

the REFORMATION *herald*

Vol. 56, No. 1



An Appeal to Fathers and Mothers

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Official Church Publication of the
Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement

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

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THE REFORMATION HERALD® (ISSN 0482-0843)
features articles on Bible doctrine that will enrich the
spiritual life of those who seek to know more about God.
It is published bimonthly by the Seventh Day Adventist
Reform Movement General Conference, P. O. Box 7240,
Roanoke, VA 24019-0240, U.S.A.

Printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing
Association. Manuscripts, inquiries, address changes,
subscriptions, payments, and donations should be mailed
to the address below. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke,
Virginia 24022.

Subscription rates:

United States	U.S. \$16.95
Foreign (air mail)	U.S. \$22.00
Single issue	U.S. \$ 4.50

Illustrations: Adventist Digital Media on pp. 2, 28;
Fotolia on the front cover and pp. 2-4, 6, 8, 9, 11,
12, 16-27, 29, 32; Harry Anderson on p. 26.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Reformation
Herald*, P. O. Box 7240, ROANOKE, VA 24019.

Vol. 56, No. 1. Copyright © 2015. January/February Issue.

Rebuilding the Home

Why all the doubt? Why all the unbelief? Perhaps the most common objection that unbelievers make against Christianity is when inconsistency is found in its professed followers. Isaiah 4:1 symbolically depicts a people stubbornly wanting their own lifestyle instead of the one marked out by Christ—yet still claiming His name, because they feel it is popular or fashionable to do so. Indeed, such hypocrisy has long been a stumbling block to the unbelieving world—but especially to the growing children of these professed believers.

It has been observed that over 70% of young adults professing Christianity will leave their parents' church—and essentially their faith—not long after they leave their parents' home. Current statistics show that today, many or even most are not coming back. Why?

In the winter 2012 issue of *Christianity Today*, young people surveyed gave various reasons for their departure—reasons that revealed a superficial, emotional, entertainment-based religion that was not well grounded in deep biblical understanding nor convincingly brought into practical life.

Shall we change this disturbing trend?

What does it mean to have a reformation in the human experience? It means to make, to build, to form again the fallen, erring character in a new way. How? Through the creative power of the Creator Himself. The promise is sure: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Through the power of God's word enshrined in the heart, the life is to be transformed, because "the word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature."¹

A change from the inside out

If our nature is remade from within, it will shine forth naturally to those around us. On the other hand, if we try to paste some good works on the outside and think that with this we can make a good show to fool others, we ourselves are the ones who are fooled. Real reformation must come from within—and is possible only through the power of God and submission to His will and ways.

What does this have to do with the home life? At home we are who we really are. The psalmist who yearned for a genuinely pure life made the pledge, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Psalm 101:2). Not just when he was in public—but when he was at home with his family.

As individual families, let us view, then, the following declaration as a personal call to action: "The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are 'the issues of life' (Proverbs 4:23); and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences."²

"Home should be made all that the word implies. It should be a little heaven upon earth, a place where the affections are cultivated instead of being studiously repressed."³ Let us arise and rebuild such homes! *R*


References

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.

² *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 349.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 539.



A photograph of two construction workers on a building site. They are wearing white hard hats and high-visibility yellow safety vests over dark clothing. They are standing on a metal scaffolding structure, working on a wall. The background shows a clear blue sky and some distant buildings.

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

A Home-Based REFORMATION

*Restoring “all things”
in your family*

By the last prophet of the Old Testament, God sent a powerful message about the final reformatory work to take place in earth's history. Let us read verses 5 and 6 of Malachi chapter 4: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

For all of us who desire to be reformers, it is very clear that no reform will succeed, whether in the church or in the world, unless this reform begins first in the heart of each individual, then in the home, next in the church, then in society, and so forth. This is the logical order that God has always used in the past, and He is using it in the present as well. No one can give what he or she does not possess.

The prophet Malachi mentioned Elijah, the great prophet of the Old Testament, as an archetype for the needed work to be fulfilled before the first and second comings of Christ. His prophecy had a partial fulfillment in the days that preceded Christ's ministry.

The disciples of Christ asked an important question on the subject: “Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and **restore all things**. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:10–13, emphasis added).

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the argument of the scribes was based on the prophecy of Malachi. In His answer to the disciples, Christ spoke about the Elias that would come in the future (“Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things”), and He mentioned the Elias that had already fulfilled his mission (“I say unto you,

That Elias is come already"). The disciples realized then that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist.

Let us consider the life and work of Elijah during the time when Ahab, an apostate king, governed an equally apostate Israel.

Elijah

The mission of Elijah is recorded in 1 Kings, chapters 17 to 21 and in 2 Kings, chapters 1 and 2. The lifestyle, appearance, and behavior of this prophet was characterized by utter simplicity. He was a very informal man. "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1). In the same manner that he appeared unannounced, he likewise disappeared after delivering his message.

Three years later, again Elijah appeared in the presence of the king to deliver a new message. "And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. . . . And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim" (1 Kings 18:2, 17, 18).

The fearless ministry of Elijah as a man of faith and prayer was able to hold in check the rapid spread of apostasy in Israel. "[Elijah's] whole life was devoted to the work of reform. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of evil. And while he came to the people as a reprove of sin, his message offered the balm of Gilead to the sin-sick souls of all who desired to be healed."¹

The mission of Elijah is intimately connected with the work of the angel of Revelation 18:1–5:

"Today, as in the days of Elijah, the line of demarcation between God's

commandment-keeping people and the worshipers of false gods in clearly drawn. 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' Elijah cried; 'if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him' (1 Kings 18:21). And the message for today is: 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities' (Revelation 18:2, 4, 5)."²

Jesus explained the parallel between two leaders of great reformatory movements, Elijah and John the Baptist (Matthew 17:12, 13; 11:14).

John the Baptist, the second Elijah

The Word of God reveals a great similarity between Elijah and John the Baptist. The mission of both men was similar—and their characters were similar as well. Let us read the biblical account regarding the prophet who was the forerunner of Christ at the time of His first advent:

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:1–4).

John the Baptist worked mightily to restore the family—which in his time had suffered great decadence because of the infidelity of spouses and ensuing divorce. He was not afraid to present his message of home reformation even to Herod himself. "But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison" (Luke 3:19, 20).

"For Herod had laid hold on John,

and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:3, 4).

"Herod was affected as he listened to the powerful, pointed testimonies of John, and with deep interest he inquired what he must do to become his disciple. John was acquainted with the fact that he was about to marry his brother's wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful. Herod was unwilling to make any sacrifice. He married his brother's wife, and through her influence, seized John and put him in prison, intending however to release him. . . .

"John came in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the first advent of Jesus. I was pointed down to the last days and saw that John represented those who should go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to herald the day of wrath and the second advent of Jesus."³

"John the Baptist was a reformer. To him was committed a great work for the people of his time. . . .

"John separated himself from his friends and from the luxuries of life, dwelling alone in the wilderness and subsisting upon a purely vegetable diet. . . .

"The work of John was foretold by the prophet Malachi: [Malachi 4:5, 6 quoted]. John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just. He was a representative of those living in the last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ."⁴

The remnant of the last days—the third Elijah

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

“Those who bear the last message of mercy to the world should feel it their duty to instruct parents in regard to home religion. The great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God. As the claims of the law are presented, and men and women are convicted of their duty to render obedience, show them the responsibility of their decision, not only for themselves but for their children. Show that obedience to God’s word is our only safeguard against the evils that are sweeping the world to destruction. Parents are giving to their children an example either of obedience or of transgression. By their example and teaching, the eternal destiny of their households will in most cases be decided. In the future life the children will be what their parents have made them.

“If parents could be led to trace the results of their action, and could see how by their example and teaching they perpetuate and increase the power of sin or the power of righteousness, a change would certainly be made. Many would break the spell of tradition and custom.

“Let ministers urge this matter upon their congregations. Press home upon the consciences of parents the conviction of their

solemn duties, so long neglected. This will break up the spirit of pharisaism and resistance to the truth as nothing else can. Religion in the home is our great hope and makes the prospect bright for the conversion of the whole family to the truth of God.”⁵

Let us consider some essential points about the Bible verses and Spirit of Prophecy statements cited above:

1. The parents’ conversion

This is the first factor mentioned by the prophet Malachi regarding the work of the last Elijah. Before insisting with the children about the importance of being converted, parents should be converted first. This is the message we find in Deuteronomy chapter 6:

“That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. . . . Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Verses 2, 4–6).

2. The children’s conversion

God works with much success through converted parents in drawing the hearts of their children into family loyalty and the fear of the Lord.

He is very specific about the work that should be done, and the manner in which it is to be done.

By precept and example, the precious truths of His Word are to be inculcated in the hearts of the children, when they are sitting at home, walking by the way, “when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

This Bible verse brings out the need for

friendship in the home between the parents themselves, and then between parents and children. The expression “when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” includes the morning and evening worship.

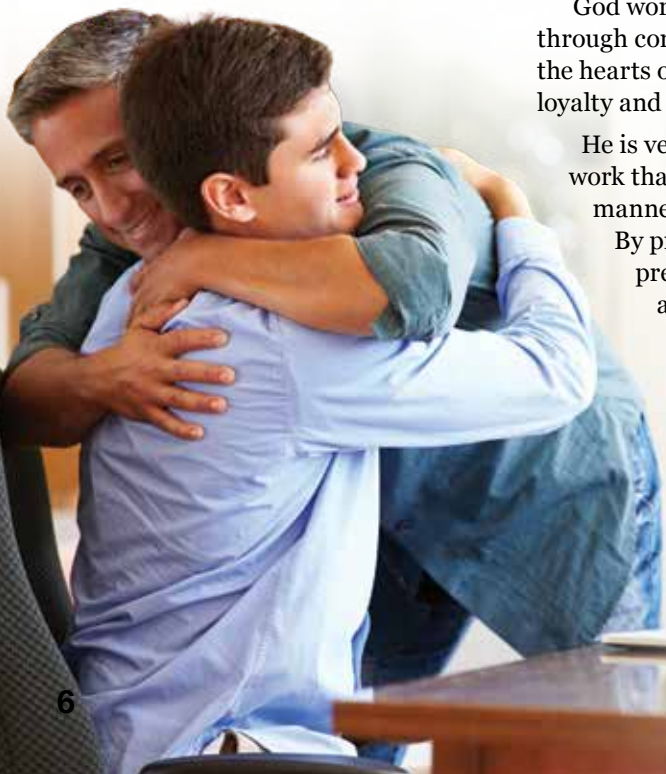
Before offering the sacrifice in the presence of the worshippers of Baal, Elijah repaired the altar that had been broken down (1 Kings 18:30). It is a sad fact that the altar of the morning and evening worship is broken down in many of the homes of those professing to be reformers in these last days. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the family altar be restored if we ever want to see genuine conversion in our homes.

