

Growing Up / Brotherly Kindness & Charity / The Church Victorious



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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."

— Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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# The Double Ladder of anctification

Christians are followers of Jesus Christ—the Sinless One who forgives sins and cleanses us from them.

What happens when you first come to Christ for this wonderful cleansing? You are drawn to Christ by His love. His goodness leads you to repentance, you confess your sins, and He cleanses you from all unrighteousness.

Then you're baptized. Remember that wonderful day? You felt so clean as you came out of the water. Your fellow believers were so happy for you. You were a newborn babe in the Lord!

Then, life went on. . . . Trials, temptations, problems, frustrations—just like those things that everyone faces whether or not they're Christians. But perhaps, in the midst of all those clouds, your first love may have dwindled.

Did you forget the miracle that had taken place?

Did you lose your perspective on what really matters most in life?

Did you forget that you had been purged from your old sins? This is the condition of the one who fails to climb Peter's ladder. We need to remember that Christ, "according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be

barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:3–9, emphasis added).

If we are failing to succeed in the ascent of this ladder, we have lost our vision and forgotten the gospel! The success of Peter's ladder depends on Jacob's ladder.

"When the converting power of God takes hold of the soul, it will work a radical change. Those who have formerly abused their families and friends will begin to labor earnestly for their salvation. Jesus came to save the lost, to take them out of their fallen condition, to make them more than conquerors, and to give them a seat upon His throne. Oh, that the soul temple might be



cleansed of every defilement! Oh, that we might not offer to God a diseased, defiled offering! An infinite price has been paid to bring us into connection with Christ. Self-indulgence must cease. We must come into right relations with God, and we must be cleansed from all iniquity and walk worthy of the vocation whereunto we are called.

"When Jacob journeyed to the house of Laban, he lay down to rest in the wilderness, with a stone for a pillow. He was a discouraged, disappointed man. It seemed to him that he was forsaken of friends and forgotten of God. His own brother was seeking him, that he might take his life. While he slept, he had a vision. There appeared before him a ladder, whose base rested on the earth, and whose top reached into the highest heavens. God was above the ladder, and His glory shone through the open heaven, lighting up every round of the ladder; and angels were ascending and descending upon it. When Jacob awoke, he said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' See Genesis 28:10-17.

"The plan of salvation was opened to Jacob's mind in this dream. Christ was the ladder that he saw. Christ is the link that binds earth to heaven, and connects finite man with the infinite God. This ladder reaches from the lowest degradation of earth and humanity to the highest heavens. We are to ascend the ladder that Jacob saw but not by our own strength alone. It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance and reformation. We are not left to struggle on alone."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Pamphlet 105, *There Is Help in God*, pp. 5, 6. [Emphasis supplied.]

# To Have the Mind of Christ

By A. Balbach

am a perfect man,"
I heard someone
say aloud one day, as I
walked into a barber shop.
For a moment, I did not know what to
think of the speaker. Maybe he was just
joking. Maybe not; I wasn't sure. As he
walked away, I did not know in what
sense I should feel sorry for him.

Can we identify those who actually have the mind of Christ as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 2:16?

"Those who will walk closely in the footsteps of their self-sacrificing, self-denying Redeemer will have the mind of Christ reflected in their minds. Purity and the love of Christ will shine forth in their daily lives and characters, while meekness and truth will guide their way. . . . Many misunderstand the object for which they were created. It was to bless humanity and glorify God, rather than to enjoy and glorify self. God is constantly pruning His people,

cutting off profuse, spreading branches, that they may bear fruit to His glory and not produce leaves only. God prunes us with sorrow, with disappointment and affliction, that the outgrowth of strong, perverse traits of character may be weakened and that the better traits may have a chance to develop."1

"Does God actually make me a conqueror? When I'm a failure at school, or at work, or in business, what does that mean?" Experience teaches that a person who walks in the counsel of the Lord and is willing to be taught by Him shall be a winner. "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3). When we are punished for our mistakes, let us thank God for teaching us a new lesson and giving us an opportunity to try again with new courage, increased effort, and with a mind enlightened with heavenly wisdom.

It took me a long time to understand that, unless I am guided by the

mind of Christ to be a winner, I would be led by the mind of Satan to be a loser at the end. Don't deceive yourself into thinking, as I once thought, "I will follow my own mind." There is no such thing. Each of us either have a positive mind for the truth or a negative mind for error, falling under the control of Satan, even if we do not recognize it at first.

As people become slaves of Satan, they may, little by little, experience a great change. Their looks, mind, attitude, and voice may change until everything about them is changed. Here is one example:

The story is told of a painter who found a child playing in the street. The painter asked the child to pose for a painting. For years the child's picture hung in the studio with bright eyes, golden hair, and the face of innocence looking down on anyone who visited. Over the years the painter kept looking

for someone to sit in his studio and pose for a contrasting picture. He was looking for a face so terrible that the child's face would become even more beautiful. At last he found the person sitting in prison. Carefully he painted the face and hung it next to the child. Then it was that the painter learned that this face of shame and the face of innocence belonged to the same person. The two paintings demonstrated what years of hate and sin can do to a face.

# Do you wish to have the mind of Christ?

In his second epistle, the apostle Peter addresses the believing Gentiles who had obtained the same "precious faith with us," the believing Jews. After praying that grace and peace be multiplied to them through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, Peter emphasizes the great promises that were extended to them—that by these promises they might become partakers of the divine nature. And then, being assisted by divine power, they were admonished to give all diligence to walk in the Spirit, so that their faith would not wither but would be fruitful and grow to a state of maturity, producing all the qualities that belong to a Christian character. Compare 2 Peter 1:5-7 with Galatians 5:22, 23.

Some readers may ask the question: Do I also have to meet the same requirement? Do I have to put forth all diligence, by the grace of God, to attain perfection of Christian character if I want to be counted among the redeemed? What will happen if I forget the divine requirement explained by the apostle Peter, because I understood that I was saved the moment I accepted Christ? Listen to the answer given by the apostle:

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting

kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8–11).

The seven graces listed by Peter—each grace serving as a stepping-stone for another grace—tend to a specific goal: the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we are to employ "all diligence," by the help of God, to become mature in our Christian experience—"unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

If you have not yet been able to show in your Christian life all the fruits of the Spirit mentioned by Peter and Paul (2 Peter 1:5-7; Galatians 5:22, 23), do not be discouraged but do not deceive yourself by thinking: "I still have time, plenty of time." Decide right away to follow the example that Paul left for you, for me, and for all of us. He wrote:

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Faith and virtue are the first two rungs in the spiritual ladder presented by Peter to us.

#### **Faith**

What is faith?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews shows how faith works and how many wonders have been accomplished by faith.

In the writings of Sister White, genuine faith is defined as:

- 1. The arm for laying hold on divine power.<sup>2</sup>
- 2. The hand that clasps Christ's hand "in every emergency."<sup>3</sup>
- 3. The hand that appropriates Christ's merits and remedies for sin.<sup>4</sup>
- 4. The hand that reaches upward to grasp God's never failing promises<sup>5</sup>; "the hand that takes hold of infinite help"<sup>6</sup>; the hand "that touches infinity."<sup>7</sup>
- 5. A living power that "overrides all obstacles."8
- 6. The means of laying hold of Christ's merits.<sup>9</sup>

Genuine faith is also described as that which:

1. "Always works by love." 10

- 2. Works "as leaven that transforms the character." 11
- 3. Creates "desire to save souls at home." 12
- 4. "Destroys selfishness and pretense." <sup>13</sup>
- 5. Makes people "sober-minded."14
- 6. Leads to conformity to God's Law. 15
- 7. Manifests good works.<sup>16</sup>
- 8. "Purifies the soul."17
- 9. Relies wholly on Christ.<sup>18</sup>
- 10. Will not "fail under test and trial." 19

George F. Watts (1817–1904) was an English painter who painted ideas rather than objects—ideas that were not at first sight apparent to the beholder. In his picture of faith, for example, he put a powerful, resolute, and conquering figure, determined to fight the evils of the world. He represented faith as being a woman holding a sword in her lap while letting water wash her bloodstained feet. This reminds us of Paul's description of a Christian soldier, carrying "the shield of faith" "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16). In his first epistle, John says that "he who is born of God overcometh the world" through faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (5:4). Faith; "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17); and perseverance in prayer are powerful Christian weapons.

# The difference between faith and presumption

"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"But faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God's promises and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

"Often when Satan has failed of exciting distrust, he succeeds in leading us to presumption. If he can cause us to place ourselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation, he knows that the victory is his. God will preserve all who walk in the path of obedience; but to depart from it is to venture on Satan's ground. There we are sure to fall. The Saviour has bidden us, 'Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation' (Mark 14:38). Meditation and prayer would keep us from rushing unbidden into the way of danger, and thus we should be saved from many a defeat."<sup>20</sup>

#### **Virtue**

What is virtue?

Clarke's Commentary, vol. 6, p. 880, gives the following definition: "Virtue — Courage or fortitude, to enable you to profess the faith before men, in these times of persecution."

How do faith and virtue walk hand-in-hand? "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17, NKJV). And the word of God is a powerful tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

"Man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. . . . The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. All who would be saved . . . must submit to the working of this power. . . .

"Received into the heart, [the truth of the word of God] will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.

"The world regards as a mystery the man who is imbued with this principle. The selfish, money-loving man lives only to secure for himself the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But with the follower of Christ these things will not be all-absorbing. For Christ's sake he will labor and deny self, that he may aid

in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Such a man the world cannot understand; for he is keeping in view eternal realities."<sup>21</sup>

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

And if the world can see that "we have the mind of Christ" (verse 16), they may understand why the things that are "wisdom" to them are "foolishness" to us.

# "Giving all diligence"

I repeat: We cannot change ourselves. Only God, through the Holy Spirit, can change our heart with our consent and cooperation. We must "give all diligence." The Holy Spirit is still active, leading men and women to find repentance and conversion as He did with a young man whose experience is still fresh in my mind.

After listening to a sermon on confession of sin, the young man turned to the pastor and asked for advice. I'm giving, in my own words, the gist of the conversation that followed.

"Pastor, I'm in trouble. I have sinned against another person, and I don't know what to do. I would like to make a confession and make amends, but I cannot pluck up courage to do that. I'm ashamed. I have built a boat for my boss and, in my trade, I took advantage of him. I have used common nails which are relatively cheap instead of copper nails which are expensive. I know that copper nails are used in boat building, because they do not rust in the water. In this case I was tempted to deceive my boss."

