for the human family. But something happened. Eve **separated** from her husband. Eve then **listened to Satan**. The couple did not cleave to one another! Herein we need to look individually and as a body of believers and examine whether we are truly following God's principles for our family or whether we are following the enemy's counterfeit.

The scriptures further tell us that prior to the time of the exodus, "Moses said, We will go with our young and

with our old, **with our sons and with our daughters**, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. And [Pharaoh] said unto [Moses and Aaron], Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and **your little ones**: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence" (Exodus 10:9–11, emphasis supplied).

"Pharaoh had endeavored to destroy the Israelites by hard labor, but he now pretended to have a deep interest in their welfare and a tender care for their little ones. His real object was to keep the women and children as surety for the return of the men."¹

When Pharaoh finally decided to let Israel leave Egypt, we read the following: "And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and



get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. . . . And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, **beside children**" (Exodus 12:31, 32, 37, emphasis supplied).

The Israelites obeyed the directions that God had given. Swiftly and secretly they made their preparations for departure. Their families were gathered, the paschal lamb was slain and the flesh roasted with fire, the unleavened bread and bitter herbs were prepared. The father and priest of the household sprinkled the blood upon the doorpost and joined his family within the dwelling. In haste and silence the paschal lamb was eaten. In awe the people prayed and watched—the heart of the eldest born, from the strong man down to the little child, throbbing with indefinable dread. Fathers and mothers clasped in their arms their beloved firstborn as they thought of the fearful stroke that was to fall that night. But no dwelling of Israel was visited by the death-destroying angel. The sign of blood—the sign of a Saviour's protection—was on their doors, and the destroyer entered not.

Brethren and Sisters, your children were given to you to love, care for, and train up in the Lord. Are you gathering your children by your side and preparing them for the final scenes that are about to take place?

The Hebrews could answer yes to all these questions. The patriarchs taught their own children. These families were fulfilling their responsibilities according to God's original plan, for God, in the garden of Eden, had placed the family together, equipped with all that was needed—two parents working hand in hand with God. As long as this plan was followed, they lacked in no area.

We see in the life of John the Baptist the results of following God's original plan. John had parents who were faithful to God and their home above. They were not preoccupied with position, salary, or in using their time selfishly. As a result of this, John was equipped to stand in the presence of monarchs and worldly great men. He had the character of "steel" when it came to upholding God's word.

The life of Jesus is an example of how God put the family unit together. Jesus was taught by His parents at home just as the patriarchs were. He stayed in their care for some thirty years. Side by side He watched and learned from His father, mother, and siblings. He was sheltered from the negative surroundings and associations. It was there He learned a skill and the Scriptures which formed His character. You might say at this point, "My children need to be taught on their level; they can't understand what adults are learning". But Jesus addressed all ages in a manner in which all could understand. He never sent the children away so He could only address the adults, nor did He send the adults away so He could only address the children. Jesus never divided or segregated.

I have watched my children over the years, and I can say with firm conviction that their greatest desire is to be learning by our side. We read together, we plant the garden together, we walk together, we wash dishes together, we go to the store together, we even worship and study together in church, never sending our children away alone.

"The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God's plan for the

members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the father as priest of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children. But the results of sin, having changed the conditions of life, to a great degree prevent this association. Often the father hardly sees the faces of his children throughout the week. He is almost wholly deprived of opportunity for companionship or instruction. But God's love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another.

"Since the Sabbath is the memorial of creative power, it is the day above all others when we should acquaint ourselves with God through His works. In the minds of the children the very thought of the Sabbath should be bound up with the beauty of natural things. Happy is the family who can go to the place of worship on the Sabbath as Jesus and His disciples went to the synagogue—across the fields, along the shores of the lake, or through the groves. Happy the father and mother who can teach their children God's written word with illustrations from the open pages of the book of nature; who can gather under the green trees, in the fresh, pure air, to study the word and to sing the praise of the Father above.

"By such associations parents may bind their children to their hearts, and thus to God, by ties that can never be broken.

"As a means of intellectual training, the opportunities of the Sabbath are invaluable. Let the Sabbath school lesson be learned, not by a hasty glance at the lesson scripture on Sabbath morning, but by careful study for the next week on Sabbath afternoon, with daily review or illustration during the week. Thus the lesson will become fixed in the memory, a treasure never to be wholly lost.

