

the
REFORMATION
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Vol. 55, No. 2

Wake Up
Already!



The Attitude in Asking / The Object of Education / Activities for Holy Time

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

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FROM EGYPT TO EDEN

The Spirit of Prophecy refers to a glorious time when the Sabbath is to be proclaimed more

fully. This will enrage those who end up rejecting the Sabbath as God's holy day, but others who are honest in heart will be uplifted as they learn. These will bravely take their stand with God's remnant.¹

Yes, a special blessing is pronounced upon the new souls who will accept the present truth just before the Lord's return: "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. . . . For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 56:1, 2, 4, 5).

The joy experienced by new Sabbathkeepers need not be limited only to them. Our children can also share in this happiness if they continue in the faith and share the message with others. So the question comes: How can we help our children to continue

in the faith? There are many factors, of course, but one key is to learn from the early patriarchs of faith.

"Abraham decided to obey the law of God. . . . He recognized that he was accountable for the instruction of his household and his children and commanded them after him to do justice and judgment. In teaching them the laws of God, he taught them that the Lord is our Judge, our Lawgiver and King, and that parents and children were to be ruled by Him; that on the part of parents there was to be no oppression, and on the part of children no unfilial disobedience.

"The Lord commanded Moses to go and speak unto Pharaoh, bidding him to allow Israel to leave Egypt. For four hundred years they had been in Egypt and had been in slavery to the Egyptians. They had been corrupted by idolatry, and the time came when God called them forth from Egypt, in order that they might obey His laws and keep His Sabbath, which He had instituted in Eden. He spoke the ten commandments to them in awful grandeur from Mount Sinai, that they might understand the sacred and enduring character of the law and build up the foundation of many generations, by teaching their children the binding claims of God's holy precepts.

"This is the work that we are called upon to do. From the pulpits of the popular churches it is proclaimed that the first day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord; but God has given us light, showing us that the fourth precept of the decalogue is as verily binding as are the other nine moral precepts. It is our work to make plain to our children that the first day of the week is not the true Sabbath, and that its observance after light has come to us as to what is the true Sabbath, is idolatry, and in plain contradiction to the law of God. In order to give them instruction in regard to the claims of the law of Jehovah, it is necessary that we separate our children from worldly associations and influences, and keep before them the Scriptures of truth by educating them line upon line and precept upon precept, that they may not prove disloyal to God."²

With this sacred duty in mind, may the Lord help us to lead our children—and neighbors—away from the idols of Egypt to the true and living way as it was revealed at creation. What a wonderful privilege we have! *R*

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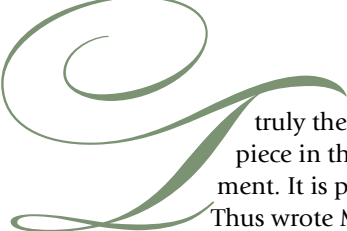
² *The Review and Herald*, January 9, 1894.

The Challenging
WALK

*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by M-A.F. Ducheine*

“The Lord requires us to be submissive to His will, subdued by His Spirit, and sanctified to His service. Selfishness must be put away, and we must overcome every defect in our characters as Christ overcame.”

—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 66.



his letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel.”

Thus wrote Martin Luther about the book whose reading helped to launch the reformation of the 16th century. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans—and especially the seventh chapter—has been the object of many studies. Theologians and preachers have expressed their ideas and penned many pages regarding the book that I believe could be well (re-)named the Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Paul. As we take a closer look at the seventh chapter of this piece, may the Lord help us to understand the essence of the gospel.

Perfection

The law of God is perfect, eternal, immutable (Psalms 19:7; 111:7, 8), holy, just, good, and spiritual (Romans 7:12, 14). “The law of God is the expression of His character. God possesses absolute, invariable, and immutable independence, and His law is without variableness, unalterable, eternal, because it is the transcript of His character. No event can take place that will in any sense make it necessary to declare a law of a contrary nature. ‘The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul’ (Psalm 19:7). Any change in the law would mar its perfection. The slightest variance in its precepts would give reason to the hosts of heaven and to unfallen worlds to think that God’s counsels and declarations are not to be relied upon but need to be remodeled, because they are of a faulty character. Should any change be made in the law of God, Satan would gain that for which he had instituted controversy.”¹

Sin and its consequences

The Bible teaches us that “all unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). Sin is the transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4); it is the neglect of any known duty (James 4:17). It entered the world through the disobedience of the first human being (Romans 5:12, 19).

The consequences of sins are:

1. Separation from God (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

2. Disease (Psalm 38:1–10).
3. Death (Romans 6:23).

“It is the nature of sin to spread and increase. Since the first sin of Adam, from generation to generation it has spread like a contagious disease. While the world was yet in its infancy, sin became fearful in its proportions. Hatred of God’s law, and, as the sure result, hatred of all goodness, became universal.”²

Human nature

The human race was created perfect, but after the Fall, we became “carnal, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14) and incapable of doing any good (Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9).

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Job 14:4; Romans 8:7). Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life.”³

But in spite of the sinful nature of men and women, God expects perfection (Matthew 5:48) and holiness (Hebrews 12:14) from us.

“What does God require? Perfection; nothing less than perfection.”⁴

The Christian experience

As a beautiful butterfly comes out of its cocoon transformed, so does the newborn Christian become a new creation by the power of Christ (John 3:1–3; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Born of water and of the Spirit, the newly born soul receives a new heart from the Chief Surgeon (Romans 6:3–6, 10–14; Ezekiel 36:25–28; Psalm 51:10). And this is Good News (the gospel).

The life of the newborn is characterized by faith in the Son of God; he/she is “crucified with Christ;” therefore Christ lives/abides in the heart (Gala-

tians 2:20; 6:14) and he/she does not practice sin any more (1 John 3:6, 9), “having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” and having partaken of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

The Spirit of Prophecy states: “God’s law is immutable and eternal; for it is the transcript of His character, and by it God designs to bring the family on earth into harmony with the family in heaven. God has made it possible for men to obey His requirements, by making it possible for them to be partakers of the divine nature. Thus our characters may be molded in accordance with the law of God. And by willing obedience to this law our characters are conformed to the character of God.”⁵

Conflicting natures

There is, in the life of every believer, an ongoing warfare between the carnal nature against the spiritual nature (Galatians 5:1, 16–18, 24–26). “The life of the Christian is not all smooth. He has stern conflicts to meet. Severe temptations assail him. ‘The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh’ (Galatians 5:17). The nearer we come to the close of this earth’s history, the more delusive and ensnaring will be the attacks of the enemy. His attacks will grow fiercer and more frequent. Those who resist light and truth will become more hardened and unimpressible, and more bitter against those who love God and keep His commandments.”⁶

Paul eloquently wrote: “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:15–19).

The servant of the Lord commented on these verses, saying, “It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness

of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, 'I consent unto the law that it is good.' 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, 'I am carnal, sold under sin' (Romans 7:16, 12, 14). He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' (Romans 7:24, margin). Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29)."⁷

Our only hope

Our only hope is outlined in the following verses: "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. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:1-4).

"Nothing but a deep personal experience will enable us to stand the test of the trials and temptations we shall meet in the Christian warfare. Too often we feel well when every-

thing goes smoothly; but when doubts assail the soul, and Satan whispers his suggestions, our defense is gone, and we yield quickly to the arts of the tempter, with scarcely an effort to resist and repulse him. It is not enough to have good impulses. The soul must be barricaded by prayer and study [of] the Scriptures. Armed with these weapons, Jesus encountered our wily foe on the field of battle, and overcame him. We may all conquer in His strength; but it will not answer for us to suppose that we can dispense with His help. He says, 'Without me ye can do nothing' (John 15:5). But no truly humble soul who walks in the light as Christ is in the light, will be ensnared by Satan's deceptive devices."⁸

"We should now consider that our life is swiftly passing away, that we are not safe one moment unless our life is hid with Christ in God."⁹

The experience of Paul: A good illustration

1. ROMANS 7:5-11.

"The apostle Paul, in relating his experience [in Romans 7:9], presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says, 'I was alive without the law once'—he felt no condemnation; 'but when the commandment came,' when the law of God was urged upon his conscience, 'sin revived, and I died.' Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law. Mark, it was Paul, and not the law, that died."¹⁰

2. HOW DID PAUL DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM? PHILIPPIANS 3:3-17.

"Paul says that 'as touching the law'—as far as outward acts were con-

cerned—he was 'blameless,' but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, when he looked into the holy mirror, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by a human standard, he had abstained from sin, but when he looked into the depths of God's law, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation, and confessed his guilt. He did not go away from the mirror and forget what manner of man he was, but he exercised genuine repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He was washed, he was cleansed."¹¹

The apostle testified: "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**" (1 Corinthians 15:31, emphasis added).