The pastor said to the young man that he must go to his boss, make a confession, and put it right.

"I cannot," said the young man.
"I cannot tell him that I have robbed him. I cannot offer to compensate him for the wrong that I have done to him."

"Why not?" asked the pastor.

"He is an unbeliever and a scoffer. I have often tried to talk to him about God and about salvation, but I only get derisive answers. If I tell him what I have done to him, he will say that I am just

a hypocrite. I am afraid to present an unfavorable image of Christianity and of Christians in general if I talk to him. But my conscience is bothering me. I have no peace of mind. I want to settle this problem, and I don't know how to."

The pastor insisted that he must talk to his boss and make a confession. That was the beginning of a fierce mental struggle. Positive decision and cowardly hesitation kept circling in his mind in a seemingly endless war. At the same time the Holy Spirit kept rebuking his conscience and building up his courage to make a confession.

After a few days the young man met the pastor.

"Pastor," he said with an expression of joy on his face, "the matter is settled. My conscience is clear, now."

"Tell me more about it," said the pastor.

"Well, I confessed to my boss. When I did that, there was a queer look in his eyes. Then he said to me: George, I must tell you the truth. I have always had an unfavorable opinion about you. I have always thought you were just a hypocrite, like the rest. But now, after I have heard your confession, I have changed my opinion about you and your religion. Now I begin to see there is something positive in Christianity. It must be good to follow such a religion."

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 354.
- <sup>2</sup> Gospel Workers, p. 259.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 262.
- <sup>4</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 175.
- <sup>5</sup> The Sanctified Life, p. 47.
- <sup>6</sup> Messages to Young People, p. 102.
- <sup>7</sup> Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 467.
- <sup>8</sup> The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 995.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, p. 1073.
- 10 Ibid., p. 1111; Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 219.
- <sup>11</sup> Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 53.
- 12 Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 427, 428.
- <sup>13</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 409.
- <sup>14</sup> Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 223.
- <sup>15</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1073.
- 16 Selected Messages, bk 1, p. 397.
- <sup>17</sup> Sons and Daughters of God, p. 71; Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 705.
- <sup>18</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 73.
- 19 Selected Messages, bk 2, p. 375.
- <sup>20</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 126.
- <sup>21</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 96–101.

# Growing Up

Adding to Knowledge Temperance . . .

By T. Stockler

ired but
happy, I called my
parents to tell them
that they were now
grandparents. After six
hours of watching my wife struggle and
work hard, I now held our first child.
Joy and satisfaction filled me. I never
anticipated how wonderful it is to have
a child of your own.

But I was also humbled and uncertain. I felt ignorant and insufficient, without experience. Like millions of parents before me, I counted his fingers and toes to make sure they were all there. But how would I know that this son was healthy and normal?

I came to cherish a book provided by my mother that described the growth of a child. Every few months I would take out that book and check my son's height and weight against the numbers given there. I would consider my son's social, intellectual, and physical development against what was described in that one book. Because that book provided a summary of healthy growth throughout childhood, I gained increased confidence that I could raise my son intelligently. If he deviated from the common growth patterns of other children, I could detect and address it. If he grew normally, I could rejoice in it.

My son never seemed to care about that book. He didn't need to read about a two-year-old's expected weight and then set it as a goal. It never mattered to him what was considered normal—he just grew. The only value in that old book was to provide a template of what is normal for those observing and nurturing my son. The book never helped or guided him

directly. This experience helped me understand some Bible statements that I puzzled over for many years.

The Bible provides us with some passages that summarize the natural growth patterns of a Christian's spiritual experience. Studying those passages and mechanically trying to match their description will not cause us to grow into spiritually mature people. Rather, these passages are meant to be used by those helping us judge the healthfulness of our Christian growth. They are also to be used by us in our self-assessment, after we are mature enough as Christians to be able to examine ourselves.

"[2 Peter 1:5–7 quoted.] All these successive steps are not to be kept before the mind's eye, and counted as you start; but fixing the eye upon Jesus, with an eye single to the glory of God, you will make advancement. You cannot reach the full measure of the stature of Christ in a day, and you would sink in despair could you behold all the difficulties that must be met and overcome. You have Satan to contend with, and he will seek by every possible device to attract your mind from Christ.

"But we must meet all obstacles placed in our way, and overcome them one at a time. If we overcome the first difficulty, we shall be stronger to meet the next, and at every effort will become better able to make advancement. By looking to Jesus, we may be overcomers. It is by fastening our eyes on the difficulties and shrinking from earnest battle for the right, that we become weak and faithless."

One of these passages that God provided to help us assess our moral and spiritual progress is given in the opening verses of Peter's second letter. Peter teaches that growth in Christian life comes from knowing and admiring God (1:3). He adds that we are assisted in that growth that comes from looking to Jesus by knowing and depending on the promises that Jesus provided (verse 4).

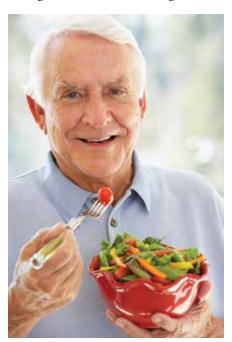
Then Peter overviews what that growth will look like in what has famously come to be called Peter's ladder. This summary is not a description of human development generally. Peter is not talking of our growth in knowledge or patience as carnal humans, for a baby has to learn patience before his or her head fills with knowledge. And many of us gain years of knowledge without any growth in faith or virtue. Peter's ladder does not follow the order of childhood development outlined in my mother's book. But it is exactly what occurs in spiritual development.

We are born spiritually when we first surrender our proud heart to God. It is a moment of faith. And immediately God forgives us and provides real virtue. This virtue is not that carnally created thing that seems like virtue. It is real obedience to God. God Himself is the one that starts us up this ladder of growth, for He is the only one that can add virtue to our faith. Soon after, we start discovering all sorts of spiritual truths.

For those who appreciate spiritual things, seeing a new Christian born is as beautiful as seeing the birth of my son. Hearing the testimonies of surrender to the love and to the demands of our beloved God is awe-inspiring. We are filled with joy at the fresh evidence of the miracle that only God can do—change the human mind.

Newly born Christians can be as excited as little children. Ideas fill them. It is as though light comes through the darkness of human confusion. They begin to experience the growth in knowledge that Peter predicted. The divine Spirit is guiding into truth (John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:7–15). Growing in knowledge is a sign of being a healthy Christian. And it is wonderful. It can be more exciting than kindergarten. We begin to grow in moral and spiritual knowledge. And that spiritual knowledge explains secular knowledge.

This growing knowledge is one of the signs that we are following Jesus,



just as continual growth in virtue and in faith are signs of spiritual health. If we are not growing in spiritual knowledge, then we are sick Christians. But as the Christian matures, our knowledge, virtue, and faith are tempered by temperance.

When temperance and moderation do not govern our growth in knowledge, we become unpleasant or worse. We become spiritual know-it-alls. Sometimes Christians become so excited with growing in knowledge that they lose sight of Jesus. They run away from Him and start fighting with their fellow Christians over who is more right (Matthew 24:48–51). Watching the cantankerous wars that sometimes break out among Christians

is frustrating, for new Christians can be the most bigoted people you will ever meet. They are certain that their new understanding of the inspired writings is correct. They can become infatuated with doctrines and how to present them. In the process of championing truth, they betray it, for their attitudes are sometimes exactly the opposite of the doctrines they brag about. With the fanatical zeal of a demon, these misguided Christians go about to advocate the truth of God. They seem almost unconscious of the damage to God's reputation they are causing all around them.

I know about this, painfully, because I was once one of God's self-appointed warriors. One of the important moments in my own growth as a Christian was an argument I had early in my experience. I was visiting with a friend who discredited one of God's prophets. I spent almost a whole afternoon standing up for God as zealously as I knew how. I argued passionately and with determination. I was certain that I was correct and my friend was incorrect. But when I went home and replayed the conversation, I had to admit that my friend had less of an unchristian attitude than I did. I puzzled and prayed about what had happened. How was I so angry when I believed I was so right? Why did I behave as though I had to do all the fighting for truth, and God wouldn't do anything to defend Himself? How could I claim to be right when my attitude suggested I was wrong? I asked myself many hard questions that night that would take years for me to answer.

I had to learn how to be temperate with ideas. Knowledge should nurture, not carelessly wound.

I had to learn that God was in charge of defending His own truth. I had no responsibility to force anyone to believe what is true.

I had to learn that it was the work of the Holy Spirit to change hearts. Without that invisible power I cannot change my own mind, never mind anyone else's.

I had to learn that my knowledge was for my own personal growth and not a weapon with which to attack others. I could share how that knowledge helped me. I was never justified in using it to trick or force anyone else.

Jesus asked me to permit my life to shine in this world of confusion. But it was not my knowledge that was the source of the world's light. It is my actions. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16, emphasis added). I am not the light of the world. God's success in me is the light of the world. I do not shine. He shines through me. God's choice to use the church for a medium to communicate with the world never gives me any justification for pushing my own opinions or beliefs on other people. I am God's servant. He is not my assistant.

Just because some of us have become fanatical at times in our use of knowledge does not mean that this growth in knowledge is bad. On the contrary, it is good. God Himself is the one who adds it; just as He adds temperance.

We need God's grace to live temperately just as we need His wisdom to use knowledge wisely. We live in an age that understands growing in secular knowledge. Mandatory education forces every child to grow in knowledge at a certain pace every year until he or she reaches adulthood. But we do not understand temperance. Temperance is something that the western world partially threw away in the 1960s and 1970s with a campaign focused on personal pleasure. Temperance has now been relegated to the military, to professional athletes, and to "other" people. The average person looks for ways to skip it as much as possible. Thousands long for the work week to finish so they can be intemperate.

Since society has less guidance in temperance, we need God's guidance even more in this subject. For many Christians the transition from growing in knowledge to growing in temperance added to knowledge is difficult. We can use the skills from school to grow in spiritual knowledge. But how do you add temperance to your life?

The simple answer is that we can't. Sinful humanity needs God's wisdom

and power to provide temperance. For temperance does not come from trying harder to be better. The solution is not more will power.

Here is exactly where many Christians lose their Christian experience. Growth in knowledge teaches them that they should be temperate, for example, in their eating habits. So they exercise will power and change their diet. They eat less sugar or less snacks or less of the harmful oils. But this change in behavior is not temperance. It is not from God. It is a carnal human struggling to obey God without God's help.