The principles of the law of God

When a doctor of the law asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment of God’s law, Jesus answered him with the words: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40).

Through the apostle Paul the Lord declared that “love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). The ten commandments are the amplification of these great principles of love as enunciated by Christ. In 1 Corinthians 13:1–8 this love is described, along with its importance and its results:

“Thou I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and



is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

And who are these closest neighbors to whom we are to manifest such love? Our family. Through the same apostle Paul, the Lord announced the following guiding principles of family conduct: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1–4).

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:18–21).

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).

“The law of God is the foundation of all enduring reformation. We are to present to the world in clear, distinct lines the need of obedience to His law. The great reformatory movement must begin in the home. Obedience to God’s law is the great incentive to industry, economy, truthfulness, and just dealing between man and man.”⁶

Duties of ministers and workers

The Spirit of Prophecy explains clearly the work of ministers and

workers regarding teaching parents their duties in relation to their children. All are admonished against the spirit of pharisaism. Of what does this spirit consist? In His clear admonitions against the Pharisees, Jesus declared unto them that their main characteristic was hypocrisy. They taught one thing while practicing exactly the opposite. “They say but do not.” When explaining the theoretical doctrine, they presented something that in their practical life was completely denied.

Our great hope

The paragraph cited above emphasizes the truth that “religion in the home is our great hope.” “Parents should explain and simplify the plan of salvation to their children that their young minds may comprehend it. Children of eight, ten, or twelve years of age are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion. Do not teach your children with reference to some future period when they shall be old enough to repent and believe the truth. If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ. Ministers are generally too indifferent to the salvation of children and are not as personal as they should be. Golden opportunities to impress the minds of children frequently pass unimproved.”⁷

“God calls upon believers to cease finding fault, to cease making hasty, unkind speeches. Parents, let the words that you speak to your children be kind and pleasant, that angels may have your help in drawing them to Christ. A thorough reformation is needed in the home church. Let it begin at once. Let all grumbling and fretting and scolding cease. Those who fret and scold shut out the angels of heaven and open the door to evil angels.”⁸

“Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

“When Jesus told the disciples not to forbid the children to come to Him, He was speaking to His followers in all ages—to officers of the church, to ministers, helpers, and all Christians. Jesus is drawing the children, and He bids us, Suffer them to come; as if He would say, They will come if you do not hinder them.

“Let not your un-Christlike character misrepresent Jesus. Do not keep the little ones away from Him by your coldness and harshness. Never give them cause to feel that heaven will not be a pleasant place to them if you are there. Do not speak of religion as something that children cannot understand, or act as if they were not expected to accept Christ in their childhood.”⁹

Confession

“If you have failed in your duty to your family, confess your sins before God. Gather your children about you and acknowledge your neglect. Tell them that you desire to bring about a reformation in the home and ask them to help you to make the home what it ought to be. Read to them the directions found in the Word of God. Pray with them; and ask God to spare their lives and to help them to prepare for a home in His kingdom. Thus you may begin and continue a work of true reform.”¹⁰

Conclusion

“If the work of reformation be begun and carried forward in each family, there will be a living and prosperous church. Things must first be set in order at home.”¹¹ *R*

References

- ¹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 119.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 188.
- ³ *Early Writings*, pp. 154, 155.
- ⁴ *Temperance*, pp. 90, 91.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 119.
- ⁶ *Child Guidance*, p. 489.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 400.
- ⁸ *The Adventist Home*, p. 441.
- ⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 517.
- ¹⁰ *The Review and Herald*, April 21, 1904.
- ¹¹ *Life Sketches*, p. 274.



The Father

*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by A. C. Sas*

When small, a little child addresses his or her words to the father, saying, “Daddy.” That voice sounds like sweet music to the ears of a good father. How pleasant it is to hear that he is someone who is addressed with such an endearing word. He realizes that his position in the family is greatly esteemed, and that he is the highest authority in the home and, at the same time, is the one most responsible for the welfare of his family.

To be a father involves both a great privilege and a tremendous accountability. The father is to a great extent responsible for the well-being and prosperity of the whole family. It means more than simply to consider himself the head of the household, subordinating his wife and children under his care. A good father is the house-band of the family, the lace that encircles all the components of the household. He is the orbit that surrounds everyone in the home, as a protector, provider, and a caretaker.

“All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice.”¹

An ideal father

To be a good father is a secret which very few realize. An ideal father is tender, compassionate, full of sympathy, and love for everyone in the household. He will show patience and restrain his anger when provoked, either by circumstances or by someone in the family or in society. He will show mature judgment in every aspect of daily life. He will wisely direct all plans to be followed in his household.

“The father is to stand at the head of his family, not as an overgrown, undisciplined boy, but as a man with manly character and with his

passions controlled. He is to obtain an education in correct morals. His conduct in his home life is to be directed and restrained by the pure principles of the word of God.”²

The father is usually away from home during the day. He is engaged in earning the livelihood for the family. His work may be in the factory, in an office, or in a commercial enterprise. If the family lives in the country, the father may be engaged in the cultivation of the soil, plowing, planting, or harvesting. The great share of the responsibilities of the household falls upon the wife. As the husband arrives home, his countenance should glow with joy when he sees his wife smiling, and his children running to meet him at the gate, ready to hug him. It is possible that the routine of his work has not been running as smoothly as it should, the business has not been so profitable as far as the income is concerned, or that other inconveniences have caused him to frown. An ideal father will remember

to leave all these worries outside the gate and take to his household a pleasant countenance.

“The father should study how to make the mother happy. He should not allow himself to come to his home with a clouded brow. If he is perplexed in business, he should not, unless it is actually necessary to counsel with his wife, trouble her with such matters. She has cares and trials of her own to bear, and she should be tenderly spared every needless burden.”³

“Whatever may be his calling and its perplexities, let the father take into his home the same smiling countenance and pleasant tones with which he has all day greeted visitors and strangers. Let the wife feel that she can lean upon the large affections of her husband—that his arms will strengthen and uphold her through all her toils and cares, that his influence will sustain hers—and her burden will lose half its weight.”⁴

When he arrives home at the end of the day, if his wife was not able to have the dinner ready, he should join in by giving her a helping hand in the preparation of the evening meal. If the children have some need of bathing, let the father take care of these needs and lighten the burden of the mother. His involvement in the home will have an impact upon the minds of the children, and when they are grown up they will imitate their father.

“The children look to their father for support and guidance; he needs to have a right conception of life and of the influences and associations that should surround his family; above all, he should be controlled by the love and fear of God and by the teaching of His word, that he may guide the feet of his children in the right way.”⁵

As an educator

A father should understand his duty and responsibility to teach his children. In the first years of existence, the father, together with the mother, should educate their children in the ways of life. That which the little ones learn in their young ages, they will not forget throughout their

lives. The character of the children should be molded when they are still very young. The father has the duty especially to educate the sons. He cannot afford to neglect his duty without encountering the result of his neglect. The Lord will hold him accountable if he does not fulfill his responsibility. A good father will not only feel the obligation to train up his children, but he will find enjoyment in doing such a noble work. His heart will be filled with satisfaction when he sees the result of his work.

The father is responsible not only to teach the children how to read and write, but also to educate them in right habits and practices. He will not only impose on his children duties and burdens, but he will set a right example before them, showing that he has learned to place himself under the control of God. The family of such a father will be a blessing to the world and to the church.

“If the father would have his children develop harmonious characters, and be an honor to him and a blessing to the world, he has a special work to do. God holds him responsible for that work. In the great day of reckoning it will be asked him: Where are the children that I entrusted to your care to educate for Me, that their lips might speak My praise, and their lives be as a diadem of beauty in the world, and they live to honor Me through all eternity?”⁶

“During the first few years of a child’s life the molding of the disposition is committed principally to the mother; but she should ever feel that in her work she has the cooperation of the father. If he is engaged in business which almost wholly closes the door of usefulness to his family, he should seek other employment which will not prevent him from devoting some time to his children. If he neglects them, he is unfaithful to the trust committed to him of God.”⁷

The priest of the family

In a happy family, the father will never leave the home without first

gathering the members of the family for a devotional service. He is the priest of the family. The wife and children should join the father in singing, reading the word of God, and praying, asking God’s protection for the day.

“In a sense the father is the priest of the household, laying upon the family altar the morning and evening sacrifice. But the wife and children should unite in prayer and join in the song of praise. In the morning before he leaves home for his daily labor, let the father gather his children about him and, bowing before God, commit them to the care of the Father in heaven. When the cares of the day are past, let the family unite in offering grateful prayer and raising the song of praise, in acknowledgment of divine care during the day.”⁸

From the experience of Abraham and other patriarchs we learn that they offered to God morning and evening sacrifices. These are represented today by the morning and evening worship offered to God. In the morning the protection and guidance of the Lord must be sought, and at the end of the day the family should meet together again to thank the Lord for the ministry of the holy angels. At the same time they should ask the Lord to be with them during the night, that they may renew their strength and awaken in the morning refreshed for the day’s duties.

“There should be a fixed time to rise in the morning, a time for breakfast, and a time for prayer, either directly before or directly after the morning meal. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before their fast is broken, and direct their young minds to our heavenly Father, who bestows upon us the bounties of His providence. Let them thank God for protecting them during the night, and ask for help and grace and the watchcare of angels through the day.”⁹

“The father, who is the priest of his household, should conduct the morning and evening worship. There is no reason why this should not be

the most interesting and enjoyable exercise of the home life, and God is dishonored when it is made dry and irksome. Let the seasons of family worship be short and spirited. Do not let your children or any member of your family dread them because of their tediousness or lack of interest. When a long chapter is read and explained and a long prayer offered, this precious service becomes wearisome, and it is a relief when it is over.”¹⁰

Take time for the children

Nothing is more pleasant than to know that children have full trust and confidence in their parents. The father should spend much time with their children, especially while they are small. He should have dialogues with them. Children have brains as well as adults do; they are thinking persons. A nice conversation with the children has a better effect on their education than scolding or punishment.