"In listening to the sermon, let parents and children note the text and the scriptures quoted, and as much as possible of the line of thought, to repeat to one another at home. This will go far toward relieving the weariness with

which children so often listen to a sermon, and it will cultivate in all a habit of attention and of connected thought.

"Meditation on the themes thus suggested will open to the student treasures of which he has never dreamed. He will prove in his own life the reality of the experience described in the scripture:

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart' (Jeremiah 15:16).

"I will meditate in Thy statutes.' 'More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold. . . . Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward' (Psalms 119:48; 19:10, 11)."²

Church schools and Sabbath schools were put into place as an aid to help the parents, not to replace the parents. But I am afraid that it has become the latter. Children should be counseled

to remain with their parents.

"The moral taste of the worshipers in God's holy sanctuary must be

elevated, refined, sanctified. This matter has been sadly neglected. Its importance has been overlooked, and as the result disorder and irreverence have become prevalent, and God has been dishonored. When the leaders in the church, ministers and people, fathers and mothers, have not had elevated views of this matter, what could be expected of the inexperienced children? **They are too often found in groups, away from the parents, who should have charge of them.** Notwithstanding they are in the

presence of God, and His eye is looking upon them; they are light and trifling; they whisper and laugh, are careless, irreverent, and inattentive."³

"The evil influence around our children is almost overpowering; it is corrupting their minds and leading them down to perdition. The minds of youth are naturally given to folly; and at an early age, **before their characters are formed and their judgment matured**, they frequently manifest a preference for associates who will have an injurious influence over them.

"Could my voice reach the parents all through the land, I would warn them not to yield to the desires of their children in choosing their companions or associates. Little do parents consider that injurious impressions are far more readily received by the young than are divine impressions; therefore their associations should be the most favorable for the growth of grace and for the truth revealed in the word of God to be established in the heart.

"Let the youth be placed in the most favorable circumstances possible; for the company they keep, the principles they adopt, the habits they form, will settle the question of their usefulness here and of their future, eternal interests with a certainty that is infallible.

"Parents, your sons and daughters are not properly guarded. They should never be permitted to go and come when they please, without your knowledge and consent. The unbounded freedom granted to children at this age has proved the ruin of thousands."⁴

Let us again look very closely at the above paragraph, where it says "**before their characters are formed and their judgment matured.**"

At what age are we to start weaning our flock? Is it at age 8 or 12 or 18? An article in the *Family Circle* magazine, entitled "The Young and the Restless," reports that scientists at the National Institute of Mental Health used Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans in order to track changes in the teen brain over a period of 10 years. They discovered that during the teenage years, the human brain is actually going through an intense period of rewiring and isn't fully mature until

about age 20. Most startling is the fact that the **last** part of the brain to come completely online is actually the prefrontal cortex—the center of reasoning and judgment! This explains why teens can understand information but still tend to act impulsively out of emotion, without thinking ahead. Therefore, if we truly love our young people, how can we prematurely turn them loose at a very vulnerable time in their life when they are not yet equipped psychologically or even physically to exercise consistently sound judgment? No wonder so many spiritual, mental, and moral disasters occur in the life of persons in this age group! If only we as parents kept closer to them at this crucial time in their life instead of stepping back too soon, how many sorrows and woes could be prevented!

Not before the age of 20 do young people come to the age of full accountability. From birth through age 20 is a waiting time when one, first as a child and then as a young person, is learning about God's ways and preparing for adulthood when he or she can make more mature decisions. Here are some typical examples in Bible history:

- A 20-year-old was called a man. Leviticus 27:2, 3.
- A 20-year-old was able to go to war. Numbers 1:3.
- A 20-year-old was held accountable. Numbers 14:29.
- A 20-year-old was able to work in the house of the Lord. Ezra 3:8.

The Spirit of Prophecy also uses this measurement as a minimum age for deciding upon marriage. "A youth not out of his teens is a poor judge of the fitness of a person as young as himself to be his companion for life."⁵

Thus we see a significant thread running consistently in the Lord's timetable for maturity. Until that 20-year timeframe has been completed, the fruit is not yet ripe. ❧

References

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 271.

² *Education*, pp. 250–252.

³ *Child Guidance*, p. 542 [Emphasis supplied].

⁴ *The Adventist Home*, p. 466 [Emphasis supplied].

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.



Happy to Hear!

*"He that sat upon the throne said,
Behold, I make all things new"*

(Revelation 21:5).