"The Lord requires us to be submissive to His will, subdued by His Spirit, and sanctified to His service. Selfishness must be put away, and we must overcome every defect in our characters as Christ overcame. In order to accomplish this work, we must die daily to self. Said Paul: "I die daily." **He had a new conversion every day, took an advance step toward heaven.** To gain daily victories in the divine life is the only course that God approves. The Lord is gracious, of tender pity, and plenteous in mercy. He knows our needs and weaknesses, and He will help our infirmities if we only trust in Him and believe that He will bless us and do great things for us."¹²

"It is the daily dying to self in the little transactions of life that makes us overcomers. We should forget self in the desire to do good to others."¹³

“Paul’s sanctification was the result of a constant conflict with self. He said: ‘I die daily’ (1 Corinthians 15:31). His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God’s will, however crucifying to his own nature. God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose. No one will be borne upward without stern, persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves. Individually we are responsible for the issue of the struggle; though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land, they could deliver neither son nor daughter by their righteousness.”¹⁴

3. DID PAUL GAIN THE FINAL VICTORY? PHILIPPIANS 4:13; 2 TIMOTHY 4:6–8.

“Avoid running into temptation. When temptations surround you, and you cannot control the circumstances which expose you to them, then you may claim the promise of God and with confidence and conscious power exclaim, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me’ (Philippians 4:13). There is strength for you all in God. But you will never feel your

need of that strength which alone is able to save you unless you feel your weakness and sinfulness.”¹⁵

4. WHAT GODLY ADVICE DID PAUL LEAVE FOR US? EPHESIANS 6:10, 11.

“Everyone who has enlisted under the bloodstained banner of Christ has entered upon a warfare that demands constant vigilance. Satan is determined to keep up the warfare to the end. Coming as an angel of light, claiming to be the Christ, he will deceive the world. But his triumph will be short. No storm or tempest can move those whose feet are planted on the principles of eternal truth. They will be able to stand in this time of almost universal apostasy.”¹⁶

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:10, 11).

“Day by day we are to fight the good fight of faith. Day by day God will give us our work; and though we cannot see the end from the beginning, we are to examine ourselves daily to see if we are in the path of righteousness. We must strive to overcome, looking unto Jesus; for in every temptation He will be at our side to give us the victory. Every day should come to us as the last day in which we may be privileged to work for God, and much of it must be given to prayer that we may work in the strength of Christ. This is the way in which Enoch walked with God, warning and condemning the world by manifesting before them a righteous character.”¹⁷

Conclusion

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 24, 25).

“Our only safety is to watch and pray, and depart from all iniquity. If we would stand in the day of the Lord, we must search carefully our own hearts, and know whether we are in the love of God. Says the apostle: ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?’ (2 Corinthians 13:5). This close self-examination must go forward day by day and hour by hour.”¹⁸

Always remember that “you are unsafe, unless you hold the hand of Christ.”¹⁹ ❧

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- ⁹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 190.
- ¹⁰ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1076.
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- ¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 132.
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- ¹⁹ *Medical Ministry*, p. 37.

THE WINE FOR THE *Holy Communion*

Part 1 of 2

Picture the scene . . .

“When the hour was come, [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22:14–18).

What was inside the cup?

Regarding the wine that Jesus drank with His disciples in the upper room, many Christians hold one or the other of two contradictory opinions.

The first category is of those who believe that the drink which Jesus took with His disciples, even though it is called “wine,” is in reality pure, unfermented grape juice.

The second holds the opinion that the word “wine” used in Scripture refers to fermented grape juice (alcoholic wine). Therefore, in desiring to follow Christ’s example, they use alcoholic wine for the Holy Supper.

The truth is that only one of these opinions is right. I also believe that it is important to know exactly what Jesus drank that night in order that we may follow His example. Let us put our opinions and preconceived ideas aside for a moment as we turn to God’s

By G. Melnychuk

Word and to historical facts to distinguish between divine truth in contrast to human ideas.

One word—two meanings!

What is a homograph? It is a word that reads and spells the same but can actually mean two or more different things—depending on the general idea of a sentence. A few random examples include words such as “speaker” as a person who speaks—or as an electronic component in a sound system; “close” as in not far away—or in making a door or window no longer open; and similarly with other examples such as “issue,” “period,” “solution,” or “table.”

The word “wine” also has two different meanings. The first: unfermented grape juice. The second: a fermented, alcoholic beverage made from grapes. The second meaning has become so common in recent times, that many people are unaware of the first one. As a result, many Christians today erroneously assume that “wine” is **only** a fermented juice.

Therefore let us look at some older dictionaries of the English language:

The *General English Dictionary*, published in London in 1708, gives the following definition: “Wine, a Liquor made of the Juice of Grapes or other Fruits. Liquor or Liqueur, anything that is Liquid; Drink, Juice, etc. Must, Sweet Wine, newly pressed from the Grape.”¹

We find a similar definition in the 1760 *New Universal Etymological English Dictionary*: “Natural WINE, is such as it comes from the grape, without any mixture or sophistication. Adulterated WINE, is that wherein some drug is added to give it strength, fineness, flavour, briskness, or some other qualification.”²

The next evidence of the two different meanings of “wine” can be found in the 1830 *American Dictionary of the English Language*: “1. The fermented juice of grapes. 2. The juice of certain fruits.”³

“WINE a Liquor made of the Juice of the Grapes or other Fruits.”⁴ “LIQUOR anything that is liquid. Drink, Juice, Water, &c.”⁵

The 1854 *Imperial Dictionary* defines “wine” very simply: “The juice of certain fruits”⁶

In the 1895 *American Encyclopedic Dictionary* we find a more extensive explanation of the different meanings of the word “wine”: “1. The fermented juice of the grape. The must or expressed juice of the grapes. 2. The juice of certain fruits prepared in imitation of wine obtained from grapes, but distinguished by naming the source from whence obtained; as, gooseberry wine, currant wine, etc. 3. The unfermented juice of certain plants.”⁷

One more extended explanation of the different meanings of “wine”: “1. The fermented juice of the grape. . . . 2. The juice of certain fruits prepared in imitation of wine obtained from grapes. . . . 3. The unfermented juice.”⁸

The 1919 Funk & Wagnalls, *Desk Standard Dictionary of the English Language* defines “wine” as follows: “The fermented juice of the grape; in more extended use, the expressed juice of the grape, fermented or unfermented.”⁹

In its 1955 edition it reads almost the same: “The fermented juice of the grape: in loose language the juice of the grape whether fermented or not.”¹⁰

An exhaustive reference we find in the 1913 *Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, which defines “wine” as “the expressed juice of grapes, especially when fermented; a beverage . . . prepared from grapes by squeezing out their juice, and (usually) allowing it to ferment.”¹¹

This definition recognizes that the basic meaning of “wine” is “the expressed juice of grapes” which is **usually, but not always**, allowed to ferment.

Looking at the definitions of the word “wine” in older dictionaries, the ambiguity in the modern English

language becomes even more evident. It is clear that the word English word “wine” can refer to an alcoholic beverage as well as to pure, unfermented grape juice.

The 1997 *Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, one of the most popular dictionaries of the English language today, defines “wine” as: “3. The juice, fermented or unfermented, of various other fruits or plants, used as a beverage, sauce, etc.”¹²

The definitions of “wine” from older English dictionaries lead us to conclude that when the King James Version of the Bible was produced (1604–1611), its translators probably understood “wine” to refer to either fermented or unfermented wine.

“Wine” in the Hebrew language

The 1907 *Jewish Encyclopedia* gives a very clear evidence of the various liquids that have been translated as “wine”—not only in Jewish society but in religious ceremonies as well: “There were different kinds of wine. ‘Yayin’ was the ordinary matured, fermented wine, ‘tirosh’ was a new wine, and ‘shekar’ was an old, powerful wine [strong drink]. . . .

“Wine is called ‘yayin’ because it brings lamentation and wailing into the world, and ‘tirosh,’ . . . ‘Tirosh’ includes all kinds of sweet juices and must, and does not include fermented wine. ‘Yayin’ is to be distinguished from ‘shekar’; the former is diluted with water (‘mazug’); the latter is undiluted. . . .

“Fresh wine before fermenting was called ‘yayin mi-gat’ (wine of the vat). . . .

“For religious ceremonies wine is preferable to other beverages. Wine ‘cheereth God’ (Judges 9:13); hence no religious ceremony should be performed with other beverages than

Jesus, in referring to the drink which the disciples shared, declared that He would have the very same “new” drink again in His Father’s kingdom.

wine. Over all fruits the benediction used is that for ‘the fruits of the tree,’ but over wine a special benediction for ‘the fruits of the vine’ is pronounced. This latter benediction is, according to R. Eliezer, pronounced only when the wine has been properly mixed with water. Over natural wine the benediction is the same as that used for the ‘fruits of the tree.’ The drinking of natural wine on the night of Passover is not ‘in the manner of free men.’ ‘Kiddush’ and ‘Habdalah’ should be recited over a cup of wine. . . . According to Raba, **one may squeeze the juice of a bunch of grapes into a cup and say the \aleph iddush.** The cup is filled with natural wine during grace, in memory of the Holy Land, where the best wine is produced.”¹³

(By the way, what do these Hebrew words *Kiddush* and *Habdalah* mean? *Kiddush*—literally: “sanctification”—is a blessing recited over the kosher wine or grape juice to sanctify the

Shabbat or Jewish holiday (Passover). The *Habdalah* or *Havdalah* is a ceremonial ritual marking the end of the event.)

An almost identical description of the use of Jewish “wine” is found in the more recent *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971): “The newly pressed wine, prior to fermentation, was known as *yayin mi-gat* (‘wine from the vat’), *yayin yashan* (‘old wine’) was wine from the previous year, and that from earlier vintages, *yashan noshan* (‘old, very old’).”¹⁴

Both of these standard Jewish Encyclopedias explicitly attest that the Jewish “wine” was used to refer to a fermented wine as well as to fresh grape juice such as that squeezed from a cluster into a cup.