“Take time to read to your children from the health books, as well as from the books treating more particularly on religious subjects. Teach them the importance of caring for the body—the house they live in. Form a home reading circle, in which every member of the family shall lay aside the busy cares of the day and unite in study. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, take up this work heartily, and see if the home church will not be greatly improved.”¹¹

The father who does not take time to be with his children will regret his mistake later. In some instances it will be too late to redeem the past. When children are interested to talk to their father and have a desire to be heard by him, he often says: “I have no time now; I am very busy.” When they will grow up without developing a close friendship with their father, children will be busy with unimportant matters or even detrimental topics, and though the father may wish to talk to them, they will say: “Sorry, Dad, I have no time. When I wished to talk to you in my childhood, you were always busy. You never took time to listen to me. Now I am busy, with no time to listen to you.” The words of

inspiration give a solemn warning to such a father:

“‘No time,’ says the father, ‘I have no time to give to the training of my children, no time for social and domestic enjoyments.’ Then you should not have taken upon yourself the responsibility of a family. By withholding from them the time which is justly theirs, you rob them of the education which they should have at your hands. If you have children, you have a work to do, in union with the mother, in the formation of their characters. Those who feel that they have an imperative call to labor for the improvement of society, while their own children grow up undisciplined, should inquire if they have not mistaken their duty. Their own household is the first missionary field in which parents are required to labor. Those who leave the home garden to grow up to thorns and briars, while they manifest great interest in the cultivation of their neighbor’s plot of ground, are disregarding the word of God.”¹²

“The average father wastes many golden opportunities to attract and bind his children to him. Upon returning home from his business, he should find it a pleasant change to spend some time with his children.”¹³

“The father should not become so absorbed in business life or in the study of books that he cannot take time to study the natures and necessities of his children. He should help in devising ways by which they may be kept busy in useful labor agreeable to their varying dispositions.

“Fathers, spend as much time as possible with your children. Seek to become acquainted with their various dispositions, that you may know how to train them in harmony with the word of God.”¹⁴

Negative attitudes

It is very often the case that the father is absorbed in the struggle for a livelihood or is bent on acquiring wealth, and he allows the mother

to carry most of the burdens which overtax her strength. The result is feebleness and disease in the wife and mother. The father should share the home burdens instead of leaving them to his companion.

On other occasions the mother meets with cold reserve from the father. If the routine of life does not run smoothly or as pleasantly as the husband would like it to be, he blames his wife for the lack of success. In doing this he is working against his own happiness and interest.

“Too often [the father] returns home bringing with him his cares and business perplexities to overshadow the family, and if he does not find everything just to his mind at home, he gives expression to his feelings in impatience and faultfinding. He can boast of what he has achieved through the day, but the mother’s work, to his mind, amounts to little, or is at least undervalued. To him her cares appear trifling. She has only to cook the meals, look after the children, sometimes a large family of them, and keep the house in order. She has tried all day to keep the domestic machinery running smoothly. She has tried, though tired and perplexed, to speak kindly and cheerfully, and to instruct the children and keep them in the right path. All this has cost effort and much patience on her part. She cannot, in her turn, boast of what she has done. It seems to her as though she has accomplished nothing.”¹⁵

Positive attitudes

A good father will understand and appreciate the cares and hardships that his wife endures. She is usually confined to a round of house duties which are not easy to accomplish. When the father arrives home, he should bring sunshine to the family circle. He will help his wife in the finishing of the food she is preparing. He will remember that his wife has been the nurse, the cook, the cleaner, the housemaid, and her efforts will be deeply appreciated for what she has done in the home.

The ideal father will understand and condescend to take a worrying child from the arms of his or her mother, so that his wife may accomplish her unfinished task. If the child is restless, he will try to appease him or her; he will act as a nurse or a janitor. He will remember that his wife has spent many hours doing this work. The child belongs to both, and he feels under a sacred obligation to take part in the burden of rearing the child.

The exemplary father will not spend his time in doing simply nothing. An indolent man will always be in need and poverty. A good father will be diligent and with honesty and sacrifice will earn the daily bread. He will be faithful in his employment. He will allow no cheating. No deception will be seen in his dealings whether in the home or abroad. He will practice hospitality, entertain visitors in his home, and help the needy and the poor.

A good father and husband will always remember the commitment he made at the wedding altar, to be faithful and maintain that vow. If perplexities and disappointments occur in his married life, or if his expectations are not fulfilled as he thought before marriage, he will show tolerance, forbearance, patience, and love, which will surmount mountains of difficulties. His thoughts will always be holy, elevated and noble, and he will not permit the thought of separating from her whom he chose to be his partner for life.

“How careful should the husband and father be to maintain his loyalty to his marriage vows. How circumspect should be his character, lest he shall encourage thoughts in young girls, or even in married women, that are not in accordance with the high, holy standard—the commandments of God. Those commandments Christ shows to be exceedingly broad, reaching even the thoughts, intents, and purposes of the heart. Here is where many are delinquent. Their heart imaginings are not of the pure, holy character which God requires; and however

high their calling, however talented they may be, God will mark iniquity against them and will count them as far more guilty and deserving of His wrath than those who have less talent, less light, less influence.”¹⁶

The reward for a noble father

The reward will be granted to a faithful, caring, diligent, honest, and good father who fears the Lord, even in this earth. The psalmist writes:

“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord” (Psalm 128:1–4).

“Then, Christian friends, fathers and mothers, let your light grow dim—no, never! Let your heart grow faint, or your hands weary—no, never! And by and by the portals of the celestial city will be opened to you; and you may present yourselves and your children before the throne, saying, ‘Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me.’ And what a reward for faithfulness that will be, to see your children crowned with immortal life in the beautiful city of God!”¹⁷

“I saw you struggling with poverty, seeking to support yourself and your children. Many times you knew not what to do; the future looked dark and uncertain. In your distress you cried unto the Lord, and He comforted and helped you, and hopeful rays of light shone around you. How precious was God to you at such times! how sweet His comforting love! You felt that you

had a precious treasure laid up in heaven.”¹⁸

“In your work for your children take hold of the mighty power of God. Commit your children to the Lord in prayer. Work earnestly and untiringly for them. God will hear your prayers and will draw them to Himself. Then, at the last great day, you can bring them to God, saying, ‘Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me.’”¹⁹ *R*

References

- ¹ *The Adventist Home*, p. 212.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- ³ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 428.
- ⁴ *The Adventist Home*, p. 216.
- ⁵ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 390.
- ⁶ *The Signs of the Times*, December 20, 1877.
- ⁷ *The Adventist Home*, p. 221.
- ⁸ *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 392, 393.
- ⁹ *The Signs of the Times*, August 7, 1884.
- ¹⁰ *Child Guidance*, p. 521.
- ¹¹ *The Review and Herald*, July 29, 1902.
- ¹² *Fundamental of Christian Education*, pp. 65, 66.
- ¹³ *The Signs of the Times*, December 6, 1877.
- ¹⁴ *The Adventist Home*, pp. 221, 222.
- ¹⁵ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 158.
- ¹⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 594, 595.
- ¹⁷ *The Signs of the Times*, January 14, 1886.
- ¹⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 269.
- ¹⁹ *The Adventist Home*, p. 536.



The Feminine Heart in the Home

By K. Clark

Family . . . what a beautiful thought this word brings to us! If we are children or young people, this denotes to us love and safety from all the world around us. If we are adults, it brings back sweet memories of our childhood when we gathered around the table with Dad, Mom, and brothers and sisters as we gave thanks to our heavenly Father for His bountiful blessings.

Parents

The nucleus of the family is those two people who dedicated their lives and hopes to one another as they came together to establish a home where they planned to bring children into the world, thus establishing a family. There is the one who would be known as Dad and who would be the provider and the strength of the family unit. There is the one who would be the Mom who would nurture and shed love and tenderness to each member of the family. One without the other could not produce the right results—those results which were in the plan of God; that plan being that the man and the woman which He had created would populate the earth and add to the family of God.

Mother

As the title of our article suggests, the one who would carry out the duty of tender caring for each member

of the family is the mother. As she carries the child within her own body, she is giving that love and tenderness to the little one, even before he or she is born. This close relationship is preparing her to love that little one with a special love which even the Dad-to-be cannot quite understand. It is within her desire to prepare a loving atmosphere for that special little one which will fit him or her for the life which he or she will have to experience.

Here is a quote from the pen of inspiration, “The tenderest earthly tie is that between the mother and her child. The child is more readily impressed by the life and example of the mother than by that of the father; for a stronger and more tender bond of union unites them. Mothers have a heavy responsibility. If I could impress upon them the work which they can do in molding the minds of their children I should be happy.”¹

As the mother cradles the newborn child in her arms, she is imparting to the babe comfort and a freedom from fear; she is beginning the formation of the character which he or she will develop with growth. When she speaks softly to the baby, even when the little one is irritable, she is imparting a knowledge of kindness which will benefit the child in later life. This kindness and love will be as a soothing balm as he or she experiences the little childhood hardships that surround a person when growing through the different stages of his or her life.

The mother as the queen

“The mother is the queen of the home, and the children are her subjects. She is to rule her household wisely, in the dignity of her motherhood. Her influence in the home is to be paramount; her word, law. If she is a Christian, under God’s control, she will command the respect of her children. Tell your children exactly what you require of them. Then let them understand that your word must be obeyed. Thus you are training them to respect the commandments of God, which plainly declare, ‘Thou shalt,’ and ‘Thou shalt not.’ ”²

The mother is usually the one who spends the most time with her child; thus she has a great influence upon him or her and has the opportunity to provide the training needed in order to learn to respect and to obey those in authority.

Not only are the realities of life to be imparted to the child as he or she matures enough to grasp their meaning. The child is also to be introduced to the surrounding beauties of nature. As the daily activities of life unfold, the mother will have the opportunity of taking walks outdoors with her baby, that together they may breathe in the fresh air and become acquainted with the sights and sounds of God’s creation. Mom will be able to acquaint the youngster with the songs of the birds and the lives of the little animals they will encounter during their walks together. In this way an appreciation

of other forms of life will develop within the child. Later, when he or she might have an animal pet, it will be possible to relate to its needs. As the child has experienced the love and caring ways received from Mom, he or she will show that loving spirit to the other creatures of God's creation.

Faithfulness of parents

When those who become parents realize more how important is their work of raising children to love and fear God, they themselves will feel the need of spending more time in prayer and in being appreciative of the duties which each of them has. The dad has the duty also of training the child and of being the right example, but he usually does not have the same amount of time devoted to those daily activities as does the mother. The mother is thought of as the one who is soft, tender and delicate—which makes her relationship with her child so very special. She is the one who will give so much of her time and energy in seeing that the young one learns how to properly conduct himself or herself in the various activities of life. She is the one who will prepare for the child the proper food so that he or she may be nourished well and be in good health. She will be the teacher of many of the practical activities of life, whether she has boys or girls in her charge.

The first sympathizer

Children will have the need of one to sympathize with them during times of illness and the little disappointments that seem like mountains to them. Mom is usually the one to whom they run during the time of pain, whether it be physical or emotional. She may be very weary herself from dealing with all the things which she encounters as a wife, mother, and homemaker—but she usually can find the strength, energy, and patience to bring comfort to the little ones entrusted to her care. She finds much comfort when her little one says, "I love you, Mommy." Those sincere words make it all worthwhile.