By Inneka Lausevic

I have the rather dubious distinction of having inherited from my ancestors a genetic disorder called otosclerosis. My mother has it, my grandfather has it, and his mother and grandmother had it too—and perhaps it goes back even further than that. Instead of re-forming properly, the bones in the middle ear make a sort of spongy tissue which eventually hardens as years pass. This stiffens the bones—particularly the stapes bone—and reduces their ability to conduct sound into the inner ear. The result is a loss of hearing that gradually gets worse; in my case, the hearing loss had become very severe (just ask my family). Fortunately, an operation has been developed which, in most cases, restores hearing completely. In the procedure, the stapes bone is removed

and a prosthesis is put in its place. The operation has a very high success rate (over 97%), with very few risks, and, as the surgeon said, I

didn't have much to lose. My hearing was about as bad as it gets with otosclerosis.

My operation was scheduled for Wednesday, August 27, 2008. The week before this date was one of the most nerve-racking I've spent. Not only did I have four young children to prepare to be without their mother for a couple of days (for the first time in their young lives), but I had to face the fact that surgery always has risks. The anaesthetist assured me that the risk of dying from anaesthetic complications


is far lower than the risk of dying in an accident while driving from my home to his office, but the thought was still there in my mind. What bothered me most was that I knew that if I should die on the operating table, I would not be ready for heaven, and no matter how much time I spent "preparing" for the possibility, I still wouldn't be ready. In the end I just gave my life to God, realizing that I could offer Him nothing, and I simply relied on Him for forgiveness and strength. I spent a lot of time in prayer, asking for courage and preparedness for whatever might happen.

By the time the day of the operation had arrived, I was much calmer, and I felt God by my side. My family

When they came home from church, and I heard the voices of my family again, I nearly wept.

and friends were all praying for me, and it was wonderful to know that I was covered by a blanket of prayer. I knew I could trust in God to work everything out in the way that He knew best, and that He would guide the hands of the skilled surgeon as he worked on my ear.

And oh, the joy as I woke from the operation and could hear the nurses gossiping in the recovery room! Sounds were unbelievably loud in the repaired ear, and there would be even more improvement in the days to come. Unfortunately, I had quite a bad reaction to the operation; the fluids in my ear took a while to settle down, and I suffered from severe dizziness and vomiting whenever I tried to get up. The medical staff at the hospital were wonderful, and I couldn't have received better care. Nevertheless, it was two days before I could get up without vomiting. I would just lie as still as I possibly could to avoid any dizzying movement, and I prayed to God to please get me through this, as He has got me through so many things in the past.



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By Friday, I was able to pull my Bible out of my bag for the first time. The reading for the day was from 2 Corinthians chapter one, and two of the verses go like this: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (verses 3, 4).

I was allowed home on Sabbath morning. My mother came to take me home while my husband took our children to church. When they came home from church, and I heard the voices of my family again, I nearly wept. Otosclerosis narrows the range of audible frequencies, and now for the first time I could hear the full range of my children's voices. As the day went on, I realized that I could also hear the rain on the roof, the breathing of my sleeping boy beside me, and the dog barking at night (okay, maybe that last one isn't so much of a good thing, but it was still a novelty).

That was just the beginning. Every day I hear new things, and each discovery is as exciting as the last. I can hear around doors, I can hear through windows, and I can hear whispers. Before, I could never understand how a blind person can avoid obstacles while walking through a room, simply by listening to echoes, but now I can hear the echoes—and that is only with one ear repaired. I almost can't wait to get the other one fixed.

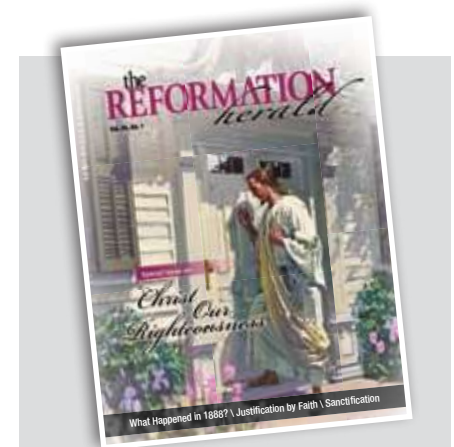
One day, if we are faithful, we will go to heaven, and I think I have experienced a foretaste of the joy we will feel to be home at last. Hearing things that I haven't heard for years is such a blessed and new experience, but what about the delight we will feel in a world where there will be no pain, no sorrow, no tears, and no death? Everything will be new, and, most blessed of all, Jesus will be there, the One who gave up so much for us!