This is not adding temperance to knowledge, virtue, and faith. It is adding burdens so heavy they cannot be

This is not to say that these Christians should change their diet. They need to change their desires. When Ellen White decided to eat whole wheat bread, she hated it. She did not think she could eat it. But she was determined that her desires would change. She refused to eat anything until she was willing to eat whole wheat bread.<sup>2</sup>

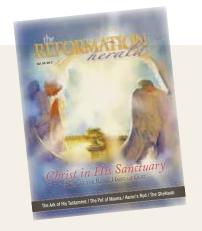
When we are willing to refuse to do what is wrong and pray for God to give us the desire to do what is right, He changes what we want. This is a prayer He will always answer, if we are only earnest and persistent.

Many are losing their salvation by abandoning God's grace and relying on their own efforts; but because it is the right thing to do, they move on oblivious that they are doing it the wrong way.

Temperance is self-government. It is trusting God to change your appetites and passions, until you always want to do what is right. "Every man that striveth for the mastery, [Paul] declared, 'is temperate in all things' (1 Corinthians 9:4). The runners [in the ancient Olympic races] put aside every indulgence that would tend to weaken the physical powers, and by severe and continuous discipline trained their muscles to strength and endurance, that when the day of the contest should arrive, they might put the heaviest tax upon their powers. How much more important that the Christian, whose eternal interests are at stake, bring appetite and passion

under subjection to reason and the will of God! Never must [the Christian] allow his attention to be diverted by amusements, luxuries, or ease. All his habits and passions must be brought under the strictest discipline. Reason, enlightened by the teachings of God's word and guided by His Spirit, must hold the reins of control."<sup>3</sup>

In our age of antagonism to temperance, this is harder to understand. Paul does not tell us to abandon our desires. His example of the athletes demonstrates that he intended us to strengthen and discipline our passions to the highest possible point of success. We are not to destroy our desires. We are to bring our strong feelings to God to have Him clean them of every taint of evil and return them to us for holy use. We are to govern those now sanctified impulses by our rational mind as it is guided directly by the Holy Spirit.



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When Americans used horses instead of horseless carriages for transportation, most of them knew a lot about horses. Some horses have a lot more spirit or passion than others. The spirited horses are harder to train. But once trained they accomplish a lot more.

So it is with us humans. Some of us have a lot more will power than others. We are all passionate about different things. But when all of our passions are surrendered to God and guided by the

depends upon strictly temperate habits, we would work to the point of strict temperance in eating and drinking. By our example and personal effort we may be the means of saving many souls from the degradation of intemperance, crime, and death."<sup>5</sup>

If we do not demonstrate growth in knowledge and temperance, then we need to consider whether we still trust God and are His children. Just because we once gave ourselves to God does not mean that we are always His chil-

When we are willing to refuse to do what is wrong and pray for God to give us the desire to do what is right, He changes what we want. This is a prayer He will always answer, if we are only earnest and persistent.

directions of His word and the influence of His Spirit, those passions help us accomplish a lot more as individuals, as a church, and as a society.

"In the family circle and in the church we should place Christian temperance on an elevated platform. It should be a living, working element, reforming habits, dispositions, and characters. Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the evil in our world. . . .

"Those who in ancient times ran for a prize realized the importance of temperate habits, and how much more should we, who are running a race for a heavenly crown. We should put forth every effort to overcome evil.

"At all times and on all occasions it requires moral courage to adhere to the principles of strict temperance.

"Remember that you are daily weaving for yourself a web of habits. . . . The better you observe the laws of health, the more clearly can you discern temptations, and resist them, and the more clearly can you discern the value of eternal things."

"If we could realize that the habits we form in this life will affect our eternal interests, that our eternal destiny dren. Peter went from being a mirror of God's truth to a spokesperson of Satan inside of twenty minutes (Matthew 16:13–28). God does not reject us, but we can reject Him.

Whenever we discover that we are not growing according to the template laid out by Peter, the solution is the same—growth in Christ that comes from looking to Him. All that pertains to life and godliness still comes from the knowledge of God Himself. This is not merely a theoretical knowledge. The devil himself knows all about God, and it does him no good. But knowing God through experience and letting Him influence and guide us is the way of life eternal.

"Point the youth to Peter's ladder of eight rounds, and place their feet, not on the highest round, but on the lowest, and with earnest solicitation urge them to climb to the very top.

"Christ, who connects earth with heaven, is the ladder. The base is planted firmly on the earth in His humanity; the topmost round reaches to the throne of God in His divinity. . . . We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. . . .

"It is no easy matter to gain the priceless treasure of eternal life. No one can do this and drift with the current of the world. He must come out from the world and be separate and touch not the unclean. No one can act like a worldling without being carried down by the current of the world. No one will make any upward progress without persevering effort. He who would overcome must hold fast to Christ. He must not look back, but keep the eye ever upward, gaining one grace after another. Individual vigilance is the price of safety. Satan is playing the game of life for your soul. Swerve not to his side a single inch, lest he gain advantage over you.

"If we ever reach heaven, it will be by linking our souls to Christ, leaning upon Him, and cutting loose from the world, its follies and enchantments. There must be on our part a spiritual cooperation with the heavenly intelligences. We must believe and work and pray and watch and wait." 6

I was puzzled by Peter's ladder since I didn't know how to climb it. I've learned that no human can. We do not grow by trying; just as we do not grow taller by trying. God adds each quality in our life; He carries us up this ladder.

But God is kind to give us these words so we can—under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—reflect upon our own Christian experience and observe whether or not we are healthy, growing Christians. He also gives us these words, so that we can recognize if we have fallen off Peter's ladder and need to pray earnestly that God will pick us back up and continue to add His knowledge and temperance to the virtue and faith He is already giving each one of us.

# References

- <sup>1</sup> Messages to Young People, pp. 45, 46.
- <sup>2</sup> See Counsels on Diet and Foods, pp. 483, 484.
- <sup>3</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, p. 311.
- <sup>4</sup> Sons and Daughters of God, p. 212. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>5</sup> Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 489.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, p. 147.



atience is that grace that enables us to bear calamities, afflictions, and oppositions with constancy and calmness of mind and with a ready submission to the will of God.

It is something to be "followed after" (1 Timothy 6:11). The teachings of truth, as also the temptations of the devil, constantly present before the mind's eye, a path and inducements to walk in it. The path of patience is presented by truth and is to be followed.

By Paul (2 Corinthians 6:3–12), it is placed at the head of those graces that commend us to God and good men, in the midst of all the trials that have ever been the common lot of God's children, or that ever will be incident to Christian life. See also 2 Thessalonians 1:3–6; 2 Timothy 3:8–13. While it preserves its possessor from offending by any departure from the path of duty marked out by the Lord (2 Corinthians 6:3), it does not always prevent people from becoming offended with us. Verse 12.

Its exercise is a condition of God's favor, and of being preserved by Him in the hour of temptation. Hebrews 6:12; 10:36; James 1:3, 4; Revelation 3:10.

It is a link in that chain of graces upon which is suspended the Christian's hope. Romans 5:3; 15:4; 2 Peter 1:6. It is preceded by love. 1 Timothy 6:11.

It is as impossible to secure and retain the noble grace of Christian patience without "righteousness, godliness, faith and love," as it is for the smith to attach a fifth link to his chain, before he has put on the fourth one; and the devil will never assail us with "great wrath," until this chain of graces is complete.

Almost all classes of community hold on to and admire some one of the links in this chain. Thus we have the "Moral Reform Society," for the promotion of "virtue." The "Temperance Society," for the promotion of "temperance," etc., etc. But alas! where is the society for the promotion of Christian *patience*? For the want of this link in the chain, the Christian's hope is fallen in the dust, where it fails to attract the malicious eye of the enemy of God and man.

Patience is wrought in the "trial of our faith" (James 1:3). God has given us a rule of faith—the Bible—containing things to be believed, that when fully believed and practiced, will bring the tribulation necessary to work patience in the soul. Christian patience supposes tribulations—such as are

peculiar to the Christian—tribulations occasioned by following Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:22–31. It cannot be possessed without tribulation—it is wrought by it. So says the sure word, and we are unsafe without a kind of patience thus wrought.

An anxiety for the wealth and honors of this world will destroy its exercise. 1 Timothy 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:24.

To gain eternal life, the exercise of patience must be continuous. Romans 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:9,10; 1 Corinthians 4:12–16.

It is a duty enjoined in waiting for the coming of the Lord. James 5:7, 8; Psalm 37:7; 40:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; etc.

We want it to bear with each others' infirmities and with a scoffing world. 1 Thessalonians 5:14. All men like ourselves are poor fallible beings, possessing the same liability to err; and we should ever bear in mind that their opposition can affect our salvation in no other way, than by trying our patience. In such trials our eternal well-being is endangered; for if we yield to impatience, the chain is broken and our hope is lost; or become a mere creature of imagination. Those followers of Jesus, whose minds are naturally sensitive and easily affected by tribulations arising from sarcasm, falsehood, and misrepresentations will ever be safe in

turning to the reasoning of the Apostle in Romans 8:31–39.

We should exercise patience toward our fellow men, because we are ever liable to be placed in circumstances where we may need it extended to us. Matthew 18:26.

Another reason for the exercise of patience is that God has not authorized us to ask any more lenity from Him, than we extend to our fellows. Matthew 6:12; 18:21, 22, 33.

True patience reaches to the end of the Christian's pilgrimage (James 1:4; Revelation 13:10; 14:12), while the patience of the unstable and worldly-minded man wears out somewhere on his journey, but is more likely to be exhausted near the journey's end. None tire at the beginning of a pilgrimage; few in the middle of it; but many give out near its end.

God has furnished us with an excellent rule for testing our patience, whether it be of the proper kind; for there is seldom a true bill without its counterfeit. 1 Peter 2:20–23 is a complete counterfeit detector in this line of graces. It must be a kind of patience wrought by tribulations, occasioned by following Christ, or His word, which is a transcript of Himself.

O how much has the Christian pilgrim to try his patience while passing through this "vale of tears!" "Looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "Behold," says James, "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." The husbandman prepares his ground, sows his seed, fences his field, and watches the first appearance of the blade, and never once murmurs because the harvest is not ready at midsummer; and even though the harvest is a month later in ripening, than usual, he patiently waits until it is ready, when he thrusts in his sickle and returns, "rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

But we have a higher example in the patience of God toward our fallen race. After the world has slighted His grace, rejected His laws, and established laws, systems, and governments of their own; behold His patience, and mark well His tender love! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

James 5:10. Moses, the *meek*, was also the *patient* servant of God. He exchanged the heirship of the Egyptian throne for a companionship with oppressed slaves; and while he appealed again and again to the haughty tyrant for the liberation of God's people, he *patiently* waited till the "firstborn of

Egypt" were slain; the host assembled; the pillar of fire appeared; then meekly pursued his course through the Sea, and the wilderness, till the promised land was stretched out before his view.