“Wine” in the Greek language

A key factor in our consideration is to establish whether or not the Greek word *oinos*—translated into English as “wine”—refers only to fermented grape

juice, because the experience recorded in the New Testament was written in Greek. To help us better understand how the Greek word for “wine” was used in the times of Christ, let us consider the historical Greek understanding:

Aristotle, the renowned Greek scientist and philosopher in his treatise *Meteorology* makes reference both to sweet, unfermented wine that does not inebriate, and to fermented, intoxicating wine—explaining that the same word is often used to describe two different things—either fermented or unfermented.

“Sweet wine does give off fumes. . . . Really it is not wine at all in spite of its name: for it does not taste like wine and consequently does not inebriate as ordinary wine does.”¹⁵

“The reason is that the word ‘wine’ is ambiguous and different ‘wines’ behave in different ways.”¹⁶

Athenaeus, the Grammarian (about A.D. 200), explains that sweet, unfer-

mented “wine” is good for the stomach. He recommends that the dyspeptic “take sweet wine, either mixed with water or warmed, especially that which is called *protropos*, the sweet Lesbian wine, as being very good for the stomach. New sweet wines do not make the head heavy.”¹⁷

There are other materials (historical records and biographies, as well as examinations of these materials done as doctoral research) of Greek origin that prove the word “wine” to have two different implications—one being an alcoholic beverage, the other a fresh, not fermented, natural grape juice.

Indeed, historical references and definitions of the word “wine” reveal multiple meanings to be evident in Hebrew, in Greek, and in the English language as well. On what basis, therefore, do many Christians assign to Jesus the use of alcoholic wine?

What was in the cup?

Now that we understand that the word “wine” as used in the Bible can mean more than one thing, we return to the question: Which kind of wine did Jesus use at the Last Supper? Please read carefully in the four Gospels the following verses, which describe the passover supper of Jesus with His disciples in the upper room, the night before His crucifixion:

t.BUUIFXo
t.BSLo
t-VLFo
t.IODIBQUFSTo

Did you notice that the word “wine” does not even appear in the passages listed above? None of the four evangelists use the word “wine” in reference to the drink they had that night! Instead, three of them clearly state that in the cup was “the fruit of the vine”:

Jesus declared, “I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of **this fruit of the vine**, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29).

“Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of **the fruit of the vine**, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God” (Mark 14:25).

“For I say unto you, I will not drink

of **the fruit of the vine**, until the kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22:18).

What is “the fruit of the vine?”

The same Bible verses (Matthew 26:29 and Mark 14:25) give us an answer to this question. Both Matthew and Mark recorded the words of Jesus as “until that day when I drink it **new**” (see verses above). In other words, Jesus, in referring to the drink which the disciples had just shared, declared that He would have the very same “new” drink again in His “Father’s kingdom.”

The Greek word “new” (*kainon*) used in Matthew 26:29 and Mark 14:25 means and is translated as followed: a. as respects form: **recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn**; b. as respects substance: *of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of.*¹⁸

So the word “new” is used on purpose to clarify what kind of “fruit of the vine” was in the cup. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* states very clear: “There were different kinds of wine. ‘Yayin’ was the ordinary matured, fermented wine, ‘tirosh’ was a new wine . . . one may squeeze the juice of a bunch of grapes into a cup and say the **‘tidush.’**”

“The newly pressed wine, prior to fermentation, was known as yayin migat (‘wine from the vat’).”

“By the term ‘new wine,’ [that] *must* is meant, can hardly admit of a doubt. In Luther’s translation . . . as elsewhere, ‘new wine’ is invariably rendered *must*. The meaning of *must* as defined by all the Dictionaries is ‘new wine, wine pressed from the grape, but *not fermented*’—*Imperial Dictionary*. The two terms (*i.e.*, new wine and *must*), are used interchangeably in all the books, and this of itself is conclusive, that wine to be wine need not be fermented.”¹⁹

Since “new wine” and “must” are interchangeable words, an important detail is coming into the picture while we look at the definition of “must.” Even the more recent 1997 *Webster’s Dictionary*, defines “must” as: “**wine; the unfermented juice as pressed from the grape** or other fruit.”²⁰ This definition once again clearly equates “wine” with grape juice.

So, none of the four evangelists used the word “wine” when referring to the drink used in the upper room. This makes sense because, as mentioned above, this word in Greek has various meanings and could be easily misinterpreted. Instead, to close the door for any possible suppositions, Matthew and Mark, with “the fruit of the wine” use the word “new,” thus making clear that Jesus pronounced a blessing over the “new wine” or “must” which was, in reality, grape juice. Proverbs 28:13. *R*

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THE ATTITUDE IN ASKING

A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation, with comments by B. Montrose

We live in an age of instant gratification. We want things to happen quickly—fast food, immediate results, online information at your fingertips on virtually any subject, ultra-fast text/cell communication, ready transportation, rush, rush, rush.

You can even find quick answers about the will of your Father in heaven. Just check out the various Bible websites that provide concordance information in any translation, or reap the benefits of the comprehensive research edition of the writings of Ellen G. White and the Advent pioneers. Just think—such a wealth of enlightening information is available to us nowadays at minimal cost!

But here is another question: What about answers to prayer? Are those answers coming faster than ever before, too? . . . Especially on large matters—do tremendous, breakthrough answers to prayer constitute part of the current trend in keeping with today's increasing pace of things?

To be honest, probably not—at least for most professed Christians. Everything is speeding up, except for that. Why?

A lot of it has to do with our state of mind. God has His wisdom and

timing; He will not be intimidated—or even unnecessarily rushed if it's not for the ultimate benefit of humanity. Above all, He bases His relationship with us largely on what we are inside, not what we profess to be on the outside.

How often do we hear about miraculously answered prayer for people who are living in ignorance and sin. Yet only Heaven can measure the level of accountability required of every individual soul that He has made. One thing is for sure, however: Those of us entrusted with great light have a greater level of accountability for that light.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

1. Purity of conscience

The first prerequisite to answered prayer is to confess our sins. The inspired psalmist states clearly: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). The Hebrew word here translated as "regard" signifies many things—including approve, behold, or perceive. That means to be aware of some form of iniquity in the inner life. If we are aware of something wrong in ourselves, we

should not just blithely, casually accept that reality—we should do something about it! "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:9, 10).

In view of this necessary requirement, the psalmist was able to continue His declaration, "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" (Psalm 66:19, 20).

But what if we are not sure whether or not we have done something wrong? Quite often that is the case, partly because of the deceptive nature of sin itself. As sin blunts our discernment, the spirit of self-justification arises and we are tempted to convince ourselves that we are perfectly—or at least marginally—innocent, when in many cases we may indeed be guilty of some kind of wrongdoing. "Marginally innocent"? That's an interesting concept. In reality, there is really no such thing. But often the human mind rationalizes itself into spiritually vague territory when it considers that the guilt of another person

has surely been greater than “mine.” Therefore “my” guilt must not be so bad. Hmm. Sounds like a cheap way to try to justify self.

“When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances, he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved. But the examples in God’s word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification.

“Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt.”¹

The inspired apostle did not paint his guilt in light-colored shades. He might have reasoned that he did not know any better when he committed wrongs against the followers of Christ. But he did not attempt to deceive himself this way—he went ahead and freely acknowledged his wrongdoing. The psalmist did the same:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is

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

It doesn’t really matter whether our guilt is minimal or huge. The blood of Christ is more than adequate to be able to handle the sins of the whole world. “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2).

Why should we then be ashamed over whether our sin is small or great compared to the guilt of someone else? Sin is sin, period. There is no such thing as marginal or borderline guilt. If we have any measure of guilt, we are guilty. Even if someone else is involved in the guilt, that does not free us from our responsibility.

“If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters—if envy, malice,

bitterness, evil surmisings, have existed, confess these sins, **not in a general way**, but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. **If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender.**”²

Do not confess “in a general way”! That means it’s not enough to say superficially at footwashing time, “Sorry if I offended you in any way.” Well, did you or didn’t you? Sometimes you honestly may not know—in which case such a comment would certainly be fine and appropriate. But many times you may know perfectly well that you likely offended someone. So why be vague and general about it? That is not painting your sin in its darkest hue—it’s whitewashing it to avoid confrontation and personal embarrassment. Does such a habit promote genuine Christian integrity? Does it develop a people in whose mouth is found no guile—a mandatory requirement in this sealing time? (Revelation 14:1–5.) No, it does not.

Now is no time for religious games. We are not to include in our prayers the token statement, “Forgive our sins” without honestly seeking to know what those sins are and taking serious steps to eradicate them. We need to study God’s word to know His will, we need the eyesalve of spiritual discernment to see how it applies to us, we need faith to believe that God will forgive our shortcomings, and we need love to be courageous enough to apologize to others. **“One of the greatest hindrances to our spiritual success is the great want of love and respect evidenced for one another.”**³

If we are going around with a dirty conscience (*i.e.*, any unconfessed, known sin), there will certainly be a delay in receiving answers to our prayers, except if they would be according to the multitude of idols (Ezekiel 14:4), which should be an answer we wouldn’t want if we are truly serious about our salvation.