Many are the moments of special needs with which the mother has

to deal. Many are the scrapes and bruises, whether of the physical body or of the spirit, which will need a kiss and tender loving care from her. There will be feelings of rejection inflicted, perhaps by a playmate, which will open up the avenue for valuable lessons to be taught concerning forgiving others. It is when these everyday problems arise, which tend to bring discouragement and disappointment to the fragile little feelings of the child, that Mom has the opportunity to show forth and teach the tenderness as was displayed through the life of Jesus while He was on earth and dwelt among all types of people. He was able to teach valuable spiritual lessons to those whom He encountered on a daily basis—and at the same time show forth great love and compassion for each one. It will be through this same loving spirit that the child may be taught how he or she is to react toward others.

Children basically do not display much patience, especially when things do not go according to their desires. This presents the need of an extra degree of patience for the mom as she attempts to calm the overly anxious child who overtly displays unhappiness with certain situations. She has to bring correction, sometimes with a degree of sternness—but always in love. This may remind the mother of her need for closer communication with her Father in heaven so that she will bring correction to her child in the most proper way. We must be reminded of how God must at times deal with us, His children, during the many situations when we disappoint Him. We all indeed have much to learn from His guidebook which tells us to "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

The need for training

If we truly love the little ones who have been entrusted to us, we will seek diligently the words of wisdom that our heavenly Father has given as to how to train

and teach the young lives under our care. Parents must be agreed as to how these principles are to be applied and then apply them through precept and example, with love and a caring attitude.

Everyone within the body of Christ, the church, needs to display this same loving-kindness to the children of the congregation, for they are also entrusted to us as we are the mothers and fathers in Israel. Is there a mother who seems overwhelmed with her duties? Then offer a helping hand in the way that will help her the most. We must convey the right spirit rather than criticize her efforts. We all have a duty to perform in the training of the young ones who will be the workers for God in the future days.

Where is your little flock?

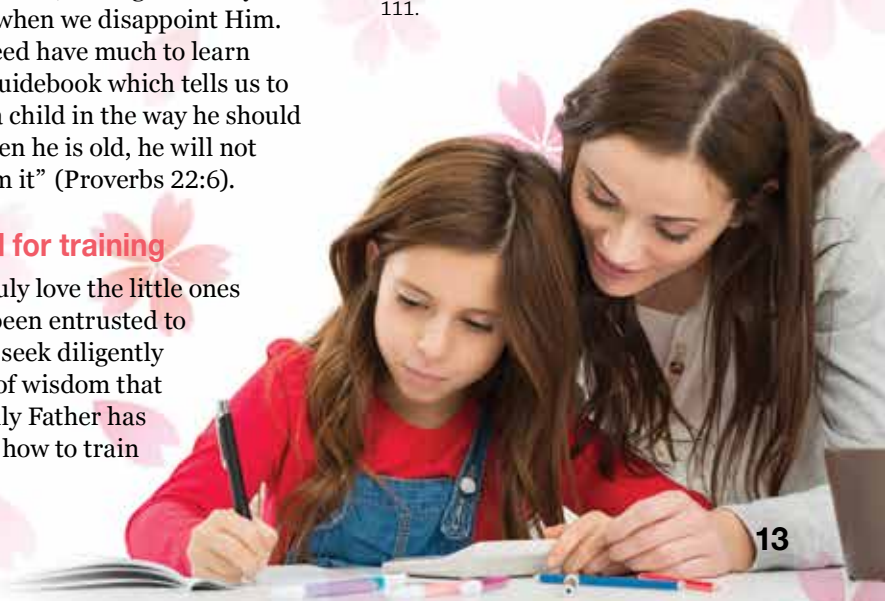
Someday soon, when Jesus returns to gather His faithful ones unto Himself, He will ask the parents, "Where is your little flock, the ones that I have entrusted to your care?" Mothers and fathers, what will be your answer? Hopefully it will be, "Here they are right with us, ready to meet You and live with You throughout eternity!"

May God bless you each one, you faithful mothers who have borne children for the enrichment of the kingdom of God. Continue on your journey and seek help for each day from your Father in heaven. Amen. *R*

References

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 536.

² *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 111.





The Mother

*Extracts from the
writings of E. G. White*

My sister, has God entrusted you with the responsibilities of a mother? You have a great work, a holy calling. If you are one of those who are to be the light of the world, that light is to shine in your home. Here you are to exemplify the Christian graces, to be lovable, patient, kind, yet firm. . . .

Mothers do not half appreciate their privileges and possibilities. They do not seem to understand that they can be in the highest sense missionaries, laborers together with God in aiding their children to build up a symmetrical character. This is the great burden of the work given them of God. The mother is God's agent to Christianize her family. She is to exemplify biblical religion, showing how its influence is to control us in its everyday duties and pleasures, teaching her children that by grace alone can they be saved, through faith, which is the gift of God. This constant teaching as to what Christ is to us and to them, His love, His goodness, His mercy, revealed in the great plan of redemption, will make a hallowed, sacred impress on the heart.

Scolding and fretting, gathering clouds and gloom about the soul, will bring only a shadow and discouragement in the home life. Let not one word of fretfulness, harshness, or passion escape your lips. The grace of Christ awaits your demand. His Spirit will take control of your heart and conscience, presiding over your words and deeds. Never forfeit your self-respect by hasty, thoughtless words. See that your words are pure, your conversation holy. Give your children an example of that which you wish them to be.¹

A heavenly influence

Mothers, it is your privilege to bind your children to your heart with the tenderest and strongest cords of love.²

The mother especially should be fitted for her appointed work of patient labor. It is her privilege and sacred duty to train all who are under her care and her influence, by her teachings and her example, for lives of usefulness. Every woman has an influence with those with whom she associates. That influence may be either good or bad. The mother is exercising her influence continually. Every glance of her eye, every word her lips utter, every act of her life, carries with it an influence which has power to affect the character and future destiny of her children. This influence may gladden the heart, or

bring discouragement, and deform the character.

In view of these facts, mothers should take time for reflection and prayer. They should earnestly seek wisdom from God.³

We have much to learn in regard to child training. When teaching the little ones to do things, we must not scold them. Never should we say, "Why did you not do this?" Say, "Children, help mother do this;" or, "Come, children, let us do this." Be their companion in doing these things. When they finish their work, praise them.

Years ago the children in my home were learning how to knit. One of them asked me, "Mother, I should like to know whether I am helping you by trying to do this knitting work?" I knew that I should have to take out every stitch, but I replied, "Yes, my child, you are helping me." Why could I say that they were helping me?—Because they were learning. When they did not make the stitches as they should have made them, I took out every stitch afterward, but never did I condemn them for their failure. Patiently I taught them until they knew how to knit properly.

The mother is the queen of the home. She must not allow her children to treat her as a slave. Many a mother has gone down into the grave with a broken heart, because she made

a slave of herself, doing things that she should have taught her children to do. Let every mother teach her children that they are members of the family firm, and must bear their share of the responsibilities of this firm. Every member of the family should bear these responsibilities as faithfully as church members bear the responsibilities of church relationship.⁴

Teach your children the way of the Lord. In your morning and evening devotions join with them in reading the Bible and singing beautiful songs of praise. Let them learn to repeat God's law.⁵

Loving restraint

The salvation of children depends very much upon the course pursued by the parents. Children must be restrained, and their passions subdued, or God will surely destroy them in the day of His fierce anger; and the parents who have not controlled them will not be blameless. It is because the home training is defective that the youth are so unwilling to submit to proper authority. I am a mother. I know whereof I speak when I say that youth and children are not only safer but happier under wholesome restraint than when following their own inclinations. Parents, your sons and daughters are not properly guarded. They should never be permitted to go and come when they please, without your knowledge and consent. The unbounded freedom granted to children at this age has proved the ruin of thousands. . . .

Mothers are accountable in a great degree for the health and lives of their children, and should become intelligent in regard to laws upon which life and health depend. Parents should teach their children by example that health is to be regarded as the chiefest earthly blessing; that all pleasures and indulgences which will interfere with health are to be sacrificed. If the children are taught self-denial and self-control, they will be far happier than if they are allowed

to indulge their desires for pleasure and extravagance in dress.

"The world may clamor for our time and affections, fashion may invite our patronage, but the words of the apostle should be enough to lead Christian mothers from the indulgence of pride in dress and demoralizing amusements: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

Christian mothers should take their position on the platform of truth and righteousness; and when urged to unite with the world in patronizing fashions which are health-destroying and demoralizing, they should answer, "We are doing a great work and cannot be diverted from it. We are seeking to develop in our children sound, worthy, and beautiful characters, that they may bless the world with their influence and may have immortal beauty and glory in the world to come."⁶

Children often become impatient under restraint and wish to have their own way and to go and come as they please. Especially from the age of ten to eighteen they are inclined to feel that there can be no harm in going to worldly gatherings of young associates. But the experienced Christian parents can see danger. They are acquainted with the peculiar temperaments of their children and know the influence of these things upon their minds; and from a desire for their salvation, they should keep them back from these exciting amusements.⁷

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

unimportant, earthly things, their minds will come to the same level. If they hear the principles of religion slurred and our faith belittled, if sly objections to the truth are dropped in their hearing, these things will fasten in their minds and mold their characters. If their minds are filled with stories, be they true or fictitious, there is no room for the useful information and scientific knowledge which should occupy them.⁸

Watch, watch, watch!

Satan works through young associates to influence and corrupt the minds of each other. It is the most effectual way he can work. Young associates have a powerful influence over one another. Their conversation is not always choice and elevated. Evil communications will be breathed into the ear, which, if not decidedly resisted, find a lodgment in the heart, take root, and spring up to bear fruit, and corrupt their good manners.⁹

Some are constantly leaning to the world. Their views and feelings harmonize much better with the spirit of the world than with that of Christ's self-denying followers. It is perfectly natural that they should prefer the company of those whose spirit will best agree with their own. And such have quite too much influence among God's people. . . .

God does not own the pleasure seeker as His follower. Those only who are self-denying, and who live lives of sobriety, humility, and holiness, are true followers of Jesus. And such cannot enjoy the frivolous, empty conversation of the lover of the world.¹⁰

The young should not be suffered to learn good and evil indiscriminately, with the idea that at some future time the good will predominate and the evil lose its influence. The evil will increase faster than the good. It is possible that after many years the evil they have learned may be eradicated; but who will venture this? Time is short. It is easier and much safer to sow clean, good seed in the hearts of your children than to pluck up the weeds afterward.¹¹

When does child-training begin?