My experience made me realize just how ready I have to be. Ready for Jesus to come, ready for heaven if it so happens that my life on this earth is

shorter than I expect. I only had a week to prepare for my operation, and I don't know how much longer I have to prepare for heaven. But I'm giving my life to God anew every day and trusting in Him to finish the good work He has started in me. These words from the grand old hymn "Rock of Ages" have always been precious to me and are even more dear to me now:

*"Nothing in my hand I bring,
 Simply to thy cross I cling;
 Naked, come to Thee for dress;
 Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
 Foul, I to the fountain fly;
 Wash me, Saviour, or I die."*

—Augustus M. Toplady



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Confession, Reconciliation, & Healing

If we confess our sins, [Jesus Christ] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

There is healing power in confession. There is healing power in asking for forgiveness. There is healing power in granting forgiveness. There is healing power in receiving forgiveness. There is healing power in reconciliation.

A troubled conscience is often one of our greatest problems. Because of sin, a person is at enmity with himself or herself—a divided self. An injured self may develop feelings of self-commiseration, or feelings of hatred, retaliation, and even sadism (which is an abnormal delight in practicing

cruelty), or a complex of inferiority with a tendency toward masochism (an abnormal delight in being abused), or an illusory superiority complex. On the other hand, a guilty conscience may bring feelings of frustration, shame, and self-loathing. In both cases a person's health may be seriously affected.

Need relief?

Life is full of failures, disappointments, and sorrows. Sometimes everything seems to be against us. Nothing works right. Trouble after trouble drives you to despair. Sleepless nights bring dark thoughts running around in circles. You feel your stomach churning. You can hear your heart beating in acceleration. Your blood pressure is elevated. Well . . . you must find out the cause before you can expect help.

King David had been a great sufferer with a guilty conscience, until the prophet Nathan came to him with the Lord's rebuke, "Thou art the man" (2

Samuel 12:7). Only then did David make a confession. He prayed:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51:1–13).

Only after his reconciliation with God did David find peace. He wrote:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:1–5).

Arthritis alleviated

A chronic guilt complex is the main cause of anxiety (a feeling of fear and uncertainty), which makes you look restless, tired, and pale. A specialist in arthritis and rheumatism says:

"Fifty-one percent of the cases of arthritis, rheumatism, and colitis, in patients that I have examined in the hospital, originated from a feeling of remorse that was tormenting their conscience."

One day a middle-aged man, suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, was brought in a wheelchair to attend a conference held by a minister of the Gospel. After the meeting he spoke to the lecturer.

"The title of your conference aroused my interest," he said; "so I came to listen to you before firing a bullet through my head. I thought you might be able to help me find a solution to my miserable life. These last fourteen years I have been suffering from an acute form of rheumatoid arthritis. Sometimes I'm bedridden for three solid months. I have tried all kinds of remedies, and have found none that could heal me or at least relieve my pains."

Arrangements were made for the pastor to visit the sufferer, who then told his sad story. He had been in partnership with his dad in a prosperous business, and the devil tempted him to cheat the old man out of his share in the company. The betrayed father was so disappointed in his son that he became sick and died a few months later. The son knew that he had done wrong, and his guilty conscience began to accuse him more and more. And, before long, he went bankrupt, because he did not know how to manage the business that he had taken over. To make it worse, his mother and his sisters never stopped pointing at him the finger of incrimination, which meant, "Thou art the man." He felt so disgraced that he was actually tempted to put an end to his life. After having listened to his story, the pastor convinced him that the only remedy that would work in his case is found in 1 John 1:9 and James 5:16.

The man's mother and one of his sisters, who were living in the same city, were called. In their presence, he humbly confessed his sins to God and to them. As soon as he had obtained the assurance that he was forgiven, he said with a smile on his face:

"After twenty years, this is the first happy moment in my life."

Two or three days later, he was able to walk with the help of a walking stick. And after a few more days he was moving up and down like a young man.

Not only was the man healed after receiving forgiveness; also his mother and his sisters felt much better health-wise after they had granted forgiveness.

A healthier heart

I was impressed by an article which appeared in *The Sacramento Bee* of January 4, 2008, under the title, "Heart That Forgives Probably Healthier." The article reads:

"Researchers think they have it: Forgiveness—a virtue embraced by almost every religious tradition as a balm for the soul—may be medicine for the body, they suggest. In less than a decade, those preaching and studying forgiveness have amassed an impressive slate of findings on its possible health benefits.