Joshua marshaled the "Sacred Hosts of God's elect," and, following His directions, marched seven times around the city of Jericho, and on the seventh day, when the patience of many would have failed, he accomplished as much as in the whole previous six days, and through his patient and unwearied application, possessed the land promised to his fathers.

Joseph, betrayed by his brethren, falsely and maliciously accused by Potiphar's wife, *patiently* suffered the privations of a prison, till God plead his cause, elevated him to a seat above the throne of Egypt, and finally signalized him as another deliverer of His people.

Gideon, with his despised band of three hundred men, occupying a station claimed by thirty thousand, that God rejected, *patiently* pursued his course, and waited at the Midianite's camp, with their simple armor of "pitchers and lamps," till the swords of the enemies of the Lord were turned one against another, and he was left to share the conqueror's spoils.

David, "because God was with him," became an object of the wicked hatred of Saul, who bade his servants slay him. He slew the enemies of Saul "with a great slaughter;" yet, even this embittered his enemy, who again attempted to thrust him through with a dart. When the kingdom was within his reach, he fled away and sought seclusion in the society of Samuel. In vain did he appeal to his enemy, "what have I done?" he must be sacrificed to the demon of jealousy; and again he fled away—begged some bread, and the sword of Goliath, and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. This was the man of whom the damsels sung, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David has slain his tens of thousands;" yet now, one heart alone could feel for him; "Jonathan fell upon his neck and wept."

When they that would destroy him wrongfully were "more in number than the hairs of his head," then he "restored that which he took not away."



His companions were the "discontented, and every one that was in debt." Rewards of honor, fields, and vineyards were offered for his life, yet in no instance would he take revenge upon one that bore the name of an Israelite, but suffered in *patience*.

His forbearance caused even his proud enemy to weep with a loud voice and say, "Thou art more righteous than I;" when David held up the "skirt of his robe," that he had cut off while he slept, and exclaimed, "The Lord judge between me and thee," and again he fled into the wilderness of Engedi. When Saul had fallen upon the plains of Gilboa, David stood by his side, and with unaffected grief, cried, "How are the mighty fallen!"

Again, an aspirant for human honors, his own son (!) sat in the gate, and with fair speeches and enticing words stole away the hearts of the people from following after David. Meekly he yields the throne to the usurper, and when a just reward was visited upon the head of the rebel, in the room of joining the song of triumph, he clothed himself in sackcloth, and cried, "My son, Absalom, my son, my son!! would God I had died for thee."

On no occasion does he trouble himself with a defense of his course or character; yet God raised him to honor, and turned the counsel of Ahithophel against him, into foolishness. Look at his last word, 2 Samuel 23:1-7.

Elijah is another example of patience. Seven times in prayer he bowed himself and patiently waited for rain upon the thirsty land, till he saw the "little cloud" arise. He preferred to lie down in the wilderness alone and receive his food from the wild ravens' claws, rather than yield to the claims of wicked Ahab for a prophecy of peace, and prosperity for his corrupted kingdom, and tyrannical reign, when God had not spoken peace. As a reward of his patient sufferings, God sent his chariots, and bore him forever away from the scene of his trial.

Nehemiah and Ezra were special objects of hatred, when they had courage to rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem. Sanballat and Tobiah sneeringly said, "If so much as a fox go up on

your wall, he will break it down." But as the work was *patiently* prosecuted, they changed their tune, first to flattery, then to threats. The dignified, patient reply to their crafty efforts was, "I am doing a great work, and why should it cease for me to come down to you?"

Esther, raised from obscurity to the throne of Media and Persia, in *patient* silence wept and prayed, awaiting deliverance from the hand of God, for herself and people, against the deep laid and crafty designs of wicked Haman, and witnessed his overthrow.

**Job**. Ye have heard of the patience of Job. James 5:11. In the midst of affluence tribulations came. His "oxen were ploughing," and his asses quietly "feeding beside them," when the Sabeans fell upon them, carried them away, and slew his servants, and the fire from heaven consumed his flocks. His houses were rent by winds, and his children perished. His body was smitten with boils till he sat down in the dust and cried aloud with pain. He mourned alone; even his wife upbraided him for his constancy. His friends conspired against him, taking peculiar pains to prove him a bad man; yet "in all this he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly," but looked forward to the day of retribution, and exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Jeremiah went down to the potter's house and foretold the evils to come upon Israel and Judah; then they conspired against him and said, "Come and let us smite him with the tongue." God sent him again to prophesy against Israel and Judah, charging him to "diminish not a word." Then they conspired against him, saying, "he is worthy to die." He patiently submitted himself to them, was shut up in the court of the prison, afterwards was cast into a dungeon where he nearly perished with hunger; and in all this, not one bitter complaint for himself; but for his people he cried, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

Ezekiel patiently submitted to eat the "bitter roll," and speak the words that God had given him, and "briers and thorns were with him." At the end of his patient, and as usual with God's servants, unpopular labors, he was presented with a view of the glorious City, and river of life.

Daniel and his brethren patiently suffered the privations of captivity from their Canaan home, and without a murmur submitted to the exactions of an unrighteous decree, and thus "stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire."

The minor prophets all suffered privations in their turn, leaving their cause to God.

And what of all these? Why, if you will obey God, and be His, take them for an example of "suffering, affliction, and patience."

The Jewish dispensation, with its scenes of suffering, passed away at that point of time when professed servants of God were conspiring the death of creation's acknowledged Lord.

And now opens a fresh scene of tribulation, that loudly calls forth the exercise of this manly—this Godlike grace. I say, manly, because it is completely divested of that want of principle—that impatience, which seeks the destruction of its victim—a work the child of God never can, and never will attempt to do.

First on the list of *patient* sufferers under the gospel dispensation is, Who! Ah, Who!? Its Leader! No less than He that is now soon to appear, wearing the insignia of *King of kings, and Lord of lords*. See him in the midst of a mob [Matthew 26:50–56], betrayed by a professed disciple, yet no unkind word. They all abandoned Him to His enemies, yet no reproaches. "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." They spit in His face, and insulted Him on the cross, yet on the cross He prayed, "forgive."

"Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye become wearied and faint in your minds."



# Clothing.

AN OBJECT LESSON FROM ONE ASPECT OF GODLINESS

less the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104:1, 2, emphasis added).

"Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble."<sup>1</sup>

This purity is symbolized by the white raiment of the righteousness of Christ—which, of course, encompasses much. In summary, it is distinguished by innocence before God through the merits of our Redeemer's sacrifice.

#### In Eden

The first reference to clothing in the word of God is recorded in Genesis 2:25: "And [Adam and his wife] were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation, with comments by D. P. Silva

Perhaps in your mind you may be questioning, "This text does not speak about clothing but about nudity!"

Just a moment! What type of clothing catered the first couple before sin?

"The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them."<sup>2</sup>

It is sad to see that almost all illustrations of Adam and Eve in paradise leave the impression that they were naked, when in reality they were fully covered with the divine glory, as it occurs with the angels that have never sinned. Note the last sentence of the previous paragraph: "So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them."

What did happen with the covering of light when the sinless pair disobeyed the divine instruction?

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7, emphasis added). Now, yes, they were really naked!

"After his transgression Adam at first imagined himself entering upon a higher state of existence. But soon the thought of his sin filled him with terror. The air, which had hitherto been of a mild and uniform temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair. The love and peace which had been theirs was gone, and in its place they felt a sense of sin, a dread of the future, a nakedness of soul. The robe of light which had enshrouded them, now disappeared, and to supply its place they endeavored to fashion for themselves a covering; for they could not, while unclothed, meet the eye of God and holy angels."3

There are several points worth highlighting in this inspired declaration by Ellen G. White:

After sinning, the first pair lost their peace with God and a sense of guilt overcame them. They felt a nakedness of soul. That inward nudity—in the heart—found an echo in the removal of the covering light that enshrouded them. Physically, they were also naked. They struggled to cover themselves with "fig leaves." I can imagine that their new dress, made of leaves, must have been quite precarious and proved to be totally ineffective before the divine presence. As God searched for them, they sought to escape from their Creator. When God called Adam, he answered: "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (verse 3:10). What an embarrassment Adam and Eve must have felt, being in the presence of God with such kind of covering! Nakedness of the soul follows physical nakedness, since the inward righteousness is revealed outwardly. The soul that is covered with the righteousness of Christ covers the body with something that represents righteousness within. Physical nakedness as a general rule is the result of spiritual nakedness.

After Adam and Eve were convinced of their grievous sin, God did not abandon them but presented the plan of redemption (Genesis 3:15), and provided them with a dignified and appropriate covering. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Verse 21). Through the gospel, God provides us with spiritual robes of Christ's righteousness, so that human beings can come again before His presence, and He also provides us with decent and appropriate clothing that reflects the righteousness of Christ in the heart.

"Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without."<sup>4</sup>

Before we can dress as Christians, we must become Christians. The reversal of these factors can be fatal to the soul. A Christian is someone similar to Christ, and the true Christian is willing to sacrifice all desires and practices that are contrary to the will of Christ. "If any man will come after me," Christ said,

"let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

"No man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul."<sup>5</sup>

### The ribbon of blue

God gave specific instructions to ancient Israel regarding their clothing: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God" (Numbers 15:37-40).

Ellen G. White draws a parallel between the ribbon of blue given to the Israelites and the dress reform that should characterize the people of God today:

"I was referred to Numbers 15:38-41 [cited above]: Here God expressly commanded a very simple arrangement of dress for the children of Israel for the purpose of distinguishing them from the idolatrous nations around them. As they looked upon their peculiarity of dress, they were to remember that they were God's commandment-keeping people, and that He had wrought in a miraculous manner to bring them from Egyptian bondage to serve Him, to be a holy people unto Him. They were not to serve their own desires, or to imitate the idolatrous nations around them, but to remain a distinct, separate people, that all who looked upon them might say: These are they whom God brought out of the land of Egypt, who keep the law of Ten Commandments. An Israelite was known to be such as

soon as seen, for God through simple means distinguished him as His.