Our Creator Himself declares that the mother's habits prior to the birth of her child will affect its character and destiny. In speaking to . . . one mother [Manoah's wife, in Judges chapter 13], the Lord spoke to all the anxious, sorrowing mothers of that time, and to all the mothers of succeeding generations. Yes, every mother may now understand her duty. She may know that the character of her children will depend vastly more upon her own habits before their birth, and her personal efforts after their birth, than upon external advantages or disadvantages. If the mother would be a fit teacher for her children, she must form habits of self-denial and self-control before their birth.¹²

If children are disciplined aright, they will soon learn that they can receive nothing by crying or fretting. A judicious mother will act in training her children, not merely in regard to her own present comfort, but for their future good.¹³

The poor little children are thought not to know or understand the meaning of a correction at the age of eight, nine or ten months, and they begin to show stubbornness very young, and it is cherished and nourished by its parents till their evil passions grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength.¹⁴

Much parental anxiety and grief might be saved if children were taught from their cradles that their wills were not to be made law, and their whims continually indulged. It is not so difficult as is generally supposed to teach the little child to stifle its outbursts of temper and subdue its fits of passion.

Few parents begin early enough to teach their children obedience. The child is usually allowed to get two or three years the start of its parents, who forbear to discipline it, thinking it is too young to learn to obey. But all this time self is growing strong in the little being, and every day makes it a harder task for the parent to gain control of the child. At a very early

age children can comprehend what is plainly and simply told them; and by kind and judicious management can be taught to obey. I have frequently seen children who were denied something that they wanted throw themselves upon the floor in a pet, kicking and screaming, while the injudicious mother alternately coaxed and scolded in the hope of restoring her child to good nature. This treatment only fosters the child's passion. The next time it goes over the same ground with increased willfulness, confident of gaining the day as before. Thus the rod is spared and the child is spoiled.

The mother should not allow her child to gain an advantage over her in a single instance. And, in order to maintain this authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; as firm, steady hand and a kindness which convinces the child of your love will accomplish the purpose. But let selfishness, anger, and self-will have its course for the first three years of a child's life, and it will be hard to bring it to submit to wholesome discipline. Its disposition has become soured; it delights in having its own way; parental control is distasteful. These evil tendencies grow with its growth, until in manhood supreme selfishness and a lack of self-control place him at the mercy of the evils that run riot in our land.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

Many [parents] neglect their duty during the first years of their children's lives, thinking that when they get older they will then be very careful to repress wrong and educate them in the right. But the very time for them to do this work is when the children are babes in their arms. It is not right for parents to pet and humor their children; neither is it right for them to abuse them. A firm, decided straightforward course of action will be productive of the best results.¹⁷

When under stress . . .

Sometimes everything seems to go wrong. It is fretfulness all around, and all have a very miserable, unhappy time of it. The parents lay the wrong upon their poor children, and think them very disobedient and unruly, and the worst children in the world, when the cause of the disturbance is in themselves. In this manner some parents raise many a storm, by their lack of self-control. Instead of kindly asking the children to do this, or that, they are ordered in a scolding tone, and at the same time a censure or reproof is on their lips which the children have not merited. This course, pursued toward children, destroys their cheerfulness and ambition. They do your bidding, not from love, but because they dare not do otherwise. Their heart is not in the matter. It is a drudgery, instead of a pleasure, which often leads them to forget to follow out all your directions, which increases your irritation, and makes it still worse for the children. The fault-finding is repeated, their bad conduct arrayed before them in glowing colors, until a discouragement comes over the children, and they are not particular whether they please or not. A spirit of "I don't care" seizes them, and they seek that pleasure and enjoyment away from home, away from their parents, which they do not find at home. They mingle with street company and are soon as corrupt as any of the worst.

Upon whom rests this great sin! If home had been made attractive, had the parents manifested love and affection for their children, and with kindness found employment for them, in love instructed them how to obey their wishes, they would have touched an answering cord in their hearts, and their willing feet, and hands, and hearts, would have all readily obeyed them. Parents, by controlling themselves, and speaking kindly, and praising their children when they try to do right, encourage their right efforts, make them very happy, and throw a charm into the family circle which will chase away every dark shadow and bring cheerful sunlight in. . . .

Parents, when you feel fretful, you should not commit so great a sin as to poison the whole family with this dangerous irritability. At such times set a double watch over yourself and resolve in your heart not to offend with your lips. Nothing but pleasant, cheerful words should escape from your lips. Say to yourself, "I will not mar the happiness of my children by a fretful word." By thus controlling yourself, you will grow stronger. Your nervous system will not be so sensitive. You will be strengthened by the principles of right. The consciousness in your heart that you are faithfully discharging your duty will strengthen you. Angels of God will smile upon your efforts and help you. . . .

The mother can and should do much toward controlling her nerves and mind when it is depressed; and even when she is sick, she can, if she only schools herself, be pleasant and cheerful, and can bear more of their noise than she would once have thought it possible. If infirmities, or depression of spirits affect the mother, she should not make the children feel her infirmities and cloud their young, sensitive minds, and cause them to feel that the house is a tomb, and the mother's room the most dismal place in the world. The mind and nerves can gain tone, and strength, by exercising the will. The power of the will in many cases will prove a mighty soother of the nerves.

Do not let your children see you with a clouded brow. If they yield to temptation, and afterwards see and repent of their error, forgive them just as freely as you hope to be forgiven of your Father in heaven. Kindly instruct them and bind them to your hearts. It is a critical time for children. Influences will be thrown around them to wean them from you, which you must counteract. Teach them to make you their confidant. Let them whisper in your ear their trials and joys. By encouraging this, you will save them from many a snare that Satan has prepared for their inexperienced feet. But if you treat your children only with sternness, if you forget your own childhood, and

forget that they are but children, and try to make them perfect, and make them men and women in their acts at once, you will close the door of access which you might otherwise have to your children, and you drive them to open a door for injurious influences, to affect their young minds, and before you awake to their danger, their minds have been poisoned by others.

Satan and his host are making most powerful efforts to sway the minds of the children, and they must be treated with candor, Christian tenderness and love. This will give you a strong influence over them, and they will feel that they can repose unlimited confidence in you. Throw around your children charms for home, and your society. If you do this, they will not desire so much the society of other young associates. . . . Because of the evils now in the world, and the restriction necessary to be placed upon the children, parents should have double care to bind them to their hearts, and let them see they wish to make them happy.

Parents should not forget their childhood years, how much they yearned for sympathy and love, and how unhappy they felt when censured and fretfully chided. They should be young again in their feelings. You should bring your mind down to understand the wants of your children. With firmness, all mixed with love, require your children to obey you.¹⁸

Conclusion

The great burden in the education of children rests upon the mother. She it is who forms their characters. The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. Mothers, remember that in your work the Creator of the universe will give you help. In His strength, and through His name, you can lead your children to be overcomers. Teach them to look to God for strength. Tell them that He hears their prayers. Teach them to overcome evil with good. Teach them to exert an influence that is elevating and ennobling. Lead them to unite with God, and then they will

have strength to resist the strongest temptation. They will then receive the reward of the overcomer.¹⁹

Would that every mother could realize how great are her duties and her responsibilities, and how great will be the reward of faithfulness. The mother's daily influence upon her children is preparing them for everlasting life or eternal death. She exercises in her home a power more decisive than the minister in the desk, or even the king upon his throne. The day of God will reveal how much the world owes to godly mothers for men who have been unflinching advocates of truth and reform—men who have been bold to do and dare, who have stood unshaken amid trials and temptations; men who chose the high and holy interests of truth and the glory of God, before worldly honor or life itself.

When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened; when the "well done" of the great Judge is pronounced, and the crown of immortal glory is placed upon the brow of the victor, many will raise their crowns in sight of the assembled universe, and pointing to their mother say, "She made me all I am through the grace of God. Her instruction, her prayers, have been blessed to my eternal salvation."²⁰ R

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Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" (Jeremiah 13:20).

It is Sabbath morning, the usual Sabbath activities are taking place in the home of a family that for many years, by the grace of the Lord, has been attending church with their children who are now teenagers.

These parents are pleased and quite content for they have brought up their children in the ways of the

The children are active in the Sabbath School, they are taking active part in the afternoon young people's meetings. One of them is a choir conductor and has a string quartet. It is a joy that can only be expressed in lifting the voice of praise to our heavenly Father. As the time comes to leave home to go to church, one of the sons who is not yet ready, says: "Dad, I no longer want to go to church." The father's heart sinks; he is at a loss for words. "Why, my son, why?" "I have many reasons, I cannot tell you

"Yes, I always knew there was something rotten about him," says another.

Still others add that he was "worldly, rebellious, and did not accept instruction; he wanted everything his way." Others suggest different reasons: He left the church because he was not converted, his parents failed, . . . and the supposed "solutions" seem endless. In the meantime the parents search their own hearts in deep sorrow, and pray: "Lord, where have we failed? Our son is so tender-

"Thy Beautiful Flock"

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

Lord. They have taught them that Jesus has given His life in order that they may have life eternal. They have taught them Christian principles, and they are happy to see the fruits of their work. At school, they have been receiving nothing but praise about their children. "They are an example to other students," "they have Christian principles," "we are proud of them," and "we wish we had more students like them" is what the parents have been hearing from the faculty and staff members of the educational institutions where their children have been attending.

now" is the answer. From that time on things are different. The love is still there, even greater, but sadness is there also, and earnest prayers, more than ever before.

All heaven is silent. Angels lay down their harps and begin weeping. A young person has walked out of the church, possibly never to return. Later in a church group there are some who express their view:

"He was not connected to Christ," says one.

hearted, always obedient, excellent at his work—what did go wrong?"

During the eight years of my work especially dedicated to young people, the Lord taught me many valuable lessons that helped me to better understand the needs, aspirations, temptations, and the hearts of young people.

We must be aware that Satan wants our youth. Why? "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

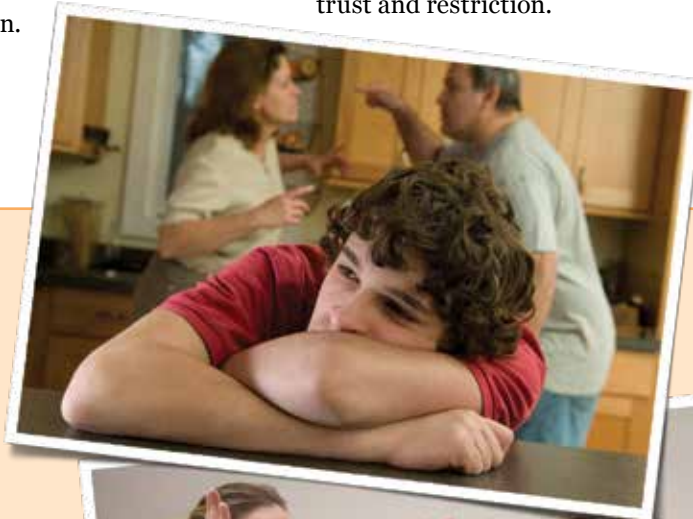
"I saw that Satan is a vigilant foe intent upon his purpose of leading the youth to a course of action entirely contrary to that which God would approve. He well knows that there is no other class that can do as much good as young men and young women who are consecrated to God. The youth, if right, could sway a mighty influence. Preachers, or laymen advanced in years, cannot have one half the influence upon the young that the youth, devoted to God, can have upon their associates."¹



Are we responsible for lost youth?