2. Wholeheartedness

“In order to do the will of God, we must search His Word, that we may know His doctrine, and put to the

“Let this be your prayer: ‘Take everything from me, let me lose property, worldly honor, everything, but let Thy presence be with me.’ It is safe to commit the keeping of the soul to God.”

task all our entrusted ability. We must be diligent in prayer, and fervent in simple, wholehearted service to God.”⁴

“Today we need men of thorough fidelity, men who follow the Lord fully, men who are not disposed to be silent when they ought to speak, who are as true as steel to principle, men who do not seek to make a pretentious show, but who walk humbly with God, patient, kind, obliging, courteous men, who understand that **the science of prayer is to exercise faith and show works that will tell to the glory of God and the good of His people.** . . . To follow Jesus requires wholehearted conversion at the start, and a repetition of this conversion every day.”⁵

Half-heartedness gets us nowhere. The apostle James exhorts us:

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 1:5–8; 4:8).

“God is behind every promise, and we cannot dishonor Him more than by questioning and hesitating, by asking and not believing, and then by talking doubt. If you do not immediately receive what you have asked for, will you go on in sullenness and unbelief? Believe; believe that God will do just what He has promised. Keep your prayers ascending, and watch, work, and wait. Fight the good fight of faith. Say to your heart, ‘God has

invited me to come. He has heard my prayer. He has pledged His word that He will receive me, and He will fulfil His promise. I can trust God; for He so loved me that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for me. The Son of God is my Redeemer.’ ”⁶

“If we would only take the Lord at His word, what blessings might be ours! Would that there were more fervent, effectual prayer. Christ will be the helper of all who seek Him in faith.”⁷

The Lord declares: “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, **when ye shall search for me with all your heart**” (Jeremiah 29:11–13, emphasis supplied).

“The infinite wisdom and power of God are exerted in our behalf. The heavenly host are surely fighting our battles for us. They are always looking with **intense** interest upon the souls purchased by the Saviour’s blood. They see, through the sacrifice of Christ, the value of the human soul. It is always safe to be on the Lord’s side, not halfheartedly, but wholly. It is this halfhearted, indifferent, careless work that separates your souls from Jesus, the source of your strength. **Let this be your prayer: ‘Take everything from me, let me lose property, worldly honor, everything, but let Thy presence be with me.’** It is safe to commit the keeping of the soul to God, who reigns over all heaven and earth.”⁸

3. Surrender and submission

The last statement above now brings us into another point that is essential to answered prayer: Submission to God

and surrender to His will. Even Christ Himself needed to do this during His earthly life on earth as He “fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. . . . He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matthew 26:39, 42).

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to his will**, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 5:14, 15, emphasis added).

Sometimes we may wonder why answers do not come, but we are warned, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3).

4. Humble contrition

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. There are those who conduct themselves in His house as they would not presume to do in the audience chamber of an earthly ruler. These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces. God is greatly to be revered; all who truly realize His presence will bow in humility before Him.”⁹

“Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance.”¹⁰

“What we need is men of prayer, men who in quietness and humility, without any display or excitement, are overcoming self.”¹¹

“When we fall, all helpless, suffering in consequence of our realization of the sinfulness of sin; when we humble ourselves before God, afflicting our

souls by true repentance and contrition; when we offer our fervent prayers to God in the name of Christ, we shall as surely be received by the Father, as we sincerely make a complete surrender of our all to God. We should realize in our inmost soul that all our efforts in and of ourselves will be utterly worthless; for it is only in the name and strength of the Conqueror that we shall be overcomers.

"If we believe in the power of Jesus' name, and present our petitions to God in His name, we shall never be turned away."¹²

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer" (Psalm 102:17).

Remember some of the petitions that were warmly accepted when the Son of man lived on the earth: The centurion who requested that his son be healed (Matthew 8:5-13); the father of the demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:7-29); the Syrophenician woman whose daughter was vexed with a devil (Mark 7:24-30); blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)—all these approached the Lord with great humility of heart, acknowledging their unworthiness, and pleading for mercy. Their petitions were readily granted.

The Lord assures us:

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). The humility factor is why fasting is sometimes recommended as a helpful accompaniment to prayer.

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

This humility is not limited to our relationship to the Almighty—it also encompasses our relationships with one another. We are bidden: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

"God grants no pardon to him whose penitence produces no humility, and whose faith does not work by love to purify the soul. We need to study the example of Him who was meek and lowly, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. A vindictive spirit will not be indulged by a true Christian.

Parents should teach their children to be patient under injuries. Teach them that wonderful precept in the Lord's prayer, that we are to forgive others as we would be forgiven."¹³

5. Keeping it all in perspective

As mentioned, God has His timing, and He knows what is best. We need not behave like spoiled children demanding of Him. Patience is a quality that we definitely need to cultivate now more than ever, for "here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). Jesus tells us, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3, 4).

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).

The servant of the Lord explains: "There are precious promises in the Scriptures to those who wait upon the Lord. **We all desire an immediate answer to our prayers, and we are tempted to become discouraged if our prayer is not immediately answered.** Now my experience has taught me that **this is a great mistake. The delay is for our special benefit.** Our faith has a chance to be tested to see whether it is true, sincere, or changeable like the waves of the sea. We must bind ourselves upon the altar with the strong cords of faith and love, and let patience have her perfect work. Faith strengthens through continual exercise.

"We must pray more and in faith. We must not pray and then run away as though afraid we should receive an answer. God will not mock us. He will answer if we watch unto prayer, if we believe we receive the things we ask for, and keep believing and never lose patience in believing. This is watching unto prayer. We guard the prayer of faith with expectancy and hope. We must wall it in with assurance and be not faithless, but believing. The fervent prayer of the righteous is never lost.

The answer may not come according as we expected, but it will come, because God's word is pledged."¹⁴

"Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."¹⁵

If in doubt . . .

The promises of God are real—and so is the assurance: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).

"The same compassionate Saviour lives today, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. . . . It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask."¹⁶

"You feel that you have neglected duties, that you have not prayed as you should. You seem at a distance from Jesus and think that He has withdrawn from you; but it is you who have separated from Him. He is waiting for you to return. He will accept the contrite heart. . . . As far as it is in your power to do so, cleanse the soul temple of every defilement, and then look to the 'Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29)."¹⁷ *R*

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By W. Knowles

Some of us like to go camping, or perhaps we like to cook—or maybe we like to go to the zoo. All of these take some preparation. Almost everything takes some preparation.

There was preparation for Christ's first coming, and there is preparation also for His second coming. During His first coming, Christ spent 3½ years with the disciples to prepare them after He would return to heaven—and character was one of the main issues that He had to address. Likewise, there is a preparation that should now be taking place for Christ's second coming.

There is much history that we could look at dealing with education. Before 1844 there was an interesting change going on in the educational system. The changes were not sufficient to prepare the various churches of the early 1800's to accept the three angels' messages. We are facing today the same challenge; a proper educational system is vitally important to prepare the last generation to accept salvation—and we are told that if we fail to understand the true science of education we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God.

What is the object of education? Let's look at the definitions of the words "object" and "education."

There are several definitions for "object," but the one we will look at is this:

Object: That to which the mind is directed for accomplishment or attainment; end; ultimate purpose.

So what we want to see is the ultimate purpose of education, that is, what is to be attained.

Now we will look at two different definitions for the word "education," one in a modern dictionary and one in an older dictionary.

The first one is from the online Merriam-Webster dictionary:

"Education: 1 *a* : the action or process of educating or of being educated; also: a stage of such a process
b : the knowledge and development resulting from an educational process
2 : the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools."¹

The second one is from the 1828 dictionary prepared by Noah Webster:

"Education, . . . The bringing up, as of a child, instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline

which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a **religious education is indispensable**; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties."²

What a difference from what education used to be and what it is today! We have lost a lot in our understanding of education. Education is not what it used to be. We need to come back to the true education.

"Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). If this is the price of heaven, shall not our education be conducted on these lines?"³

In the beginning we were created in the image of God

"God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26, 27).

Originally, we were created in God's image. Do we still reflect God's image? What has happened between then and now? Humanity has grossly defaced the image of God; this is revealed in the history of humankind and it is the result of sin—defacing the image of God. But it has been God's endeavor to bring back humanity to reflect His image.

What is the object of education? What does the Bible tell us? "Behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted [Jesus], saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,**

and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25–28, emphasis supplied).

There are three components that the lawyer alludes to here:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Is not this the spiritual part of us?

"And with all thy strength." Here we see a physical component.

"And with all thy mind." God is interested in our spiritual, our physical, and our mental aspects of life—our complete being, and we must serve Him with our whole being.

The object of education is to restore men and women to the image of God—spiritually, physically, and mentally.

Let's look at some character examples in the Bible to help illustrate this point.

In the book of Daniel we find about "children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 1:4).

These were the children before they arrived in Babylon. This was before they were taught in the Babylonian school; these were things they brought with them. They already had wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of science. Where had they acquired this education? At home! From their parents. But they had more than this, because we read that "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (verse 8). There was something else that Daniel brought with him; it was not only his knowledge but his purpose and his dedication to the Lord of our lives the Creator of the universe. This he got from his parents when he was young. This was his education and upbringing.

Where has education failed today? It has failed to instill in the youth that love—that dedication—to follow God through everything. What does it take?