"The order given by God to the children of Israel to place a ribbon of blue in their garments was to have no direct influence on their health, only as God would bless them by obedience, and the ribbon would keep in their memory the high claims of Jehovah and prevent them from mingling with other nations, uniting in their drunken feasts, and eating swine's flesh and luxurious food detrimental to health. God would now have His people adopt the reform dress not only to distinguish them from the world as His 'peculiar people,' but because a reform in dress is essential to physical and mental health. God's people have, to a great extent, lost their peculiarity, and have been gradually patterning after the world, and mingling with them, until they have in many respects become like them. This is displeasing to God. He directs them, as He directed the children of Israel anciently, to come out from the world and forsake their idolatrous practices, not following their own hearts (for their hearts are unsanctified) or their own eyes, which have led them to depart from God and to unite with the world.

"Something must arise to lessen the hold of God's people upon the world. The reform dress is simple and healthful, yet there is a cross in it. I thank God for the cross and cheerfully bow to lift it. We have been so united with the world that we have lost sight of the cross and do not suffer for Christ's sake.

"We should not wish to invent something to make a cross; but if God presents to us a cross, we should cheerfully bear it. In the acceptance of the cross we are distinguished from the world, who love us not and ridicule our peculiarity. Christ was hated by the world because He was not of the world. Can His followers expect to fare better than their Master? If we pass along without receiving censure or frowns from the world we may be alarmed, for it is our conformity to the world which makes us so much like them that there is nothing to arouse their envy or malice; there is no collision of spirits. The world despises the cross."6



20:26 and 28:42, 43.

The reason for these directives were that "that thy nakedness be not discovered." Considering the verses already mentioned in chapter 28, verses 42 and 43, where it says that the linen breeches should cover "from the loins even unto the thighs," what kind of nakedness is mentioned in Exodus 20:26? The part of the thigh down. In other words, that partial nudity was condemned by the Lord. Therefore, when the word of God speaks of nakedness, it does not always refers to a total absence of clothes. Partial nudity is also condemned by the Lord, both for men and women. Imagine a

When the subject of dress was receiving its greatest attention, a vision was given to Ellen G. White of three groups wearing different style of dresses.

"Three companies of females passed before me, with their dresses as follows with respect to length:

"The first were of fashionable length, burdening the limbs, impeding the step, and sweeping the street and gathering its filth; the evil results of which I have fully stated. This class, who were slaves to fashion, appeared feeble and languid.

"The dress of the second class which passed before me was in many respects as it should be. The limbs were well clad. They were free from the burdens which the tyrant, Fashion, had imposed upon the first class; but had gone to that extreme in the short dress as to disgust and prejudice good people, and destroy in a great measure their own influence. . . . It does not reach to the knee. I need not say that this style of dress was shown me to be too short."7

Let's consider some important details about this second class. This group was, shall we say, more than 50% well dressed, and parts of the body were well covered. Which parts? Not the legs, because the deficient aspect in this style was exactly the shortness of the dress. We conclude that the arms were well covered, correct? If the dress did not reach to the knees, and the body was well covered, that means that the arms were well protected, and not the legs.

Let's consider the third group:

"A third class passed before me with cheerful countenances, and free, elastic step. Their dress was the length I have described as proper, modest, and healthful. It cleared the filth of the street and sidewalk a few inches under all circumstances, such as ascending and descending steps, et cetera."8

Highlights of the third group:

- 1. "Cheerful countenances."
- 2. Free, elastic steps as their dresses did not sweep the streets.
- 3. Appropriate length. We will arrive to the ideal length, according to the instructions of the servant of the Lord.

should be directed exclusively to worship would be diverted because of exposure to partial nakedness.

just partially

naked, enough

from God. The

Someone may say: "We cannot apply the rules referring to the priests to the people in general." Let's not forget that the people of God in the Christian dispensation are known as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9). What is the purpose of God for His people? "That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The apostle Peter adds: "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (verses 9, 10).

In the popular churches, in some special cases, those in charge take necessary steps to ensure that when a sister goes to the podium, that she be properly protected by something that will not expose an inappropriate apparel that would serve to distract a worshipper from proper worship.

# The vision of three patterns for women's clothing

In the nineteenth century, when the "goddess of fashion" enslaved especially women with a style of dress that was only causing problems in every sense of the word—physically, morally, and financially—God sent special light to His people about the need of a reform.

"As I have before stated, the length was not given me in inches." 9

# Relationship of the vision in writing and in practice

"As I wrote upon the subject of dress the view of those three companies revived in my mind as plain as when I was viewing them in vision; but I was left to describe the length of the proper dress in my own language the best I could, which I have done by stating that the bottom of the dress should reach near the top of a lady's boot, which would be necessary in order to clear the filth of the streets under the circumstances before named.

"I put on the dress, in length as near as I had seen and described as I could judge. My sisters in Northern Michigan also adopted it. And when the subject of inches came up in order to secure uniformity as to length everywhere, a rule was brought and it was found that the length of our dresses ranged from eight to ten inches from the floor. Some of these were a little longer than the sample shown me, while others were a little shorter." 10

Please note an important detail: "Our dresses ranged from eight to ten inches from the floor."

The inch is the standard measurement used in the United States, equivalent to 2.54 centimeters. Eight inches, therefore, result in 20.32 centimeters, and ten inches equals 25.4 centimeters, correct?

The length of the recommended dress ranged between these two measurements, depending on the height of the person.

#### **Understanding Deuteronomy 22:5**

Another issue that has affected some sisters in some places is the temptation to wear long pants or trousers. What does Inspiration say about this?

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5).

"A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD YOUR GOD DETESTS

"In the acceptance of the cross we are distinguished from the world, who love us not and ridicule our peculiarity."

anyone who does this" (Ibid., NIV, emphasis added).

What is the purpose of Satan in making the clothes of women and men so similar?

In today's society we often confuse a person by his/her appearance. We see men with long hair and women with short hair. "Men" with female gestures and mannerisms, and "women" with behaviors appropriate for men. Their clothes have also created many identity problems. Satan wants to make men and women so similar that it would eliminate the characteristics which identify them, creating a similarity that leads to sinful promiscuity.

"There is still another style of dress which will be adopted by a class of so-called dress reformers. They will imitate the opposite sex, as nearly as possible. . . . In this style of dress God's order has been reversed and His special directions disregarded. Deuteronomy 22:5. The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.' This style of dress, God would not have His people adopt. It is not modest apparel and is not at all fitting for modest, humble females who profess to be Christ's followers. God's prohibitions are lightly regarded by all who would advocate the doing away of the distinction of dress between males and females. . . .

"God designed there should be a plain distinction between male and female dress and has considered the matter of sufficient importance to give explicit directions in regard to it; for the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime." <sup>11</sup>

Many servants of God in the past were identified by their clothing—Eli-

jah, for example, as revealed in 2 Kings 1:7, 8, and John the Baptist, in Matthew 3:4.

"In the time of John the Baptist, greed for riches, and the love of luxury and display had become widespread. Sensuous pleasures, feasting and drinking, were causing physical disease and degeneracy, benumbing the spiritual perceptions, and lessening the sensibility to sin. John was to stand as a reformer. By his abstemious life and plain dress he was to rebuke the excesses of his time." 12

Dress reform is an essential part of the message of the Reform Movement as it was for the prophetic ministry of Elijah and John the Baptist; however, this reform must come from the inside of a heart where Jesus reigns. This will be evident in the outside practices of our daily life.

Jesus affirmed, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matthew 17:11).

#### A solemn warning

"There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized." <sup>13</sup>

"All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline. If there is a continuance, in face of warnings and appeals and entreaties, to still follow the perverse will, it may be regarded as proof that the heart is in no way assimilated to Christ. Self, and only self, is the object of adoration, and one such professed Christian will lead many away from God." 14

"Talk of Christ, and when the heart is converted, everything that is out of harmony with the word of God will drop off. It is only labor in vain to pick leaves off a living tree. The leaves will reappear. The ax must be laid at the root of the tree, and then the leaves will fall off, never to return. In order to teach men and women the worthlessness of earthly things, you must lead them to the living Fountain and get them to drink of Christ, until their hearts are filled with the love of God, and Christ is in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life." 15

"Cleanse the fountain, and the streams will be pure. If the heart is right, your words, your dress, your acts will all be right." 16

#### Revival and reformation

We need to understand the purpose of a true revival of the primitive piety among God's people and the connection that this revival brings with its effects in our daily life.

Revival without reformation leads to a mere emotional religion. Reformation without a revival leads to a cold and critical legalism. Therefore, both must be united and complement each other.

"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work."<sup>17</sup>

Please note some key expressions in this paragraph: "But it is our

work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing."18

"God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

"A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend."19

A legitimate revival precedes a true reformation, and a true reformation is the result of a real revival. These two elements must be intimately connected, or we will fall into an extreme liberalism or into an extreme fanaticism. This balance is only possible if we look to Jesus and accept Him as our all-sufficient Saviour and Lord of our life.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Are we willing to accept the cross and its various facets before we can receive the crown? There is no other way. May God give us His marvelous grace to fulfill the conditions of discipleship!

# References

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- <sup>2</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 45.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 57. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>4</sup> Messages to Young People, p. 35.
- <sup>5</sup> Faith and Works, p. 100.
- <sup>6</sup> Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 524, 525.
- <sup>7</sup> Selected Messages, bk. 3, p. 278. [Emphasis supplied.]
- 8 Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 477, 478. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>12</sup> The Desire of Ages, pp. 100, 101. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>13</sup> Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 648.
- 14 Ibid., pp. 647, 648.
- <sup>15</sup> The Signs of the Times, July 1, 1889.
- <sup>16</sup> Messages to Young People, p. 131.
- <sup>17</sup> Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 121. [Emphasis supplied.]
- 18 Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> The Review and Herald, February 25, 1902.



# Brotherly Kindness

Compiled from the writings of Ellen G. White.

harity

hrist says you may be known by all men if ye have love one for another.

Now in order to have this love in the heart one for another it must be cultivated, and if this grace is attained then you will be a spectacle unto the world and to angels.¹

If we are not better men and women, if we are not more kindhearted, more pitiful, more courteous, more full of tenderness and love, if we do not manifest to others the love that led Jesus to the world on His mission of mercy, we are not witnesses to the world of the power of Jesus Christ.

Jesus lived not to please Himself. He gave Himself as a living, consuming sacrifice for the good of others. He came to elevate, to ennoble, to make happy all with whom He came in contact. Those who receive Christ will drop out all that is uncourteous, harsh, and rough, and will reveal the pleasantness, the kindness, that dwelt in Jesus, because Christ abides in the heart by faith. Christ was the light that shineth in darkness, and His followers are also to be the light of the world. They are to kindle their taper from the divine altar. The character that is sanctified through the truth adds the perfect polish.