The law in most countries requires proof that someone contributed to a problem to be found guilty. The rationale is that even though there may be several factors surrounding each case, your contribution may have been the significant factor leading to a connection.

This seems to be similar to the way we will be judged by the One who knows all.



“Provoke not the youth to wrath. Stir not up in them, by unjust charges and harsh treatment, the impulse to act rashly. Often those who ought to know how to deal with the youth drive them away from God by injudicious words and actions. God records such treatment of the youth as a sin against Himself. Treat the tempted ones in a way that will draw them to you as a friend who will not misjudge or hurt them.”²

“Remember that if by the injudicious use of your pen you close the door to even one soul, that soul will confront you in the judgment.”³

Should we expect perfection from our youth?

“We must expect to meet and bear with great imperfections in those who are young and inexperienced. Christ has bidden us seek to restore such in the spirit of meekness, and He holds us responsible for pursuing a course which will drive them to discouragement, despair, and ruin.”⁴

Common causes of spiritual decline in youth

DIVIDED LOVE—Serving two masters, worldly associates.

UNFULFILLED—Lacking love and support.

MISMANAGEMENT—Under/over trust and restriction.



POOR ROLE MODELS—Parents, peers, and ministry.

Divided love

There are few youth who have a negative view about Jesus when they leave the church. Typically, He is still regarded as a loving Saviour or at least the subject of a loving story. Generally, youth do not stop loving Jesus. They simply love and believe in other things more strongly, just as Eve believed the serpent more than she did God. Since Jesus never imposes His love upon any, it is easy to gradually lose sight of Him as we become absorbed in the things the world has to offer. The Bible clearly states that we cannot divide our love:

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15, 16).

How is this love for the things of the world developed?

Through our associations

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

“It has been truly said, ‘Show me your company, and I will show you your character.’ The youth fail to realize how sensibly both their character and their reputation are affected by their choice of associates. One seeks the company of those whose tastes and habits and practices are congenial. He who prefers the society of the ignorant and vicious to that of the wise and good, shows that his own character is defective. His tastes and habits may at first be altogether dissimilar to the tastes and habits of those whose company he seeks; but as he mingles with this class, his thoughts and feelings change; he sacrifices right principles, and insensibly yet unavoidably sinks to the level of his companions.”⁵

Unfulfilled

The youth who leave the church often state the following reasons for their departure:

- Loneliness.
- Lack of inspiration.
- Unresolved theological conflicts.
- Abundant criticism with little support and encouragement.

Clearly their life lacks fulfillment in the church. In many cases parents and members are to blame for this. Rather than loving (through kindness with firmness) and supporting the youth, they slander and criticize.

“The teacher can do much to discourage that evil habit, the curse of the community, the neighborhood, and the home—the habit of backbiting, gossip, ungenerous criticism. . . . We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character?”⁶

(The *Webster's Dictionary* defines backbite as “to say mean or spiteful things about who is absent.”)

“We cannot help the Christless by finding fault with them.”⁷

“Very much has been lost to the cause of truth by a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the young. Ministers of the gospel should form a happy acquaintance with the youth of their congregations. Many are reluctant to do this, but their neglect is a sin in the sight of Heaven. . . .

“Why should not labor for the youth in our borders be regarded as missionary work of the highest kind? It requires the most delicate tact, the most watchful consideration, the most earnest prayer for heavenly wisdom. The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, and the sympathy which flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will gain their confidence, and save them from many a snare of the enemy.”⁸

“None who deal with the young should be ironhearted, but

affectionate, tender, pitiful, courteous, winning, and companionable; yet they should know that reproofs must be given. . . . Excessive indulgence and undue severity are alike to be avoided. While vigilance and firmness are indispensable, so also are sympathy and tenderness. . . . Strengthen every good impulse; encourage every noble action.”⁹

“Children need appreciation, sympathy, and encouragement, but care should be taken not to foster in them a love of praise. It is not wise to give them special notice, or to repeat before them their clever sayings. The parent or teacher who keeps in view the true ideal of character and the possibilities of achievement, cannot cherish or encourage self-sufficiency. He will not encourage in the youth the desire or effort to display their ability or proficiency. He who looks higher than himself will be humble; yet he will possess a dignity that is not abashed or disconcerted by outward display or human greatness.”¹⁰

“Even kindness must have its limits. Authority must be sustained by a firm severity, or it will be received by many with mockery and contempt.”¹¹

“Dear young friends, what is your aim in life? Are you ambitious for education that you may one day have a name and position in the world? Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in lofty aspirations. You may every one of you make your mark. You should be content with no mean attainments. Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard.

“But remember that the ‘fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,’ and lies at the foundation of all true greatness. Integrity, unswerving integrity, is the principle that you need to carry with you into all the relations of life. Balanced by religious principle, you may climb to any height you please.”¹²

“If the youth today would stand as Daniel stood, they must put to the stretch every spiritual nerve and muscle. The Lord does not desire that they shall remain novices. He wishes them to reach the highest round of the ladder, that they may step from it into the kingdom of God.”¹³

“God calls upon the young men and young women to make the most of their entrusted ability. He would have you cultivate habits of industry, habits of study, that you may improve the talents He has given you. God will accept your service, and the improvement of your talents, but He cannot look with approval upon half-hearted, halfway work. Every branch of God's work calls for the exercise of the highest ability; it demands that you shall bring into requisition every available help, that you shall direct your noblest impulses to the propagation of the truth.”¹⁴

Lack of trust

“The youth must be impressed with the idea that they are trusted. They have a sense of honor, and they want to be respected, and it is their right. If pupils receive the impression that they cannot go out or come in, sit at the table, or be anywhere, even in their rooms, except they are watched, a critical eye is upon them to criticize and report, it will have the influence to demoralize, and pastime will have no pleasure in it. . . . But



this constant watchfulness is not natural and produces evils that it is seeking to avoid. The healthfulness of youth requires exercise, cheerfulness, and a happy, pleasant atmosphere surrounding them for the development of physical health and symmetrical character.”¹⁵

How much restriction should the youth have?

“Youth cannot be made as sedate and grave as old age, the child as sober as the sire. While sinful amusements are condemned, as they should be, let parents, teachers, and guardians of youth provide in their stead innocent pleasures, which will not taint or corrupt the morals. Do not bind down the young to rigid rules and restraints that will lead them to feel themselves oppressed and to break over and rush into paths of folly and destruction. With a firm, kind, considerate hand, hold the lines of government, guiding and controlling their minds and purposes, yet so gently, so wisely, so lovingly, that they will still know that you have their best good in view.”¹⁶



The right example

Scientific studies into the behavior of young people have shown that they are more likely to imitate what they observe than do what they are told. This natural law has prompted the Lord to place high emphasis on our example.

“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:2–5).

Departing youth often cite hypocrisy as the chief reason why they became disillusioned with religion. The youth need worthy examples from parents, ministers, and church leaders to counter the influence of negative peer groups. However, we must also remember to instruct the youth not to look to men and women:

“Very many of the parents who profess to believe the solemn message for this time have not trained their children for God. They have not restrained themselves and have been irritated with anyone who attempted to restrain them. They have not by living faith daily bound their children upon the altar of the Lord. Many of these youth have been allowed to transgress the fourth commandment by seeking their own pleasure upon God’s holy day. They have felt no compunctions of conscience in going about the streets on the Sabbath for their own amusement. Many go where they please and do what they please, and their parents are so fearful of displeasing them that, imitating the management of Eli, they lay no commands upon them.

“These youth finally lose all respect for the Sabbath and have no relish for religious meetings or for sacred and eternal things. If their parents mildly remonstrate with them, they shield themselves by telling of the faults of some of the church members. In place of silencing the first approach to anything of the kind, the parents think just as their children think; if this one or that one were perfect, their children would be right. Instead of this they should **teach them that the sins of others are no excuse for them. Christ is the only true pattern.** The wrongs of many would not excuse one wrong in them or lessen in the least their guilt. God has given them one standard, perfect, noble, elevated. **This they must meet, irrespective of the course which others may pursue.**”¹⁷

Parents

“The father may exert an influence over his children which shall be stronger than the allurements of the world. He should study the disposition and character of the members of his little circle, that he may understand their needs and their dangers and thus be prepared to repress the wrong and encourage the right.”¹⁸

“The sphere of the mother may be humble; but her influence, united with the father’s, is as abiding as eternity. Next to God, the mother’s power for good is the strongest known on earth.”¹⁹

Ministers

“Ministers should set the youth a worthy example, one corresponding to their holy calling. They should help the young to be frank, yet modest and dignified in all their associations.”²⁰

Preachers should also ensure that there are no unsubstantiated views put forward, and that the message be well balanced rather than reflecting the extreme liberal or legalistic position they may have. Let us consider what is on the minds of our youth.

Expectations

Young people live in a world of:

1. Daily pressures.
2. Challenges.
3. Different social structures.
4. Stimulating ideas.

They are inundated with options from:

1. Food choices.
2. Reading material.
3. Clothing.
4. Schools.
5. Degrees.
6. Entertainment.
7. Transportation.
8. Jobs.
9. Intimate companions.

Self-protection vs. commitment

Because of the “breakdown” in society and at home many youth are drawn into a “self-protection” state, by which they hesitate to commit

themselves to anything—even to doing God’s will. And if they do actually make a commitment to Christ and thus to the church, they will have certain expectations from:

• **Ministers:**

1. Youth will relate to someone to whom Christ is real.
2. They will relate to someone who has concrete reasons about what they believe. Their question is not “what” you believe, but “why” you believe.
3. They will relate to someone who is ready to listen.

Because we have studied the Word of God for a long time, we begin to think that we have “all the knowledge.” However, someone recently made this keen observation: “I can learn an incredible amount from the youth; they are on the cutting edge of information.”

4. They will relate to someone who enjoys their company and is willing to serve them. Invite them to your homes on Friday, or Saturday evenings. Visit them where they live, arrange to meet them for refreshments, discuss some of their difficulties. If they are willing, spend time with them; it demonstrates our commitment to them. In time of crisis, they will come to us, because they have learned to trust us.

• **Church members must provide:**

1. A warm atmosphere

Some youth do not have warm, loving homes; others may have a good family, but if the church is “icy cold” they are turned away.

2. Uncritical acceptance

Sometimes the church’s expectations cause a strain on the youth. Therefore we need to deal carefully if commenting on their style of dress, their attitudes and their friends. Lead them tenderly as lambs, and show the right way by example.

3. Open heart to discuss issues

We should ask the youth what topics they would like to discuss. It is essential to hear them without

criticizing. Give them an opportunity to open their hearts. They may do this after they see that we have open hearts.