Samson

Let us look at another biblical experience which began with the wife of Manoah: "The angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing" (Judges 13:3, 4).

Here we have the story of Samson, mighty in physical strength but weak in character. Instruction was given his parents as to the diet he should have, and they carefully listened to the instruction.

When Samson was a bit older, "he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well" (Judges 14:2, 3).

What does this sound like? This is the same thing that is said today, only in different areas and in different ways.

As conscientious as Samson's parents were when he was still in the womb, nevertheless in his upbringing there was evidently a lack. Something was missing.

"To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of **body, mind, and soul**, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. **This** is the object of education, the great object of life."⁴

Education has failed to instill the principles of Christianity into the heart—that the body, mind, and soul might once again reflect the image of God.

“The strength of Moses was his connection with the Source of all power, the Lord God of hosts. He rises grandly above every earthly inducement, and trusts himself wholly to God. He considered that he was the Lord’s. While he was connected with the official interests of the king of Egypt, he was constantly studying the laws of God’s government, and thus his faith grew. That faith was of value to him. It was deeply rooted in the soil of his earliest teachings, and the culture of his life was to prepare him for the great work of delivering Israel from bondage. He meditated on these things; he was constantly listening to his commission from God. After slaying the Egyptian, he saw that he had not understood

God’s plan, and he fled from Egypt and became a shepherd. He was no longer planning to do a great work, but he became very humble; the mists that were beclouding his mind were expelled, and he disciplined his mind to seek after God as his refuge.”⁶

It took 40 years in the wilderness to learn the character that was required to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Samuel

Samuel is a child from whom we can learn. We find the summary of his life in Scripture: “And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men” (1 Samuel 2:26). What was the key to the life of Samuel as a man of God? We read: “Opportunities of inestimable worth, interests infinitely precious, are committed to every mother. During the first three years of the life of Samuel the prophet, his mother carefully taught him to distinguish between good and evil. By every familiar object surrounding him she sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator. In fulfillment of her vow to give her son to the Lord, with great self-denial she placed him under the care of Eli the high priest, to be trained for service in the house of God. . . . His early training led him to choose to

maintain his Christian integrity. What a reward was Hannah’s! And what an encouragement to faithfulness is her example!”⁷

David

The life of David is a different experience, because of the position in which he was placed. He went through many trying circumstances—and as a youth he had not gone to battle with his brothers. Where did he spend much of his time? “David went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem” (1 Samuel 17:15). David spent much time with his father’s sheep. He learned bravery and patience during the years caring for those sheep. “David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him” (verses 34, 35).

These examples didn’t just happen by themselves—they had a cause. The training of the great men of God was such as to give them purpose in life, to give them fortitude and determination.

“The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. In the beginning, God created man in His own likeness. He endowed him with noble qualities. His mind was well-balanced, and all the powers of his being were harmonious. But the Fall and its effects have perverted these gifts. Sin has marred and well-nigh obliterated the image of God in man.”⁸

How is restoring “the image of God” accomplished?

By some, education is placed next to religion, but true education is religion. We find the key in the following statements:

“God had commanded the Hebrews to teach their children His requirements and to make them acquainted with all His dealings with their fathers. This was one of the special duties of every parent—one that was not to be delegated to another. In the place of stranger lips the loving hearts of the

Moses

Let’s look at another example, when the king of Egypt decreed that the Hebrew midwives were to cast into the river all the male infants born to the Hebrews. When one Levite woman, Jochebed, delivered her son, she managed to hide him from this peril for three months. “And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink” (Exodus 2:3).

This is speaking, of course, of the child Moses, who was only at home for a few years before being forced by royal decree to go into Pharaoh’s court. But what happened in the character of Moses? We can find the answer here: “The instructions which Moses received from his parents were such as to fortify his mind, and shield him from being corrupted with sin, and becoming proud amid the splendor and extravagance of court life. He had a clear mind and an understanding heart, and never lost the pious impressions he received in youth. His mother kept him as long as she could but was obliged to separate from him when he was about twelve years old, and he then became the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”⁵

father and mother were to give instruction to their children. Thoughts of God were to be associated with all the events of daily life. The mighty works of God in the deliverance of His people and the promises of the Redeemer to come were to be often recounted in the homes of Israel. . . . The great truths of God's providence and of the future life were impressed on the young mind. It was trained to see God alike in the scenes of nature and the words of revelation. The stars of heaven, the trees and flowers of the field, the lofty mountains, the rippling brooks—all spoke of the Creator. The solemn service of sacrifice and worship at the sanctuary and the utterances of the prophets were a revelation of God.

"Such was the training of Moses in the lowly cabin home in Goshen; of Samuel, by the faithful Hannah; of David, in the hill dwelling at Bethlehem; of Daniel, before the scenes of the captivity separated him from the home of his fathers. Such, too, was the early life of Christ at Nazareth; such the training by which the child Timothy learned from the lips of his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, the truths of Holy Writ (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15)."⁹

Then we have the example of Christ. What is said about Him?

"The question asked during the Saviour's ministry, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' does not indicate that Jesus was unable to read but merely that He had not received a rabbinical education. (John 7:15). Since He gained knowledge as we may do, His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently **His early years were given to the study of God's word.** And spread out before Him was the great library of God's **created works.** He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. **Apart from the unholy ways of the world, He gathered stores of scientific knowledge from nature.** He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man. From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others. For this He found resources in nature; new ideas of ways and means flashed into His mind as He studied plant life and animal life. Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the living oracles of God. The parables by which, during His ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature, and how He had gathered the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life."¹⁰

Here we can understand how Christ learned. Why didn't He learn from the typical schools?

"The teachers in the days of Christ did not educate the youth in the correct knowledge of the Scriptures, which lie at the foundation of all education worthy of the name. Christ declared to the Pharisees, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God,' 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men' (Matthew 22:29; 15:9). And He prayed for His disciples, 'Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth' (John 17:17)."¹¹

His disciples

"Christ did not go to the schools of learning and take men of high attain-

ment to do His work, for He could not use them. They had an understanding of forms and ceremonies, but that was about all. Jesus called the unlearned fishermen to His work; but before He sent them forth, He took them into His school, and taught them Himself, that they might be fitted for winning souls for eternal life."¹²

What does all this mean for us?

Brothers and sisters, there is coming that night in which no human can work. What are we doing in our own homes?

What is our purpose in life?

Is it to prepare to receive the higher education in the school above, and to obey God so that Christ's death wasn't in vain for us? We may learn lessons from these stories, not only for the training of our children and youth but for our own selves as well.

Education is the key to the success of the last generation. I pray that the Lord will help us to come into line on this vital topic.

In conclusion, let us once again keep in mind the importance of this subject: "Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). If this is the price of heaven, shall not our education be conducted on these lines?" *R*

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Activities for Holy Time

Child-Friendly Solutions for Sabbath Serenity

By P. Stemmler

The Sabbath as it was instituted was actually to protect the family from being too busy to spend time together. It is holy time with God, and special time with the family. Please notice what Inspiration has given for us regarding the Sabbath and the family.

"The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. **On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden.** It was God's plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the father as priest of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children. But the results of sin, having changed the conditions of life, to a great degree prevent this association. Often the father hardly sees the faces of his children throughout the week. He is almost wholly deprived of opportunity for companionship or instruction. But God's love has set a

limit to the demands of toil. **Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another.**"¹

There are Bible studies regarding the need for preparation, worship, and rest. Not much information is available about what to do with our families that would qualify to be done on "holy time." This article is to give practical suggestions on what families might do together on Sabbath.

God's inspired list of activities:

The following are inspired ideas found within the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. In order to make anything interesting, you need creativity and variety. This list is not exhaustive—in fact, it would be good to make up your own list of ideas. You could place them on index cards and then choose at least one out of your selection each week, so that you can properly prepare. You might also want a special selection for those "unex-

pected Sabbaths" when you have extra guests and plans change.

1. Focus on making the Sabbath a delight
2. Commune with God
3. Study nature
4. Talk with one another
5. Walk outdoors
6. Study
7. Enjoy the stillness
8. Help others
9. Provide a special treat for the Sabbath

The list expanded

Following is the list expanded. You will find in each section an inspired statement to pray and think about and then some ideas that you can incorporate into your own special planning for the Sabbath. Most of all, remember to enjoy the process of planning, of doing, and of honoring your Creator.

1. Focus on making the Sabbath a delight

"The Sabbath should be made so interesting to our families that its weekly return will be hailed with joy.

In no better way can parents exalt and honor the Sabbath than by **devising means to impart proper instruction to their families and interesting them in spiritual things**, giving them correct views of the character of God and what He requires of us in order to perfect Christian characters and attain to eternal life. Parents, **make the Sabbath a delight**, that your children may look forward to it and have a welcome in their hearts for it."²

Pray for wisdom from God so that creative, interesting ideas can be implemented each week.

Suggestions:

a. Have a theme-oriented plan – Maybe for each month, or each week, think of some theme that you can plan activities, food and visitors around.