Christ is our model, but unless we behold Him, unless we contemplate

His character, we shall not reflect His character in our practical life. He was meek and lowly in heart. He never did a rude action, never spoke a discourteous word. The Lord is not pleased with our blunt, hard, unsympathetic ways toward others. All this selfishness must be purged away from our characters, and we must wear the yoke of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

# Warning: A condition worse than Achan's

There are those who cherish a spirit of envy and hatred against their brethren, calling it the Spirit of God. There are those who go up and down as talebearers, accusing and condemning, blackening character, inspiring hearts with maliciousness. They carry false reports to the doors of their neighbors, who, as they listen to the slander, lose the Spirit of God. Not even the messenger of God, who bears to the people His truth, is spared.

This sin is worse than the sin of Achan. Its influence is not confined to those who cherish it. It is a root of bitterness, whereby many are defiled. God cannot bless the church till it is purged of this evil that corrupts minds and spirits, the souls of those who do not repent and change their course of action.

He who is renewed after the Spirit of Christ will not only love God, he will



love his brethren also. Those who make mistakes are to be dealt with according to the directions given in the Word of God. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

Plainly and faithfully evil is to be reproved. But let the one who takes up this work first be sure that he is not himself separated from Christ by evil works. He must be able to restore the erring in the spirit of meekness. Unless he can do this, he should not attempt to correct or reprove his brethren, for he will make two evils in the place of curing one.

Let men be careful how they treat the purchase of the blood of Christ. Let them not forget the prayer offered by the Saviour just before He left His disciples for the long struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane. Let them not forget the high estimate He has placed on human beings by purchasing them at the sacrifice of His life.

There are many who seem willing to wound and bruise the hearts of their brethren. Are they following the example Christ has left them? Where in the record of His dealing with men do they find themselves sustained in showing so little forbearance and patience in dealing with their brethren? Have they forgotten the words, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35)? That which distinguishes Christians from worldlings is the manifestation of Christlikeness, which by its pure influence cleanses the heart from selfishness.

Christ hates sin. From Him evil met with stern rebuke. But while He hates sin, He loves the sinner. Laying aside His riches and glory, He came to this earth to seek after us, sinful, erring, unhappy, that He might lead us to heed His words, and, through obedience, heaven. He humbled Himself, and took upon Him our nature, that He might make us like Himself, pure and upright, free from the defilement

of sin. He suffered more than any of us will be called to suffer. He gave His all for you. What have you given Him?

The knowledge of God's truth has been committed to you, not for you to quarrel over, but to fit you to be light bearers to the world. According to the ability given you will be the returns required by the Master. What have you done to persuade men to accept the precious truth? All around you are those for whom Christ has died, that they might be pure, holy, sinless. Has your life been filled with good works? Have you in meekness and faith sowed in the hearts of those with whom you are brought in contact, seeds that will bring forth fruit unto righteousness?

How much more strength the Lord's people would have if they loved Him supremely and their neighbor as themselves! On how much higher ground they would stand if they followed on to know the Lord! They have many lessons to learn in the school of Christ before they will be prepared to enter heaven. Many are through practice educating themselves to be oppressive where they should be kind. Their sharpness makes them unskillful in dealing with human minds.

Christ's life on earth was an expression of pure religion. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Those who believe in Him receive power to become the sons of God. They are no more of the world; they have come out from the world. The world knows them not, because it knew not their Master.

By blameless lives they show that they are sons of God. They are living examples of Christlikeness. They are Christians, because they are like Christ, because they abide in Him. They are light bearers to the world. Because they are willing and obedient, they are led into all truth.

Our words and works are to be channels through which the principles of truth are conveyed to the world. Those who do not cultivate personal piety cannot be lights in the world but bodies of darkness. Those who allow themselves to be dictatorial, who accuse and judge their brethren, seeking with unsanctified heart and unholy temper to mend their wrongs, drive

souls from God. Such believers are a source of weakness to the Lord's work, for they are not abiding in Christ. . . .

Go to the erring one, and pray with him. Draw him to Jesus. Press together, heart bound to heart in the love of Christ. Then will be seen in the church the mighty power of God. Then many souls will be brought to the truth.<sup>3</sup>

After the family, then comes the church. The influence of the family is to be such that it will be a help and a blessing in the church. Never speak a word of complaint or faultfinding. There are churches in which the spirituality has been almost killed, because the spirit of backbiting has been allowed to enter. Why do we speak words of blame and censure? To be silent is the strongest rebuke that you can give to one who is speaking harsh, discourteous words to you. Keep perfectly silent. Often silence is eloquence. My brethren, you will never enter heaven with a spirit of faultfinding.4

Ministers and lay members of the church displease God when they allow individuals to tell them of the errors and faults of their brethren. They should not open their ears to these reports. They should inquire, "Have you strictly followed the injunction of your Saviour? Have you told him his faults between you and him alone? And then if he refused to hear, have you carefully and prayerfully taken two or three others and labored with him in tenderness, in humility, in meekness, your heart throbbing in love for his soul?" If you failed here, there was only one more step you could take—tell it to the church, and let action be taken in the case according to the Scriptures. Then it is that heaven will ratify the decision made by the church in cutting off the offending member.

If these steps have not been taken, do not listen to a word, close the ears, and refuse to take up a reproach against your neighbor; listening to the reports of evil is lifting or taking up the reproach. If there were no brethren and sisters to take up the reproach against their neighbors, evil tongues would not find so fruitful a field in which to labor, backbiting and devouring one another. <sup>5</sup>

# The value of genuine kindness

True courtesy is not learned by the mere practice of rules of etiquette. Propriety of deportment is at all times to be observed; wherever principle is not compromised, consideration of others will lead to compliance with accepted customs; but true courtesy requires no sacrifice of principle to conventionality. It ignores caste. It teaches self-respect, respect for the dignity of man as man, a regard for every member of the great human brotherhood.

There is danger of placing too high a value upon mere manner and form, and devoting too much time to education in these lines. The life of strenuous effort demanded of every youth, the hard, often uncongenial work required even for life's ordinary duties, and much more for lightening the world's heavy burden of ignorance and wretchedness—these give little place for conventionalities.

Many who lay great stress upon etiquette show little respect for anything, however excellent, that fails of meeting their artificial standard. This is false education. It fosters critical pride and narrow exclusiveness.

The essence of true politeness is consideration for others. The essential, enduring education is that which broadens the sympathies and encourages universal kindliness. That so-called culture which does not make a youth deferential toward his parents, appreciative of their excellences, forbearing toward their defects, and helpful to their necessities; which does not make him considerate and tender, generous and helpful toward the young, the old, and the unfortunate, and courteous toward all, is a failure.

Real refinement of thought and manner is better learned in the school of the divine Teacher than by any observance of set rules. His love pervading the heart gives to the character those refining touches that fashion it in the semblance of His own. This education imparts a heaven-born dignity and sense of propriety. It gives a sweetness of disposition and a gentleness of manner that can never be equaled by the superficial polish of fashionable society.<sup>6</sup>

# **Understanding charity**

"You must have charity," is the cry everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. The apostle [John] teaches that while we should manifest Christian courtesy, we are authorized to call sin and sinners by their right names, and that this is consistent with true charity. While we are to love souls for whom Christ died, and labor for their salvation, we should not make a compromise with sin. We are not to unite with those who are rebelling against divine authority, and call this charity."

True charity never covers up unrepented and unconfessed sins. She only drops her mantle over the faults that are confessed and renounced. True charity is a very delicate personage, never setting her pure foot outside of Bible truth.<sup>8</sup>

# A pledge for every believer

"I am a Christian," must be repeated, "and I must love my neighbor as myself. I must do unto others as I would that they should do to me. I must not exalt myself as a privileged character and look down upon others as of no value. I am a Christian and must esteem others better than myself. I am a Christian and must not join any ring or party which would connive at evil, no matter how trivial might seem the transgression." It was a small transgression that opened upon our world the floodgates of woe. The act of sin may be one that is called common, and the eternal ruin will be common. We need not seek to excuse ourselves because men in high esteem are guilty of strange misdemeanors and place sin in wrong light before the world. The uprightness of all who make high professions and practice iniquity is known a pretense before that God whose eye reads the hearts of men. So few are found who act upon the principles of the Bible, that we can say indeed that many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. Christ's followers are a little flock.

Those who have not lost their first love will have a care for the souls of those with whom they are associated;

but if one in responsible position is found whose morals are tainted with dishonesty or impurity, be on your guard that his godless spirit and example do not contaminate your soul, and so the contagion of evil spread. The moral tone of piety among us must be raised, and in order that it may be, we must take time for the personal culture of heart religion. Let each one feel, I must be an example in patience. I must do good, whether others appreciate my motives or not. I must not stand allied with evil, or cover it with a mantle of false charity. Bible charity is not sentimentalism, but love in active exercise. To heal the hurt of the daughter of My people, slightly, saying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11), is called charity. To confederate together, to call sin holiness and truth, is called charity; but it is the counterfeit article. The false and the spurious are in the world, and we should closely examine our hearts that we may know whether or not we possess the genuine charity. Genuine charity will not create distrust and evil work. It will not blunt the sword of the spirit so that it does no execution. Those who would cover evil under false charity, say to the sinner, "It shall be well with thee." Thank God there is a charity that will not be corrupted; there is a wisdom that cometh from above, that is (mark it) first pure, then peaceable, and without hypocrisy, and the fruits of righteousness is sown of them that make peace. This is a description of heaven-born, heaven-bred charity. Charity loves the sinner but hates the sin, and will warn him faithfully of his danger, pointing him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Sin is not to be cloaked, but to be taken away.9 R

#### References

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- <sup>2</sup> That I May Know Him, p. 306.
- <sup>3</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 18, pp. 147–150.
- <sup>4</sup> The General Conference Bulletin, April 6,
- <sup>5</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 12, pp. 280, 281.
- <sup>6</sup> Education, pp. 240, 241.
- <sup>7</sup> The Signs of the Times, January 29, 1885.
- <sup>8</sup> Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White (1880), pp. 208, 209.
- <sup>9</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 1, pp. 216, 217.

# The Church ictorious

Abridged from a study by P. D. Lausevic.

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

(Song of Solomon 6:10).

# Speaking of triumph

When people gather together to speak of experiences involving conflict, they rarely mention defeat.

Memorials such as the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris and (after over 2,200 years) the Arch of Septimius Severus in Rome—both stand to testify of how humanity relishes the taste of victory. In the case of the Arch of Titus, the memorial remains, yet the empire that built it has vanished away.