4. Participation

The youth are generally resourceful and talented. We should involve them in church activities and have their talents appreciated. Discover their practical skills and interests, such as:

- a. Teaching Sabbath School class.
- b. Singing in the choir.
- c. Giving Bible studies.
- d. Speaking in public.
- e. Social programs and activities.

Young people love a church that is “doing something.” If the church does not fill their social needs, they will find ways to meet them outside the church. There should be a social committee, and let youth set the agenda with the guidance of parents or mature youth leaders.

Study God’s Word together

Organize Bible reading sessions. Have group discussions, workshops. Conduct youth gatherings where they can express themselves in regard to their beliefs, their outlook on life, their attitudes to the church and doctrines. Encourage them to present topics from the Word of God that are dear to their hearts. Encourage in them a missionary spirit, involve them in planning missionary efforts. This will give them a sense of belonging, a sense that their contribution is appreciated.

Above all, show them by a living example what Christ means to you, and leave the rest to the Lord.

It is with prayer that I have put these words together in the hope that we will all be more aware of the needs of our youth, to be understanding, and to be aware of the dangers and temptations to which our young people are exposed. May the Lord be with every parent, every minister, and every church as we train our children and young people in His ways. *R*

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Extracts from the writings of E. G. White.

Reflecting the Heavenly Father

By kind and judicious management, fathers as well as mothers should bind their children to them by the strong ties of reverence, gratitude, and love, and should kindle in their young hearts an earnest longing for righteousness and truth. While the mother seeks to implant good principles, the father should see that the precious seed is not choked by the growth of evil. His sterner discipline is needed that his children may learn firmness and self-control amid the allurements to sin which must be on every hand.

Let parents beware how they undervalue or neglect their work. Great is the reward of fidelity, terrible the penalty of unfaithfulness. One child wisely educated—trained to love and practice the right because it is right, may impart to thousands the blessings which he has received. Through his influence and example, the lessons of uprightness, purity, and devotion that shaped his own character are permitted to shed their precious light far and wide.¹

Fathers and mothers should carefully and prayerfully study the characters of their children. They should seek to repress and restrain those traits that are too prominent, and to encourage others which may be deficient, thus securing harmonious

development. This is no light matter. The father may not consider it a great sin to neglect the training of his children; but thus does God regard it. Christian parents need a thorough conversion upon this subject. Guilt is accumulating upon them, and the consequences of their actions reach down from their own children to children's children. The ill-balanced mind, the hasty temper, the fretfulness, envy, or jealousy, bear witness to parental neglect.²

Fathers and mothers, speak kindly to your children; remember how sensitive you are, how little you can bear to be blamed; reflect, and know that your children are like you. That which you cannot bear, do not lay upon them. If you cannot bear censure and blame, neither can your children, who are weaker than you and cannot endure as much. Let your pleasant, cheerful words ever be like sunbeams in your family. The fruits of self-control, thoughtfulness, and painstaking on your part will be a hundredfold. Parents have no right to bring a gloomy cloud over the happiness of their children by faultfinding or severe censure for trifling mistakes. Actual wrong and sin should be made to appear just as sinful as it is, and a firm, decided course should be pursued to prevent

its recurrence. Children should be impressed with a sense of their wrongs, yet they should not be left in a hopeless state of mind, but with a degree of courage that they can improve and gain your confidence and approval.

Some parents mistake in giving their children too much liberty. They sometimes have so much confidence in them that they do not see their faults. It is wrong to allow children, at some expense, to visit at a distance, unaccompanied by their parents or guardians. It has a wrong influence upon the children. They come to feel that they are of considerable consequence and that certain privileges belong to them, and if these are not granted, they think themselves abused. They refer to children who go and come, and have many privileges, while they have so few.

And the mother, fearing that her children will think her unjust,



gratifies their wishes, which in the end proves a great injury to them. Young visitors, who have not a parent's watchful eye over them to see and correct their faults often receive impressions which it will take months to remove. I was referred to cases of parents who had good, obedient children, and who, having the utmost confidence in certain families, trusted their children to go from them at a distance to visit these friends. From that time there was an entire change in the deportment and character of their children. Formerly they were contented and happy at home, and had no great desire to be much in the company of other young persons. When they return to their parents, restraint seems unjust, and home is like a prison to them. Such unwise movements of parents decide the character of their children.³

The father is to carry out the gracious designs of God and establish his family in upright principles, that they may have virtuous and well-balanced characters.⁴

Living up to this unique calling

Few fathers are fitted for the responsibility of training their children. They themselves need strict discipline that they may learn self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. Until they possess these attributes they are not capable of properly teaching their children. What can we say to awaken the moral sensibilities of fathers, that they may understand and undertake their duty to their offspring? The subject is of intense interest and importance, having a bearing upon the future welfare of our country. We would solemnly impress upon fathers, as well as mothers, the grave responsibility they have assumed in bringing children into the world. It is a responsibility from which nothing but death can free them. True, the chief care and burden rests upon the mother during the first years of her children's lives, yet even then the father should be her stay and counsel, encouraging her to lean upon his large affections, and assisting her as much as possible.

The father's duty to his children should be one of his first interests. It should not be set aside for the sake of acquiring a fortune, or of gaining a high position in the world. In fact, those very conditions of affluence and honor frequently separate a man from his family and cut off his influence from them more than anything else. If the father would have his children develop harmonious characters, and be an honor to him and a blessing to the world, he has a special work to do. God holds him responsible for that work. In the great day of reckoning it will be asked him: Where are the children that I entrusted to your care to educate for Me, that their lips might speak My praise, and their lives be as a diadem of beauty in the world, and they live to honor Me through all eternity?

In some children the moral powers strongly predominate. They have power of will to control their minds and actions. In others the animal passions are almost irresistible. To meet these diverse temperaments, which frequently appear in the same family, fathers, as well as mothers, need patience and wisdom from the divine Helper. There is not so much to be gained by punishing children for their transgressions, as by teaching them the folly and heinousness of their sin, understanding their secret inclinations, and laboring to bend them toward the right. . . .

Ways to inspire your children

The father should frequently gather his children around him and lead their minds into channels of

moral and religious light. He should study their different tendencies and susceptibilities, and reach them through the plainest avenues. Some may be best influenced through veneration and the fear of God; others through the manifestation of His benevolence and wise providence, calling forth their deep gratitude; others may be more deeply impressed by opening before them the wonders and mysteries of the natural world, with all its delicate harmony and beauty, which speak to their souls of Him who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and all the beautiful things therein.



Children who are gifted with the talent or love of music may receive impressions that will be lifelong, by the judicious use of those susceptibilities as the medium for religious instruction. They may be taught that if they are not right with God they are like a discord in the divine harmony of creation, like an instrument out of tune, giving forth discordant strains more grievous to God than harsh, inharmonious notes are to their own fine musical ear.

Many may be reached best through sacred pictures, illustrating scenes in the life and mission of Christ. By this means truths may be vividly imprinted upon their minds, never to be effaced. The Roman Catholic Church understands this fact, and appeals to the senses of the people



through the charm of sculpture and paintings. While we have no sympathy for image worship, which is condemned by the law of God, we hold that it is proper to take advantage of that almost universal love of pictures in the young, to fasten in their minds valuable moral truths, to bind the gospel to their hearts by beautiful imagery illustrating the great moral principles of the Bible. Even so our Saviour illustrated His sacred lessons by the imagery found in God's created works.

It will not do to lay down an iron rule by which every member of the family is forced into the same discipline. It is better to exert a milder sway, and, when any special lesson is required, to reach the consciences of the youth through their individual tastes and marked points of character. While there should be a uniformity in the family discipline, it should be varied to meet the wants of different members of the family. It should be the parents' study not to arouse the combativeness of their children, not to excite them to anger and rebellion, but to interest them, and inspire them with a desire to attain to the highest intelligence and perfection of character. This can be done in a spirit of Christian sympathy and forbearance, the parents realizing the peculiar dangers of their children, and firmly, yet kindly, restraining their propensities to sin.

The parents, especially the father, should guard against the danger of their children learning to look upon him as a detective, peering into all their actions, watching and criticizing them, ready to seize upon and punish them for every misdemeanor. The father's conduct upon all occasions should be such that the children will understand that his efforts to correct them spring from a heart full of love for them. When this point is gained, a great victory has been accomplished. Fathers should have a sense of their children's human want and weakness, and his sympathy and sorrow for the erring ones should be greater than any sorrow they can feel for their own misdeeds. This will be perceived by

the corrected child and will soften the most stubborn heart.

The father, as priest and house-band of the family circle, should stand to them as nearly in the place of Christ as possible—a sufferer for those who sin, one who, though guiltless, endures the pains and penalty of his children's wrongs, and, while he inflicts punishment upon them, suffers more deeply under it than they do.

But if the father exhibits a want of self-control before his children, how can he teach them to govern their wrong propensities? If he displays anger or injustice, or evidence that he is the slave of any evil habit, he loses half his influence over them. Children have keen perceptions and draw sharp conclusions; precept must be followed by example to have much weight with them. If the father indulges in the use of any hurtful stimulant, or falls into any other degrading habit, how can he maintain his moral dignity before the watchful eyes of his children? . . .

The dangers of youth are many. There are innumerable temptations to gratify appetite in this land of plenty. Young men in our cities are brought face to face with this sort of temptation every day. They fall under deceptive allurements to gratify appetite, without the thought that they are endangering health. The young frequently receive the impression that happiness is to be found in freedom from restraint and in the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures and self-gratification. This enjoyment is purchased at the expense of the physical, mental, and moral health, and turns to bitterness at last.

How important, then, that fathers look well after the habits of their sons and their associates. And first of all he should see that no perverted appetite holds him in bondage, lessening his influence with his sons. . . .

The father, above all others, should have a clear, active mind, quick

perceptions, calm judgment, physical strength to support him in his arduous duties, and most of all the help of God to order his acts aright. He should therefore be entirely temperate, walking in the fear of God, and the admonition of His law, mindful of all the small courtesies and kindnesses of life, the support and strength of his wife, a perfect pattern for his sons to follow, a counselor and authority for his daughters. He should stand forth in the moral dignity of a man free from the slavery of evil habits and appetites, qualified for the sacred responsibilities of educating his children for the higher life.⁵

Christian father, labor kindly, patiently, for the welfare of your children. Seek to turn their hearts to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Teach them by precept and example that the spirit of Christ is the spirit of doing good.⁶ *R*

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Our Loved Ones in the New Earth

By A. Balbach

A few days before my fiftieth wedding anniversary, I had a dream that made me think about the glorious day when “every eye shall see” the second coming of Jesus. In my dream, I found myself in a place where I was surrounded by people whom I knew to be no longer alive. I became excited. In the dream I thought that this must be the resurrection. Suddenly I recognized my father-in-law, whom I only met once (while I was courting his daughter and one week before his death). In my dream, I was afraid to walk up to him and surprise him when he hardly knew me.