Example: December – Remembering the birth of Christ

- i. Visit a farm a find a manger and/or a donkey.
- ii. Study the biblical accounts of Jesus' birth—dig in to find out something you never noticed before.
- iii. Talk about what it might be like to have to leave all of your friends and family to go far away and have a baby.
- iv. Study the donkey. Why is it known as the beast of burden?
- v. Find other Bible examples of donkey usage.
- vi. Find, copy, and then make available pictures to go along with your theme.
- vii. Go for a long walk, thinking about the long journey that Joseph and Mary had to take. What provisions would they have had? Can you plan a Sabbath meal with this in mind?
- viii. Read other stories from the Bible about this great event.
- ix. Take some time individually to think of things that you are really

thankful for, that Jesus has given us as a special gift.

- x. Take turns sharing what you are thankful for yourself, and write down the list.
- xi. Take time to think of what gift you are thankful for in other family members.
- xii. Take a special gift of cookies or bread or a card or a song for a visit with song to someone who might be lonely or discouraged.

Are you getting inspired yet? I will try to give more theme suggestions. The number of ideas is limited only to the time you spend thinking about them. You could tie in ideas about the human body, any creatures in nature, about family members, about building, wind, the list of created things mentioned in the book Job like oceans, rivers, stars. . . . You get the idea.

t8OVBS85IFCFBVU8GUIF
 snowflake (in places where snow is common)
 t8CSVBS84VOTIJOF
 t.BSDIo8JOEBOESBJO
 t8QJMo/FXMJGF
 t.B84QSQJOHnPXEST
 t8OFo5IFHBSEFOGPPE
 t8M88BUFS
 t8HVTUo(SFFOHSBTTBOEPUIFS

plants
 t4FQUFNCFSo&EVDBUJPO
 t0DUPCFSo5IBOLGVMOFTT
 More themes might include:
 Go into all the world—a study of

different nations and customs, and how to reach them for Jesus.

Colors—what has God made that is blue, green, red, and so forth. . . .

2. Communion with God

Naturally, adults usually think of the need to take some time to pray on the Sabbath, and parents should pray with their children at the times of worship. But communion is wonderful when it's one on One.

- a. Teach the children what communion is and how to talk and listen to God.
- b. Plan special times when each member of the family can talk to God alone.
- c. Plan a special place either in the home or outside the home to be each one's prayer closet.
- d. Realizing that communication is two-way, think of interesting ways that children can hear God speak to them. Maybe through a song, the reading of the Bible or the watching of an animal.
- e. Encourage each person to keep a record of what he or she heard or learned during their time alone with God. This record could be spoken or written. Malachi 3:16 states that God keeps records about us and suggests that these include what He hears from us. Shouldn't we likewise keep records of what we learn from God?

3. Nature

This is a very big section because there are endless things in nature to study. Notice the following:

"Parents may **take their children outdoors to view God in nature**. [The children] can be pointed to the blooming flowers and the opening buds, the lofty trees and beautiful spires of grass, and taught that **God made all these in six days and rested**

on the seventh day and hallowed it.

Thus the parents may bind up their lessons of instruction to their children, so that when these children look upon the things of nature, they will call to mind the great Creator of them all.

Their thoughts will be carried up to nature's God—back to the creation of our world, when the foundation of the Sabbath was laid, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Such are the lessons to be impressed on the minds of our children. . . .

“Teach the children to see Christ in nature. Take them out into the open air, under the noble trees, into the garden; and in all the wonderful works of creation teach them to see an expression of His love. Teach them that He made the laws which govern all living things, that He has made laws for us, and that these laws are for our happiness and joy. Do not weary them with long prayers and tedious exhortations, but through nature's object lessons teach them obedience to the law of God.”³

THE LIST

- a. Read from various Scripture references about things in nature that God uses to teach us lessons. Examples could be Job 12:7–9, chapters 26, 28, 37–41; 1 Corinthians 12. For older children, have them use a concordance and find their own Bible passages about nature.
- b. Pick your Bible theme and then go out into nature and find something that illustrates the biblical precept. For example: You are reading that love is patient. Now go looking for natural examples of patience in action. It may be the ant trying to take its catch back to the nest, or some other mother animal working with her offspring. Maybe it will be the length of time a tree takes to grow or a plant to bear its fruit.

- c. Choose one specific animal or group of animals and read about them, look at them, visit where they might live, follow their trails, colour a picture of them, or draw it yourself. What does that creature do to live, to breathe, to eat, to drink? Are there spiritual parallels? Take time to share what each is learning.
- d. Write your own object lessons. You can use the examples at www.placetogrow.ca/childrensmaterials to get your mind working, or the book *Nature Speaks. Are We Listening?* This resource actually has activity plans with each creature that is described.
- e. Go on special outings to find different animal groups.
- f. What can we be thankful for with each animal?
- g. Study more in other informative books about the various animals.
- h. Is there reference in the Bible to any animals you choose to study? Why? What is its use and reference?
- i. Make a list of animals using the letters of the alphabet in their order (e.g., Anteater, Bear, Crocodile, and so forth).
- j. There are many precious books that show wonderful pictures of God's creation. There are also DVD's, and online resources. Be sure to examine them in advance for suitability before offering them to your children.
- k. Choose songs that might go along with the lessons you are learning.

Sing them outside.

1. Read the Bible outside in a special place in God's creation.

4. Talk to each other

I have already mentioned a few suggestions how to integrate this with other things. Remember, . . .

“The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate. Whatever of ours God claims from us, He returns again, enriched, transfigured,

with His own glory.”⁴

“How can children receive a more correct knowledge of God, and their minds be better impressed, than in spending a portion of their time out-of-doors, **not in play, but in company with their parents?** Let their young minds be associated with God in the beautiful scenery of nature; let their attention be called to the tokens of His love to man in His created works, and they will be attracted and interested. They will not be in danger of associating the character of God with everything that is stern and severe; but as they view the beautiful things which He has created for the happiness of man, they will be led to regard Him as a tender, loving Father. They will see that His prohibitions and injunctions are not made merely to show His power and authority, but that He has the happiness of His children in view. As the character of God puts on the aspect of love, benevolence, beauty, and attraction, they are drawn to love Him. You can direct their minds to the lovely birds making the air musical with their happy songs, to the spires of grass and the gloriously tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air. All these proclaim the love and skill of the heavenly Artist and show forth the glory of God.”⁵

- a. Have happy talks with the children. For what are they most thankful?
- b. Talk about what they might be sad? Or concerned? Maybe they are thinking about a sick relative and want to help him or her.

- c. Invest in quality time one-on-one.
- d. Make a special card or note with a Bible verse in it for a specific family member.
- e. Pick a special song to sing for the rest of the family. Each family member can participate.

5. Walk outdoors

"We are not to teach our children that they must not be happy on the Sabbath, that it is wrong to walk out-of-doors. Oh, no. Christ led His disciples out by the lakeside on the Sabbath day and taught them. His sermons on the Sabbath were not always preached within enclosed walls."⁶

"We should devote time to interesting our children. A change will have a happy influence upon them. We can **walk out with them in the open air**; we can sit with them in the groves and in the bright sunshine, and give their restless minds something to feed upon by **conversing with them upon the works of God**, and can inspire them with love and reverence by calling their **attention to the beautiful objects in nature.**"⁷

"In pleasant weather let parents walk with their children in the fields and groves. Amid the beautiful things of nature tell them the reason for the institution of the Sabbath. Describe to them God's great work of creation. Tell them that when the earth came from His hand, it was holy and beautiful. Every flower, every shrub, every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator. Everything upon which the eye rested was lovely and filled the mind with thoughts of the love of God. Every sound was music in harmony with the voice of God. Show that it was sin which marred God's perfect work; that thorns and thistles, sorrow and pain and death, are all the result of disobedience to God. Bid them see how the earth, though marred with the curse of sin, still reveals God's goodness. The green fields, the lofty trees, the glad sunshine, the clouds, the dew, the solemn stillness of the night, the glory of the starry heavens, and the moon in its beauty all bear witness of the Creator. Not a drop of rain falls, not a ray of light is shed on our unthankful world, but it testifies to the forbearance and love of God."⁸

- a. The quotations above already give many ideas for this section. Call attention to the beautiful objects in nature. In fact, maybe you can start a collection of something. Example: special small blue stones, or feathers, or unusual pieces of bark.
- b. Organize a game by asking the question: Which day was it made? Have children find something that they think is really beautiful, or unusual, or special, or funny, etc., and tell you on which day of creation week it was made.
- c. Find thorns and thistles. Discuss why they are there. What is different about them versus flowers and plants? On which should we focus?
- d. Study music in nature. How does it sound? How does it feel?
- e. What does sunshine help? How?
- f. Discuss why God chose the colors prominent in nature's palette. What can we learn about the effect of color on us?
- g. Lay on a blanket in a field and count the things around you that show God's love.
- h. Take along a piece of string maybe 1 to 2 feet long for each person. Place each string in a circle on the ground some distance away from each other. Every person can take 5 or 10 or 15 minutes and just watch within their string to see what animals are there. This may require a great deal of patience while staying still.
- i. A similar concept is to take something that will frame an area; maybe an old picture frame that can be set on its side or mounted against something. Everyone can look through it from a different angle and share the things that they see that our Creator has made.
- j. Wear a blindfold for a portion of a walk (somewhere safe with someone sighted doing the leading) and notice the sounds, smells, and textures of God's creation. Isn't the Lord good in giving us five senses!