"They have shown that 'forgiveness interventions'—often just a couple of short sessions in which the wounded are guided toward positive feelings for an offender—can improve cardiovascular function, diminish chronic pain, relieve depression and boost quality of life among the very ill.

"Collectively, researchers say, the findings suggest that failure to forgive may, over a lifetime, boost a person's risk for heart disease, mental illness and other ills—and, conversely, that forgiving others may improve health."

The article also tells us of the conclusions of two researchers who affirm that there is a link between forgiveness and health:

"Psychologist Loren Toussaint of Luther University in Decorah, Iowa, and colleagues were the first to establish a long-term link between people's health and their propensity to forgive. . . .

"Everett Worthington, a professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University and a leading researcher on the links between forgiveness and health, has put many a study subject through the paces of pardoning and measured the resulting physiological effect.

"Worthington is a believer, both in the goodness of forgiveness and its power to influence health and wellness.

The first part of that conviction springs from his Christian upbringing, he says. But he insists the latter has been forged by studies."

A Turk turns around

In 17th century Europe, millions of Christians were under Mohammedan administration. One Christian, who had been cruelly treated as a slave at the hands of a Turkish official, regained his freedom when a local war pushed the Turks back. The Christian could now avenge himself upon the Turk, if he so desired. So the Turk, fearing vengeance, tried to commit suicide. But the Christian immediately sent him a message: "Peace be with you. You have nothing to fear."

The Turk, on his deathbed, whispered to those standing around him:

"I will not die a Moslem; I will die a Christian. For there is no religion but that of Christ, which teaches forgiveness."

Both the Christian and the Turk were blessed with peace—the one for granting forgiveness; the other for receiving forgiveness.

Let us be assured that there is healing power in these "prescriptions" found in the Word of God:

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. . . . Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:23, 24, 43, 44).

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:18–21). *✠*



United States

Southeast US Field delegation session, March 2009 (top).



Argentina

Youth outing during youth convention, February 2009 (left).

Youth convention in Buenos Aires, March 2009 (bottom).





Perú

Workers from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Perú, and Uruguay, March 2008 (top).

Entire class for prophecy seminar (bottom).

Ethiopia

A new mission was organized, March 2009 (right).





SOFTENED FOR *Success*

*"God maketh
my heart soft"*

(Job 23:16).

Why do most of us love babies? One nice thing that people of all ages enjoy about babies is that they are so soft! Their fresh, new skin feels almost like a rose petal. There is something special about that. Even when we were babies ourselves, we loved soft toys! From the time we were born, we quickly learned that some things are hard and some are soft—and we are normally drawn to the soft and pleasant things in life.

God uses the ideas of "hardness" and "softness" to describe people. He speaks to our heart by a still, small voice inside our mind. It's called the "conscience," and it comes to remind us of good things we have learned in the Bible or from our parents and teachers. We should really pay attention when God's voice speaks to our conscience. We are told: "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart" (Psalm 95:7, 8).

What does it mean to harden our heart? In the Exodus story, the king of Egypt hardened his heart by being stubborn and refusing to listen and obey God. What was the result? Eternal loss. The Lord does not want us to suffer and be lost that way. He lovingly calls us to be tender and obedient instead.

Sometimes this is difficult to do, especially at times when other children may bother us, or adults may have to tell us to do things that we may not always feel like doing. But whenever we resist what we know deep-

down to be our duty, our heart gets hard and rough. Our thoughts become angry. Such an attitude is not God's plan for us.

Jesus understands that things will not always go smoothly for us. So He says, "Watch . . . and pray" (Mark 14:38). First, watch that you do not rebel, that you do not have a stubborn, unkind attitude, and that you do not think in an ugly way or fail to do your duty.

Second, pray. Jesus knows that life is often difficult, and that there is an enemy always trying to get us in trouble. Prayer is needed in order to resist bad temptations.

"Go to your God who is strong, and who loves to hear children pray, and, although you may feel very weak, and find yourself at times overcome by the enemy, because you have neglected the first command of our Saviour, to watch, yet do not give up the struggle. Make stronger efforts yourself than before. . . . God will help you. Angels will watch over you. . . ."

"Have a set time, a special season for prayer at least three times a day."¹

Yes, ask God to help you. He can make you happier and He can soften all the rough, hard places in life. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31, 32). *OR*

¹ *The Youth's Instructor*, October 1, 1855.



By B. Monteiro

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