People like to memorialize their victories and forget their defeats.

Consider the Flavian Amphitheater—also known as the Coliseum where the blood of faithful Christian martyrs comes to memory. The vast empire that persecuted the martyrs is no longer, but the heritage of God's chosen people lives on.

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

#### The triumph of the remnant church

Yes, the Roman army with its banners waving in the sky terrified the world for nearly seven centuries. But the very church which that power tried to extinguish is still here today and will soon be the church victorious.

Why was the battle so intense? Why did imperial Rome and later papal



Rome throw Christians to the gladiators, feed them to the lions and other wild beasts, and cause them to endure every other means of persecution imaginable?

To understand this, let us look at the final victory—a victory that will not leave behind a lifeless monument in memory of a long-forgotten people.

It will be a conquest to be tasted by the victors forever.

John the Revelator describes: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:2, 3).

Of what experience is this a record? "In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God's remnant church." 1

What did the prophet see? The ultimate triumph of the remnant church—the 144,000.

With regard to the 144,000, we are told, "None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an

experience such as no other company have ever had."<sup>2</sup>

Since their experience is so unique, what are we advised to do? "Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand."<sup>3</sup>

Why is the seal placed upon the foreheads of the 144,000 so important?

"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City."<sup>4</sup>

This is not simply like a tourist or visitor's visa—this is a permanent visa, as when one is moving to a new country. In the governments on earth, to immigrate to a new country and be accepted as a permanent citizen involves police clearance, medical clearance, mental clearance, credit clearance, tax clearance, and so forth.

For that reason, a person "is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him."<sup>5</sup>

# What experience must I have in order to be sealed?

"The angel with the writer's inkhorn is to place a mark upon the foreheads of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel follows this angel." 6

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:5).

"All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour."

We must obtain perfection of character.

"We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the statue of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character? When the

Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished.' "8

This is first as individuals and then as a people (church). " 'When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come' (Mark 4:29). Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."

We must be perfected because we will see Jesus as He is. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

This was the experience of faithful Enoch, who walked with God. (See Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5.)

Let us keep in mind: "Enoch pleased [God] though living in a degenerate age." 10

"In the midst of a world by its iniquity doomed to destruction, Enoch lived a life of such close communion with God that he was not permitted to fall under the power of death. The godly character of this prophet represents the state of holiness which must be attained by those who shall be 'redeemed from the earth' (Revelation 14:3) at the time of Christ's second advent. Then, as in the world before the Flood, iniquity will prevail. Following the promptings of their corrupt hearts and the teachings of a deceptive philosophy, men will rebel against the authority of Heaven. But like Enoch, God's people will seek for purity of heart and conformity to His will, until they shall reflect the likeness of Christ. Like Enoch, they will warn the world of the Lord's second coming and of the judgments to be visited upon transgression, and by their holy conversation and example they will condemn the sins of the ungodly."11

This must be our experience if we intend to be translated as part of the 144,000 and be part of that victorious remnant church.

# The righteousness of Christ

When we say that we must have Christ's righteousness as our own, we need to understand what His righteousness is all about:

"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19, emphasis added).

What must happen to this type of righteousness? "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:21, 22).

The Bible also speaks of "the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8).

"The palm branch in [the overcomers'] hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs." 12 "We can keep the law only through making the righteousness of Christ our own." 13

Christ's perfect righteousness must become mine.

We have heard how in times past, royalty not only provided wedding guests with an invitation, but it also provided a special garment to be worn at the wedding. This is why Jesus used this as an illustration in Matthew 22.

But it is not enough to have the wedding garment. It has to be put on.

"The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness." <sup>14</sup>

For this reason, Pharisaical righteousness is insufficient to enter the kingdom of God. (See Matthew 5:20.)

The 144,000 will be trophies (triumphal arches) of this experience.

# How can we have this experience?

"It came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to

When we shall practice "the principles of the law in [our] daily life; when [our] every act bears witness that [we] love God supremely and [our] neighbor as [ourselves,] then will the church have power to move the world."

Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:1–4).

Were these souls baptized? Who baptized them? Was John a man of God? Were they baptized into the right church?

After they had the old truth put in a new setting and though it revealed old errors, what happened? "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Verse 5).

Why was rebaptism necessary? "There is still another lesson for us in the experience of those Jewish converts. When they received baptism at the hand of John, they were holding serious errors. But with clearer light they gladly accepted Christ as their Redeemer; and with this advance step came a change in their obligations. As they received a purer faith, there was a corresponding change in their life and character. In token of this change, and as an acknowledgment of their faith in Christ, they were rebaptized in the name of Jesus." 15

Why was there a change? Because they received a pure truth.

What is truth? Jesus explains, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

What does that mean? Too many "are not willing to exchange their own righteousness (which is unrighteousness) for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth." <sup>16</sup>

The believers at Ephesus were holding serious errors.

Why is it important to have pure doctrine?

"Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls [in the first centuries] were revived in the hearts of God's professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ.

"The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and doctrines were known. Therefore they were hated by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain." <sup>17</sup>

The battle was intense in the field of the Coliseum in Rome, because pure truth in the lives of God's people causes terror to evildoers.

How is this achieved?

"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)."<sup>18</sup>

Doctrine without Christ EQUALS FALSE DOCTRINE.

Christ without pure doctrine (unadulterated truth) equals falsehood as well.

Why is it important to have and to teach pure truth? "Every unconverted man is fascinated, bewildered, by the bewitching power of the great deceiver. Paul wrote to the Galatians, 'Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?' (Galatians 3:1). Every person who *cherishes a known error, in faith or practice, is under the power of sorcery* and is practicing sorcery upon others. Satan employs him to mislead other souls." 19

## Conclusion

This purity of the truth in God's church will give them power to move the world.

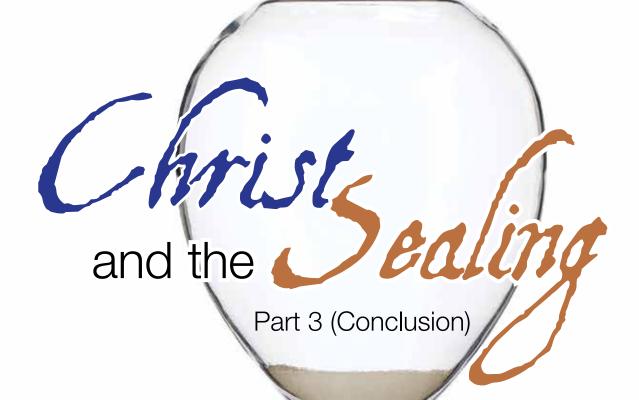
What will it take for us to obtain that same power, so that we can finish the work and go home—to our real home—as we are only strangers and pilgrims here in this old sinful world?

"When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world."<sup>20</sup>

[For the complete study, see the author's study guide, *The People of the Ark.*]  $\mathcal{R}$ 

# References

- <sup>1</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, p. 590.
- <sup>2</sup> The Great Controversy, p. 649.
- <sup>3</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7 p. 970.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 969.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, p. 1161.
- <sup>7</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 216.
- 8 The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1118.
- <sup>9</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69.
- 10 Ibid., p. 332.
- <sup>11</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 88, 89.
- <sup>12</sup> The Great Controversy, p. 665. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>13</sup> Reflecting Christ, p. 103. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>14</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 309.
- <sup>15</sup> Sketches From the Life of Paul, p. 132.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, September 27, 1899. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>17</sup> The Great Controversy, p. 46.
- <sup>18</sup> Testimonies to Ministers, p. 118.
- <sup>19</sup> The Signs of the Times, May 18, 1882. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>20</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 340. [Emphasis supplied.]



# The close of probation

In Revelation 22:11–15, we find the most solemn declaration ever given by Jesus in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary:

"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. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

"When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still; for then there will be no Priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father's throne.

Therefore what is done to rescue souls from the coming storm of wrath must be done before Jesus leaves the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary."<sup>1</sup>

"Every individual soul, if he would receive the seal of the living God, must hear the Word of the Lord and do it with exactitude. There must be no such thing as haphazard religion if men would have a place in the family of God."<sup>2</sup>

"As [John] looked with intense interest he beheld the company of God's commandment-keeping people.

They had upon their foreheads the seal of the living God, and he said: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' (Revelation 14:12)."3

A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation, with commentary by D. P. Silva

"When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received 'the latter rain,' 'the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received 'the seal of the living God.' Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands, and with a loud voice says, 'It is done;' and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: '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). Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; 'the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,' is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords."4

"There can be only two classes. Each party is distinctly stamped, either with the seal of the living God, or with the mark of the beast or his image." 5

"The seal of the living God is placed upon those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord."<sup>6</sup>

"Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully."<sup>7</sup>

"The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven."

"Just before we entered it [the time of trouble], we all received the seal of

the living God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion."9

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming." 10

"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City. But there are many who take upon themselves responsibilities in connection with the work of God who are not wholehearted believers, and while they remain thus cannot receive the seal of the living God. They trust in their own righteousness, which the Lord accounts as foolishness." <sup>11</sup>

"As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.

"Many will not receive the seal of God because they do not keep His commandments or bear the fruits of righteousness.

"The great mass of professing Christians will meet with bitter disappointment in the day of God. They have not upon their foreheads the seal of the living God. Lukewarm and halfhearted, they dishonor God far more than the avowed unbeliever. They grope in darkness, when they might be walking in the noonday light of the Word, under the guidance of One who never errs." 12

"Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God. Those who are planning sin and acting it will be passed by. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great antitypical day of atone-

ment, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God's protection. The names of those who are steadfastly looking and waiting and watching for the appearing of their Saviour—more earnestly and wishfully than they who wait for the morning—will be numbered with those who are sealed. Those who, while having all the light of truth flashing upon their souls, should have works corresponding to their avowed faith, but are allured by sin, setting up idols in their hearts, corrupting their souls before God, and polluting those who unite with them in sin, will have their names blotted out of the book of life, and be left in midnight darkness, having no oil in their vessels with their lamps. 'Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings' (Malachi  $4:2).^{"13}$ 

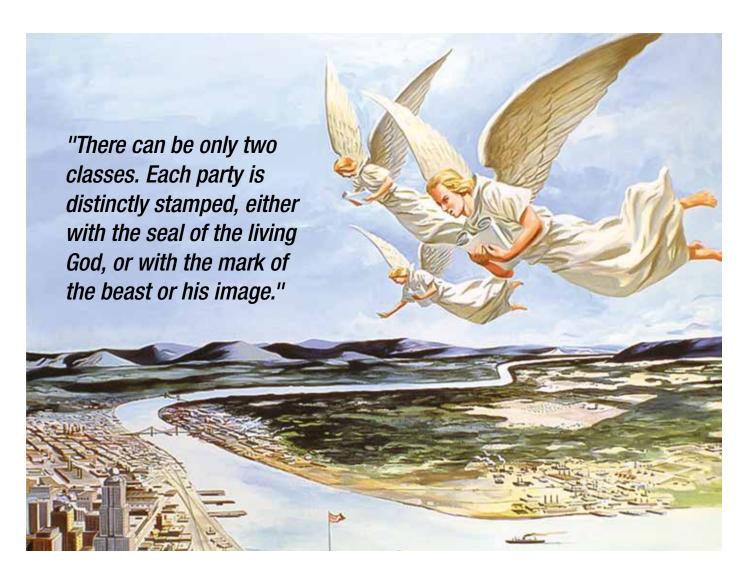
# **Escape for your life**

When God and His angels were rescuing Lot and the remnant of his family from the imminent destruction of Sodomah and Gomorrah, He urged them:

"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Genesis 19:17).