6. Study

"The children can be interested in good reading or in conversation about the salvation of their souls. But they will have to be **educated and trained**. The natural heart does not love to

think of God, of heaven, or of heavenly things. There must be a continual pressing back of the current of worldliness and inclination to evil and a letting in of heavenly light."⁹

"From time to time read with [your children] the interesting stories in Bible history. Question as to what they have learned in the Sabbath School and **study with them** the next Sabbath's lesson."¹⁰

- a. Find and read interesting Bible stories, picking a specific character quality that you feel would be of value to your children.
- b. Find and read interesting character building stories that will help on the spiritual journey to heaven.
- c. Find some of the visions that were given to Sister White and, after reading, enter into a discussion about what this means. Maybe you can do this in an

area that would show some of the features of the landscape.

- d. Ask questions about the children's story or the sermon or the children's Sabbath lesson of that morning.
- e. Study next week's Bible lesson with them, making it interesting by your enthusiasm.

7. Enjoy the stillness

It is a great idea to take some time to be alone with God during the Sabbath afternoon too. That's when you can ask God for guidance and/or understanding of the messages that you may have heard during Sabbath School and the sermon. What does the Bible say about having a quiet time?

Psalm 46:10—"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

Isaiah 30:15—"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

- a. Read the verses above to the family. Explain that each one is going to take a few minutes of quietness, which means no noise, no talking, no whispering, just quiet. This could be done all together or separately. The purpose is to let God's Holy Spirit speak to our heart while everything else is quiet. Then share what you learned in that time.
- b. This can be incorporated with a walk (or while observing nature inside a circle of string as mentioned earlier). Help everyone to understand that quietness is actually a good thing.
- c. Discuss times and places that quietness should and can be implemented.
- d. Why is quietness necessary in church? In worship?
- e. Look for examples of quietness in nature.
- f. Take children outside in the evening and feel the quietness.

8. Help others

"We should always be ready to **relieve suffering and to help those in need**. In such cases God desires that the

knowledge and wisdom He has given us should be put to use. But we should not talk about matters of business or engage in any common, worldly conversation. At all times and in all places God requires us to prove our loyalty to Him by honoring the Sabbath."¹¹

- a. As a family, discuss people who might need some encouragement because of loss, loneliness, or sickness.
- b. Discuss how those individuals can be helped by your family.
- c. Visit someone on Sabbath afternoon with a card, song, or gift to help.
- d. Practice singing a song to share with others in general.
- e. Is there someone that could be invited to your home?
- f. How could that individual be helped while visiting you?
- g. Take some time to instruct your children on how to help relieve suffering. Explain that God has given nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, trust in Him and other fundamental elements of health to help others. In what ways can children be trained to actually participate in some sort of task to relieve suffering? Depending on the age of the child, something can be done. For example, carrying a glass of water, bringing a cloth to wipe the forehead, handing mom a towel for a moist compress, serving something to eat.
- h. Teach children how to notice whether someone might need help or encouragement. Do people look sad? Are they sick or missing from church? Can we plan to visit through the week to give some physical help?
- i. Take time to memorize Bible promises to share with others.
- j. Take time to practice printing or writing Bible promises very carefully to share with someone on a card or simply an index card with a picture. Remember to help cultivate prayer and carefulness with this one.

9. Provide a special treat for the Sabbath

"We should not provide for the Sabbath a more liberal supply or a greater variety of food than for other days. Instead of this the food should be

more simple, and less should be eaten, in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things. . . .

"While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. . . . And let the meals, though simple, be palatable and attractive. Provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day."¹²


- a. Think ahead of what would be considered a treat for Sabbath and then, when you serve it, associate it by word and pleasantness with the Sabbath. Examples: Provide a favorite simple food or offer a creative way of serving something common like making pictures out of different pieces of fruit.
- b. A treat could also be a special tablecloth on the table for breakfast or candles at the evening meal.
- c. Let the children pick a special food to put on the menu for the Sabbath. Remember that there are at least 2 to 3 different meals into which you could fit something special. You will be better helped if the food chosen is not too sweet. That would only trigger hyperactivity.
- d. Let the children think and plan for something that might be a treat for Mom or Dad. Maybe serving them a meal and cleaning up.

OK, you are getting the idea of how this could work. Feel free to add more ideas and share them with other parents. This will inspire others to make the Sabbath a delight for our families, just like God intended! Enjoy! *R*

References

- ¹ *Child Guidance*, p. 535. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 536. [Emphasis supplied.]
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- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 536. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 358. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁹ *Child Guidance*, p. 532. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 359. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 360. [Emphasis added.]
- ¹² *Child Guidance*, p. 532.

By D. Burec-Stoikoff



ur
instruc-
tions were
very clear: Be
complete ready when
your host will meet you.

It was one of those beautiful, seemingly perfect days as my friends and I crested the winding, narrow path that led to the top of a small mountain. Tired from the long walk and from carrying our gear, we sat against the large trees that lined the pathway.

We were treated with a stunning sight that evening. The amber, red and purple hues stretched across the sky. The crisp air hinted that autumn was surely approaching, and we all watched silently as the sun sank against a backdrop of hills dotted with trees starting to shed their summer foliage.

What a day it had been! So much had to be accomplished in preparation for this "big day," and we had all worked hard at making final preparations. Now, we were exhausted, thanks to the climb that seemed to drain us of every ounce of strength we had

left. I'm sure that many in our group thought to themselves that this trip would have been easier if we had just known when the "big moment" was coming. But for whatever the reason, we weren't instructed on that detail. Thankfully we had been instructed on every aspect as how to be ready.

As the sun finally set, a few of our traveling companions yawned and started talking amongst themselves.

"I don't know what's gotten into me today! I'm so tired I can barely keep my eyes open, much less change into the travel clothes we were given and light my lamp just in case He shows up tonight," one said. Another chimed in, "You're so right! I think I'm actually

out of oil anyway. Oh well. . . . I guess I need to stop at the market tomorrow." I turned around to look as another member of our group stretched out on the ground and said, "Tomorrow's another day. How long have we been waiting now? And still no sign of Him!

I think we'll be ok tonight if we skip changing our clothes and fill our lamps just this once."

I turned back
around and
slowly started

to lie down before stopping at my elbows, catching myself from following some of the others.

"It's not that much extra effort to be prepared JUST in case He came at night," I said to myself. I quickly changed and filled my lamp with oil I had purchased earlier in town during the day, then went to sleep.

In what seemed like just a few minutes after I fell asleep, I heard a commotion and what seemed to be daylight. "I just went to sleep! It can't be morning already!?" I opened my eyes and as they adjusted to the light, I was startled back to consciousness. I jumped to my feet realizing that our King had finally come! What a shock to those that had not prepared just that one time!

Brothers and sisters, I've taken creative liberties with the well-known parable of the 10 virgins in the hope of helping us all understand that each one of us is a slumbering virgin. We may be so filled with pride that we think that our church, the church that has been given so much light and so much responsibility, is not slumbering. But let's take a look at early church history . . . early enough that Christ

Himself was still on this earth warning the members of His church as to the events surrounding His death.

A parallel from the time of the disciples . . .

Matthew 16:13-16, 21. In Caesarea, Jesus tells His disciples that He's going to die.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. . . . From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Matthew 17:22, 23. In Galilee, again, Jesus tells His disciples He's going to die.

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man

shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." They were exceeding sorry . . . still not grasping the warnings that Jesus had given them, to prepare them to be physically and spiritually ready for those events.

Luke 18:31-34. Now close to Jerusalem, Jesus tells His disciples He's going to die.

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Finally, do they understand!? Really? "And they [the twelve disciples] understood none of these things: . . . neither knew they the things which were spoken."

What about us?

The chosen twelve men that spent 3 ½ years with Jesus, eating together, traveling together, sleeping together, could not understand what He had been telling them for weeks—possibly months—at that point. Is it possible that we, feeling so privileged—and dare I say proud—to be in the truth for years, are asleep to what is soon to take place? Have we become so caught up in trying to achieve worldly goals of prosperity, and a life with no cares and burdens that we ourselves are fulfilling prophecy by saying the Lord delayeth His coming?

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:3, 4).

Do we realize the times in which we are living? Are we aware that in *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 11, the Spirit of Prophecy foresaw terrible scenes that would take place in New York? We are now living in the time of the fourth angel of Revelation 18 which is to stir us to sound the Loud Cry, which simultaneously is the time of “refreshing” or the “latter rain.”

“The commencement of that time of trouble, here mentioned [on Early Writings, p. 33] does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.”¹

Ellen White said, as she “looked at the great buildings going up there [in New York City], story after story, ‘What terrible scenes will take place when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth! Then the words of Revelation

When has a single generation seen “all the events” fulfilled in Matthew 24 with the level of intensity and rapidity we have seen over the last 20 years?

18:1–3 will be fulfilled.’ The whole of the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is a warning of what is coming on the earth. But I have no light in particular in regard to what is coming on New York [City], only that I know that one day the great buildings there will be thrown down by the turning and overturning of God’s power. From the light given me, I know that destruction is in the world. One word from the Lord, one touch of His mighty power, and these massive structures will fall. Scenes will take place the fearfulness of which we cannot imagine.”²

What then, is so significant about the time of the “latter rain,” the “refreshing” or the “Loud Cry” of Revelation 18 that would be fulfilled during these events? In order to receive the latter rain and participate in the Loud Cry, our sins must be blotted out, which logically implies that we have transitioned from the judgment of the righteous dead to the judgment of the righteous living.