So I started to look around for my wife. I saw her and put my arm around her. Then I hurried toward the old man with her on my left side. Now he could understand who I was when I greeted him. My first words to him were, “Fifty years of happy marriage to your daughter!”

I woke up after I dreamed those words. Half asleep, I began to think of others I look forward to seeing at the time of the resurrection: my children, my children’s children, my children’s

children’s children; my sister and her family; my friends; my fellow workers and members in the church.

We have nothing to fear

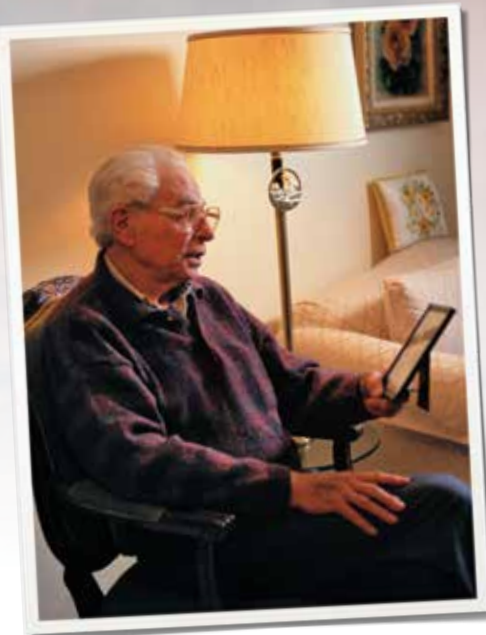
“The only thing we have to fear on our part is that we shall not keep our eyes continually fixed upon Jesus,

that we shall not have an eye single to the glory of God, so that if we were called to lay down our armor and sleep in death we might not be ready to give an account of our trust. Forget not for a moment that you are Christ’s property, bought with an infinite price, and that you are to glorify Him in your spirit, and in your body, which are His. . . .

“Be of good comfort in the hope of the resurrection morning.”¹

Although we are told, “they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35, 36), we are also told:

“We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the



light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love”²

“The divine love emanating from Christ never destroys human love, but includes human love, refined and purified. By it human love is elevated and ennobled. Human love can never bear its precious fruit until it is united with the divine nature and trained to grow heavenward. Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides. The warmth of true friendship and the love that binds the hearts of husband and wife are a foretaste of heaven.”³

What will happen at Christ's coming?

In the Bible, the climax of the prophetic picture representing the history of our world is described in these words: “The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44).

Before long the true followers of Christ will hear the good news: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

Many Bible students think that Christ will establish His kingdom on this earth at His coming and that the door of probation will still be open for unrepentant sinners to turn to God. Be not deceived. If you want to know what will actually happen at Christ's coming, read: Matthew 25:6–13; Luke 13:23–25; 17:28–30; Mark 13:26, 27

(Matthew 13:41–43); Isaiah 66:15–18 (Matthew 25:31, 32, 34, 41); 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10; Matthew 7:22, 23; Malachi 4:1–3.

We should not be deceived by the wrong ideas concerning the events to take place during the millennium. Some believe that the earth will be inhabited and that the wicked will finally be given a second chance to be saved. But the Bible does not support that conclusion.

The prophet Jeremiah was shown the earth during this period, and he writes: “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end” (Jeremiah 4:23–27).

And the prophet Isaiah was shown a similar condition: “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. . . . The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly” (Isaiah 24:1, 3, 19).

The picture is quite clear: The earth will be utterly desolate and

empty, and Satan who is confined to it will have a vacation for one thousand years, as there will be no one to be tempted or troubled. He will be able to contemplate the results of his rebellion against God.

We must repeat that there is no provision for the fanciful idea that seems so appealing to the carnal mind, that the wicked inhabitants of the world will have a second chance. When the living saints, together with the risen saints, are caught up to meet Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:17) on His way back to heaven, then the kingdom of grace is at an end. Those that have been willing to enter in are already saved, and those that have spurned Christ's invitation are already dead, awaiting the general resurrection of the wicked to receive their reward in the lake of fire.

What will happen at the end of the millennium?

The kingdom of glory symbolized by the “stone” in Daniel 2:44 is inaugurated immediately before Christ's coming (Revelation 11:15) and has the New Jerusalem for its capital city. John the revelator writes:

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;

and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Revelation 21:2–7).

Chapter 20 makes it quite plain that Satan will then be loosed for a season and that he will inspire the wicked to attack the New Jerusalem, “the camp of the saints,” with the idea of taking it by force. It is at this time that the wicked will be resurrected (Revelation 20:5) and allowed sufficient time to form organized nations, and then. . . .

“And [Satan] shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Revelation 20:8, 9).

The apostle Peter saw the result of the fire that will devour Satan and all those who belong to him.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:11–13).

At long last there will be a world government, for it is said of Christ that He shall reign “from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9:10). In that day, prophecy says, “the kingdom

and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Daniel 7:27).

“And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

This is the kingdom that Christians should have in mind when they pray the Lord’s prayer:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:4, 10).

A universal kingdom? A world government? Yes, we will have one—but only in agreement with the plan of God.

Toward this happy consummation we should now be looking forward with new hope and expectation and “so much the more” as we “see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). Let us not delay our personal preparation for it, for the hour is late; there is so little time.

Feeling at home in the New Earth

Why will the redeemed feel at home in the earth made new?

The genuine followers of Christ are those who submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit as He leads them to develop the principle of the kingdom of God in their hearts, in their minds, in their lips, in their homes, and in their association with their brethren and sisters who are also marching on the narrow way to life eternal. In this sense, while they are still in this world, they are already living in the holy atmosphere of the kingdom to be established worldwide (Revelation

11:15). This is what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples: “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

A life in harmony with the spiritual and moral principles of the kingdom—if we actually understand what Christ said (Luke 17:21)—is characterized by the love of God seen in all our actions.

“We walk in the light,” “we have fellowship with him,” . . . “we have fellowship one with another,” . . . and “verily is the love of God perfected” in us (1 John 1:6, 7; 2:5).

“Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

How will the world see our love manifest in deed and in truth? Read: Isaiah 58:7, 10; Matthew 5:44–46; 25:34–40; Romans 12:9, 10, 18–21; James 1:27.

“The happiness of heaven [among the redeemed on earth] will be found by conforming to the will of God, and if men [are to] become members of the royal family in heaven, it will be because heaven has begun with them on earth.”⁴

“Heaven is to begin on this earth.” How? “When the Lord’s people are filled with meekness and tenderness, they will realize that His banner over them is love, and His fruit will be sweet to their taste. They will make a



heaven below in which to prepare for heaven above.”⁵

From the thoughts and experiences implied in the statement of Jesus in Luke 17:21, we have the answer to our question. The redeemed will feel at home in the new earth, because here and there, they can “breathe” the same blessed heavenly atmosphere.

We are talking of the redeemed, not about those who call themselves Christians but have no idea of what Christianity actually means. These will find the door closed. Matthew 7:22, 23; 25:8–12; Revelation 20:15; 21:27; 22:12–15.

Some readers of the Bible may be tempted to question the justice of God, as He will not give these people a second chance.

“Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord” (Isaiah 26:10).

If the wicked were taken to heaven with the multitude of saints (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17) at the coming of Christ, what would happen? Or, if they were not destroyed after their resurrection at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:5, 9; 21:8), but allowed to live, would they adjust themselves to the spiritual, moral, and social conditions completely restored in the new world?

No! Why should the history of the chance extended to Cain and his descendants be repeated? The wicked, through their presence, will not be allowed to mar the happiness of heaven or to spoil the pure atmosphere of the earth made new. Whether in heaven or on the new earth, they would regret more and more the fact that they cannot be in their previous sordid environment.

They would ask: Where can we buy cigarettes? Smoking is not allowed here; are they really that concerned about air pollution? Where can I have a drink? No bars, no casinos, no dance halls, no brothels, nothing to

make us feel happy!
What a calamity!
Let's get out of here.
But how? How can we escape from this place of torment?

The second death. This will be the end of their frustration. Once again the whole universe will see that under the justice and mercy of God, if the unrepentant sinners were given a second chance, they would not be benefited by it. On the contrary, they would become worse.

Peace on Earth

“Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us” (Isaiah 26:11, 12).

“Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.” “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Isaiah 32:13, 17).

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isaiah 65:17–19, 21, 22).

“Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her. . . . For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the

Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees” (Isaiah 66:10, 12). *R*

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- ⁴ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 361.
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Romania

*Workers from
"Editura Pazitorul
Adevarului" Fagaras,
January 2015.*

Burundi

*Delegation Session,
January 2015 (middle).*

Rwanda

*Delegation session
at new headquarters
in Kigali, January
2015 (bottom).*



Italy

*Youth convention,
February, 2015.*

Brazil

*Missionary school
graduation, December
2014 (middle).*

Colombia

*Baptismal service during
the spiritual conference,
Barbosa, January 2015.*



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MOVING? Please let us know.



The Real, Live Family

By B. Montrose

“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table” (Psalm 128:1–3).

Can you imagine how sad it is not to have any family at all?

A scientist once took some baby monkeys away from their mothers. To replace the mothers, he gave them each a fake mother-monkey made from wire. Some of these wire statues he covered with soft cloth, and some were even heated to be warm—and for all of the monkeys he attached a little bottle of milk in order to feed them. But the baby monkeys became so upset that they acted very strangely, and some even died from

sadness. People were relieved to hear that these were not human babies, of course, but they also decided that this scientist did a cruel thing, for this experiment was not nice to do to any of God’s creatures.

What was missing? Most of the baby monkeys had food and warmth. But they did not have love and nurturing. They had no one of their species to care for them. All they had was a statue. . . .

We can thank our Creator that we are not cared for by statues! The Lord designed the family circle to be a safe, comforting unit to cradle the babies, guide the children, strengthen the adults, and to care tenderly for the elderly.

In God’s plan, what is a family? In the Bible, our Creator shows that it begins with a marriage directed

by Him, between one man and one woman who stay together until death. Then, if the husband and wife become

parents, they are to be thankful for their children as a precious gift of God, to guide and prepare them for eternity.

Sadly, in this world, the enemy of souls has done cruel experiments on the human race—kind of like that scientist did with the baby monkeys. Satan has come up with all sorts of strange ideas that are different from what God has planned—and many people are suffering because of them.

So, what is the answer to this problem? We need to go back to God’s word and to the Spirit of Prophecy to learn more about His will and His ways for the family. The Lord loves us, even more than any human being on earth can love us. He’s the One who gives us His plan to care for and nurture us. When we obey His Word for the family circle, we are much happier! *R*