"The same angel who visited Sodom is sounding the note of warning, 'Escape for thy life.' The bottles of God's wrath cannot be poured out to destroy the wicked and their works until all the people of God have been judged, and the cases of the living as well as the dead are decided. And even after the saints are sealed with the seal of the living God, His elect will have trials individually. Personal afflictions will come; but the furnace is closely watched by an eye that will not suffer the gold to be consumed. The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that His own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed—'GOD, NEW JERUSALEM.' They are God's property, His possession."14

"Many hear the invitation of mercy, are tested and proved; but few are sealed with the seal of the living God. Few will humble themselves as a little



child, that they may enter the kingdom of heaven."  $^{15}$ 

"What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption. The intelligent mind has seen the sign of the cross of Calvary in the Lord's adopted sons and daughters. The sin of the transgression of the law of God is taken away. They have on the wedding garment, and are obedient and faithful to all God's commands." 16

"The enemies of God's law, from the ministers down to the least among them, have a new conception of truth and duty [when God's holy law is revealed as the rule of judgment]. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God."<sup>17</sup>

To His people in this last period of the Christian era, Christ declares:

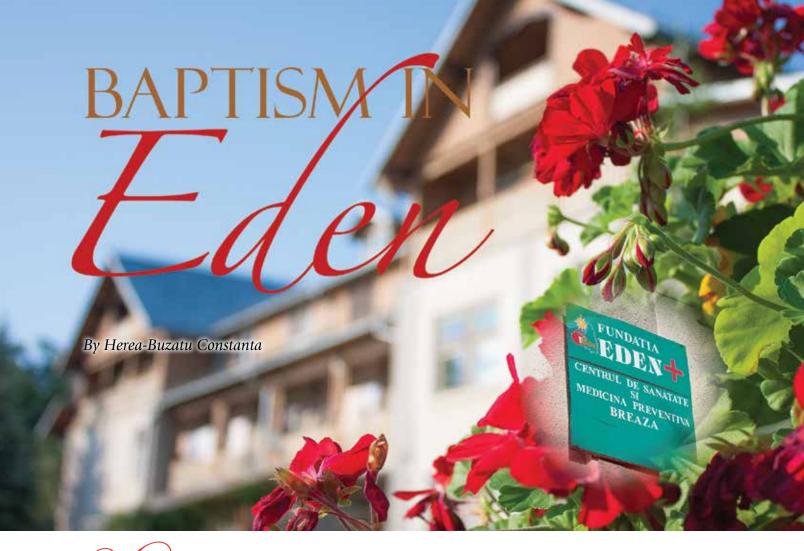
"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:19–21).

The following beautiful words are given by divine Inspiration through the apostle Paul: "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37–39).

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). R

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Early Writings, p. 48.
- <sup>2</sup> The Faith I Live By, p. 288.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 307.
- <sup>4</sup> The Great Controversy, pp. 613, 614.
- <sup>5</sup> The Review and Herald, January 30, 1900.
- <sup>6</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 980.
- <sup>7</sup> Early Writings, p. 71.
- <sup>8</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 216.
- <sup>9</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 968.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, p. 1161.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., vol. 7, p. 970.
- 12 Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Testimonies to Ministers, p. 445.
- 14 Ibid., p. 446.
- <sup>15</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 50.
- <sup>16</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 21, p. 52.
- <sup>17</sup> The Great Controversy, pp. 640.



unday, September 22, 2013, was a day of joy, both for the brethren and sisters that work in the Eden Clinic, as well as for the believers belonging to the Odai local group in the district of Prahova, Romania.

Sister Florica from Odai learned about our faith from a neighbor of hers, a member of our church. She attended our meetings in that place and decided to make a covenant with the Lord through baptism (despite the opposition of her family). May the Lord bless her choice and give her strength to be an example in the family, in the church, and in society.

Sister Constanta Herea learned the truth in the Eden Clinic and in the following testimony you will have the opportunity to read her experience. We are very glad for the decision she has made, and we ask the Lord to continue guiding her feet in the right way.

I had heard of the Eden Clinic from a friend whose daughter had had serious health problems. No doctor had expected the daughter to live much longer until finally her father appealed to the Eden Clinic. (The girl is now a student.) Beginning in the year 2000, I was the coordinator of the European "ERASMUS-SOCRATES" exchange program for university teachers and students of the Technical Construction Engineering Department at the University of Bucharest—where I was



in charge of Ph.D. theses for the faculty of the department for Technological Tools. My Ph.D. thesis was in Ecology, given at various universities of Portugal and France.

In 2008, there came to Romania a university professor from Portugal who had been diagnosed with leukemia. While she was here, together we decided to visit the Eden Clinic and talk to Dr. Doru Laza, since Dr. Laza is fluent in Portuguese. That was in the month of May, and the lady decided to come for treatments in October of that year.

The next year, in 2009, she returned for treatments, and since I was her roommate in order to translate for her during the entire treatment session, I also received treatments. With this opportunity I attended the morning and evening worship programs (at 8:30–9:00 A.M. and P.M).

That was when I began to become acquainted with the Bible. As a result, I started to ask questions and to read the scriptures for myself. Before, I had been a nonpracticing Orthodox who went to church only on Easter, Christmas, weddings, and baptisms—and that was all.

I returned to the Eden Clinic an average of 3 times each year. I came with another university teacher twice, with my mother three times, with my mother-in-law twice, with my cousin once, with a friend, and so on—all in all, more than 10 times. And hearing about the General Conference spiritual meetings to be held in Sibiu with the theme of "He Is Coming," I attended those meetings, knowing that, at the end of the conference, there would be a baptism where many people would be baptized. Full of enthusiasm, I expressed my desire to be baptized in Porumbacu.

To my surprise, I was apparently refused! I was told that I was not yet prepared.

True, there were still many things to be changed in my life. There needed to be evidence of a converted life. During the following months, learning more closely the way of living that people have when they serve the Lord wholeheartedly, I began to understand





the truth more deeply. I undertook changes in my dress and I quit dyeing my hair. . . .

Although the refusal of my baptism in 2011 was like "a cold shower" for me, I understood that the standards are "high" for those who want to join the SDARM. This was contradicting my colleagues' idea that "Adventists had brainwashed me," that they "wanted to draw me into their church as a valuable member since I was a university teacher." The refusal was a very strong argument to prove to them that they had been mistaken. I, on the other hand, consider that I have been very loved by God in coming to Breaza, to the Eden Clinic, without having any particular disease, and that I got to learn the word of God and His will.

For two years I continued my baptism preparation. I feared only one thing: That the end is near and I would not have enough time to get baptized so that I can be saved. The promise of Jesus, "I am coming soon," and the signs showing us that we live in the time of the end were troubling me, but, to my gladness, after 2 years of waiting after I had first expressed my desire to be baptized, on September 22, my dream finally became a reality!

I am so glad that I made this decision, and I pray that God may be close to me, that He may grant me strength to walk in the narrow way, having Jesus Christ as my example in my daily life.  $\mathcal{M}$ 



# Australia

Western
Australian Field
camp meeting,
September 2013.

# Rwanda

Delegation session in Kigali, August 2013 (middle).

# Zambia

Spiritual conference, October 2013 (bottom).





U.S.A. Los Angeles, CA youth baptism, September 2013.

Las Vegas, NV baptism, May 2013 (middle).

# **Ukraine**

Missionary school, August 2013 (bottom).









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MOVING? Please let us know.



he new school year was starting and the children were talking.

"I want to be in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade!" little Susie proclaimed.

"Oh, Susie. Don't be silly. How can you go to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade class, when you are just learning to read?" chided her older sister, Molly.

"I don't care. I want to be there anyway!"

"Do you realize that in 10<sup>th</sup> grade you will need to study geometry? Before that, you will need to know some algebra, too. Maybe you'll have biology or even chemistry to study! How would you know the answers to all the questions in those big, thick textbooks with all that small print?"

It was true. Susie was still quite young. Yet sooner or later, little Susie would achieve her goal. It would even be okay for her to start working toward it right away: She could learn about geometry by examining her toy blocks and measuring them with a ruler. She could study biology by looking closely at plants and small creatures and noticing things about them that were interesting. She could do little chemical experiments with baking soda or vinegar. Her learning would all be a step-by-step process.

In the Bible, the apostle Peter teaches about a step-by-step process toward the kingdom of heaven. We often call it Peter's ladder:



By B. Montrose

"Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Peter 1:5–7).

You have faith in God, right? Well, since you believe in Him, you are inspired to be good. But it's hard to become better and better, unless we know what is better in God's sight—so that means we need to learn more knowledge about Him and His ways from the Bible.

Once we know more, that should give us more self-control.

When we control ourselves, we become more patient when we have problems.

As we have this patience, we become less whiny and babyish and more mature like God.



Then, as our character becomes more like the way God is, we will not be so selfish and self-centered. We will better appreciate others around us—our family and friends. We will be kinder to them.

Then, as we grow in brotherly kindness, soon we will also start to be kind to other people. Sometimes they are not people that we would naturally like. They may be unfriendly or even rude. But we will be kind to them anyway and will try to find ways to help them. This loving of the unlovable is called charity.

We cannot climb this ladder by ourselves. It's hard to go uphill—especially when you're little. But Jesus is willing to take us by the hand and give us strength. When we invite Him into our heart day by day and ask for Him to be with us, He is there at our side. Step-by-step.