“The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out ‘when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ’ (Acts 3:19, 20). When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be.”³

A distinct alarm

If this doesn’t wake us up to the time in which we are living, then there

is something seriously wrong in our spiritual life. Have we been lulled to sleep with words of “peace and safety” that we can’t see just how close we are to Jesus’ coming? Don’t believe me? Let’s take a quick look:

Jesus said, “Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:6–8).

Interestingly, this word “sorrows,” in Greek *odino*, means to experience the pains of childbirth. Ask any mother, and she will tell you that as she comes nearer to the time of her delivery, she will experience two things: the birth pains will become more intense and more rapid. Jesus is here equating the signs of His coming as experiencing birthing pains with the same elements of intensity and rapidity.

So now, let me ask you: When has a single generation seen “all the events” fulfilled in Matthew 24 with the level of intensity and rapidity we have seen over the last 20 years?

Take a look at this chart of natural disasters from 1900–2011.

Recently in the news, Pope Francis asked a Pentecostal gathering about the need of Christian unity “if we are to preach Salvation in Christ to the world.” In a video address delivered by his friend, Tony Palmer, an Anglican Bishop, to the Pentecostal attendees, the Pope states the church and Christians are “separated because of sin, our sins.” “Who is at fault?” he asked. “All of us are, we are all sinners. There is only one who is just, and that is the Lord,” and he longs for the day when “this separation would end and there

The number of reported disasters increased dramatically from 1900–2011, from roughly 100 each decade during the first half of the 20th century to 385 each year from 2007–2010 (courtesy of [EM-DAT](#)).

Year

would be communion.” (You can see this video for yourself online.)

Are we not seeing prophecy being fulfilled by our own eyes?

Weeks after being awakened to the state I am in, personally, I have been praying for the Lord to show me “what must I do to be saved.” During a morning devotional shortly after praying on this, I read:

“The human agent whom Christ has died to save importunes [demand with persistence, or to annoy] the throne

of God, and his petition is taken up by Jesus who has purchased him with His own blood. Our great High Priest places His righteousness on the side of the sincere suppliant, and the prayer of Christ blends with that of the human petitioner. . . .

“The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He strengthens them. He will live through them, giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying Spirit, imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of Himself. **He acts through their faculties and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character.**”⁴

“Believing in Him, we have this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. We are to understand that we may **confidently** expect God’s favor not only in this world, but in the heavenly world, since He paid such a price for our salvation. Faith in the atonement and intercession of Christ will keep us steadfast and immovable amid the temptations that press upon us in the church militant. Let us contemplate the glorious hope that is set before us, and by faith lay hold upon it. . . . We gain heaven not through our own merits but through the merits of Jesus Christ. . . . Let your hope not be centered in yourself, but

in Him who has entered within the veil. . . .

“In Christ our hope of eternal life is centered. . . . Our hope is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast when it entereth into that within the veil, for the tempest-tossed soul becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is anchored in Christ. Amid the raging elements of temptation he will not be driven upon the rocks or drawn into the whirlpool. His ship will outride the storm.”⁵

“Our precious Redeemer is standing before the Father as our intercessor, and is preparing mansions for all those who believe in Him as their personal Saviour. Let those who would meet the divine standard, search

the Scriptures for themselves, that they may have a knowledge of the life of Christ and understand His mission and work. Let them behold Him as their Advocate, standing within the veil, having in His hand the golden censer from which the holy incense of the merits of His righteousness ascends to God in behalf of those who pray to Him. Could they thus behold Him they would feel an assurance that they have a powerful, influential Advocate in the heavenly courts, and that their suit is gained at the throne of God. What an experience may be attained at the footstool of mercy, which is the only place of sure refuge! You may discern the fact that God is back of His promises, and not dread the issue of your prayers or doubt that Jesus is standing as your surety and substitute. As you confess your sins, as you repent of your iniquity, Christ takes your guilt upon Himself and imputes to you His own righteousness and power. To those who are contrite in spirit He gives the golden oil of love and the rich treasures of His grace. It is then that you may see that the sacrifice of self to God through the merits of Christ makes you of infinite value; for clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness you become the sons and daughters of God. Those who approach the Father, recognizing the bow of promise, and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus will receive their request. At the very first expression of penitence Christ presents the humble suppliant's petition before the throne as His own desire in the sinner's behalf. He says, 'I will pray the Father for you.'⁶

Based on what we just read, what then will save us? Nothing we can do for ourselves, only trusting on the sacrifice that Jesus made in our behalf and believing the promise that He is even now acting as our intercessor before God. Knowing the cost of what it took to become our Intercessor, how can we not love Him? In loving Him, we become

changed from the inside out, and in turn, we will love those around us that are not as fortunate to have the message we do.

Let me take this a step further. If you're reading this, it is probable that you already know the truth or have been exposed to this truth. Have you ever asked why? Why was I born into the truth? Is it possible that my life experience will speak a different sermon than your life experience? Because of your experiences, you may be able to reach someone that I wasn't able to. Yet, by not sharing our life sermons, both of us will be accountable if we stand by and do nothing while others around us spread the message of the three angels. Seemingly secure in our secluded life, essentially hiding from the world so as to not be of the world, we have squandered and hidden the life experiences that make up the talents God has entrusted to us.

"Because of the neglect [to bring the truth of the Gospel before many who are now in vice and iniquity] neglect the Lord has looked with disfavor upon the church. A love of ease and selfish indulgence has been shown by many. Some who have had the privilege of knowing Bible truth have not brought it into the inner sanctuary of the soul. God holds all these accountable for the talents which they have not returned to Him in honest,

faithful service in making every effort possible to seek and to save those who were lost. These slothful servants are represented as coming to the wedding supper without the wedding garment, the robe of the righteousness of Christ. They have nominally accepted the truth, but they do not practice it."⁷

"It is high time for us to awake out of sleep, to cast off the armor of Satan, and call upon Him who never

slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord desires men and women to break their connection with the enemy, and link up with Christ. The mistakes of the past have been enough. Through them minds have been confused, precious opportunities have been neglected, and time, which is of more value than gold, has been wasted. We need now strong evidence that the Lord is with us of a truth. We need to consecrate ourselves and all we have to the service of God."⁸

What will you tell the Bridegroom when He asks why you were sleeping when there was given so much to share? ☞

References

- ¹ *Early Writings*, pp. 85, 86. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ² *The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 485.
- ⁴ *The Sabbath School Worker*, February 1, 1896. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, June 9, 1896. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁶ *The Youth's Instructor*, January 16, 1896.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 295.
- ⁸ *The Review and Herald*, May 21, 1901.

Italy

*Workers' seminar for
the European region
at the Waldensian
valley, May 2014.*

Mexico

*Missionary school
graduates,
May 2014 (middle).*

Philippines

*Workers' seminar,
May 2014 (bottom).*

England

*Cooking class in
London, May 2014.*

Congo

*Delegation session
in North Kivu, May
2014 (middle).*

U.S.A.

*Tennessee camp
meeting at Pickett
State Park, May
2014 (bottom).*

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Children's
Corner

The One With the Blessing

By B. Montrose

It was a bright, sunny morning and the Blake family was ready for breakfast. “Come, children,” said Father. “I want to show you something.”

The children eagerly watched as Father brought out several drinking glasses and placed them on the kitchen table.

“Now let’s fill the glasses,” he said, as he began pouring water from a big pitcher into each glass. Suddenly, just as he was about to fill the last glass, he stopped.

The children all wondered what would happen next. Even Mother wasn’t sure. . . .

Then Father went over to the refrigerator and pulled out a jar of freshly squeezed orange juice and filled the last glass with the juice. Mmmmm—the sweet aroma of delicious oranges filled the air and the children smiled.

“Now, children,” Father said. “I know you’re hungry. Which of these drinks would you like to have?”

The three children all quietly glanced at each other. They had already

had their morning water, but knowing there was only one glass of juice, they all knew that they were not supposed to be selfish about it. But it was clear that they were all thinking the same thing—each child obviously wanted the juice.

Father smiled. “Don’t worry, children. There is more juice in the refrigerator—plenty in fact—so you will all get to enjoy some. But what do these glasses bring to mind?”

The children were puzzled. They knew that Father surely had an object lesson in all of this. They knew that water is used in the Bible as a wonderful symbol of the Holy Spirit. . . . But what about juice? Was Father going to speak about the fruit of the Spirit, perhaps? What did he have in mind?

Finally, Joey counted the glasses. 1-2-3-4-5-6 glasses with water and the 7th had the juice.

“I know, Father!” he joyfully exclaimed, almost as if a light bulb had suddenly lit up in his mind. “The seventh is the Sabbath!!!”

“You’re exactly right, son,” chuckled Father. “Every day is a great gift from God—just like the water we drink. But remember, ‘on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made’ (Genesis 2:2, 3).

“Yes, children, God poured a special blessing into the seventh day, and we should enjoy it as the sweetest, most pleasurable day of the week. That’s the day I’m off from work—it’s my day off, even from household chores. We’ll get to spend more time together on the Sabbath than on any other day. And so it is with your Father in heaven. So, enjoy His day! He’s put a special blessing in it just because He loves you.”

This explanation gave the whole family a chance to thank God for His wonderful plan—and to drink their orange juice with special joy for the blessing He would have in store for them on Sabbath. *R*