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Vol. 58, No. 4

Evangelism
The Reason for Our Existence



Man's Extremity | Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow | Perfect

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Volume 58, Number 4

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—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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Revival & Reformation

It has been said that many churches start as a movement, then they became a church, then an organization, and finally, a mausoleum.

God's church needs to continue being a movement forward and upward. In this process, revival and reformation are a constant need. However, we should keep in mind that revival without reformation leads to simple excitement and sentimentalism. Reformation without revival leads to fanaticism and legalism. Revival and reformation need to work together. If the reformation is not continual, the spiritual condition of the people becomes worse and worse. The history of Israel as God's people gives us very profitable lessons. All the reformations were followed by deeper apostasy—and this is a warning to every one of us.

Our need of a true revival and reformation is evident. God's people cannot be used by the Lord in the work of spreading the gospel around the world without a deep experience with the Lord. We desperately need the baptism of the Holy Spirit as individuals, as families, and as a church. But what is the true meaning of revival and reformation?

In Joel chapter 2, verses 12–18, a strong appeal is made to us: “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of

great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.”

In this inspired message, we find all the essential elements of genuine revival and reformation: 1. Turning to the Lord with all our heart (total surrender); 2. Fasting, weeping (as fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit); 3. Rending the heart (true conversion); 4. Solemn assembly (involving God's people in this process); 5. Ministers weeping between the porch and altar, asking mercy and grace from the Lord for His people.

The result: God will be merciful and gracious to His people. “Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of God, and striving to conform their lives to its precepts.

... God calls for a revival and a reformation.”¹

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.”²

“The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife.”³

“A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.”⁴

This work needs to begin with individuals, families, and churches. I shouldn't wait for my neighbor, but rather should start with myself, my family, and my church. God is anxious to revive and reform His church. Are we willing to be revived and reformed? May the Lord inspire us with this intense desire! *R*

¹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 626.

² *The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1887.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 251.

⁴ *The Review and Herald*, February 25, 1902.



Evangelism:

The Reason for Our Existence

*A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with comments
by Davi P. Silva*

Upon completing His victorious mission on earth, Jesus Christ gave His followers in all places and at all times the great commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark

16:15–18). Paul, the greatest educator after Jesus Christ, had such serious consideration for his mission that he stated: **“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”** (1 Corinthians 9:16, emphasis supplied).

The first step to be successful in preaching the gospel is to believe the gospel ourselves! We need to have this gospel in our heart, to know Jesus Christ by personal experience, and love the souls for whom Christ gave His precious life.

There are both theoretical and practical aspects of preaching the gospel. Jesus Christ and His apostles were successful in winning souls because they lived their preaching, and they preached it through their lives.

What was Christ’s method of work? Matthew answers: “And Jesus went

about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23).

In this verse we find a real course in evangelism. Christ was a dynamic evangelist. He didn’t wait for the people to come to Him, instead He went to all Galilee and all Palestine. He didn’t preach at a level beyond the comprehension of the people but in a practical manner, identifying Himself with them in their different needs. He healed all kinds of sicknesses and diseases among the people. In summary, He preached to them, taught them, and healed them.

If we want to succeed in the work of evangelization, we should lift up Christ and make use of His methods of work.

“The great Center of attraction, Jesus Christ, must not be left out of the

third angel's message. . . . The sinner must ever look toward Calvary; and with the simple faith of a little child, he must rest in the merits of Christ, accepting His righteousness and believing in His mercy."¹

"Jesus came in personal contact with men. He did not stand aloof and apart from those who needed His help. He entered the homes of men, comforted the mourner, healed the sick, aroused the careless, and went about doing good. And if we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must do as He did. We must give men the same kind of help that He gave."²

The baptism of the Holy Spirit

Another essential and irreplaceable factor for success in evangelization is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Prophecy says: "From hours spent with God [Jesus] came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words

that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed."³

The same blessing is promised to us. "[Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11, last part). "The same is [the Lamb of God] which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33, last part). "We need a power to come upon us now and stir us up to diligence and earnest faith. Then, **baptized with the Holy Spirit**, we shall have Christ formed within, the hope of glory. Then we will exhibit Christ as the divine object of our faith and our love. We will talk of Christ, we will pray to Christ and about Christ. We will praise His holy name. We will present before the people His miracles, His self-denial, His self-sacrifice, His sufferings, and His crucifixion, His resurrection and triumphant ascension. These are the inspiring themes of the gospel, to awaken love and intense fervor in every heart. Here are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, a fountain inexhaustible. The more you seek of this experience, the greater will be the value of your life."⁴

"We need to pray as we never have prayed before for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for if there was ever a time when we needed this baptism,

it is now. There is nothing the Lord has more frequently told us He would bestow upon us, and nothing by which His name would be more glorified in bestowing, than the Holy Spirit. When we partake of this Spirit, men and women will be born again. . . . Souls once lost will be found, and brought back."⁵

Love for souls

"God calls for evangelists. A true evangelist is a lover of souls. He hunts and fishes for men."⁶

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary."⁷

Successful methods

What was the main method of Christ's work?

"The Saviour devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching. His last injunction to His apostles, His representatives on earth, was to lay hands on the sick that they might recover. When the Master shall come, He will commend those who have visited the sick and relieved the necessities of the afflicted."⁸

"Nothing will open doors for the truth like evangelistic medical missionary work. This will find access to

"We need to pray as we never have prayed before for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for if there was ever a time when we needed this baptism, it is now."





hearts and minds, and will be a means of converting many to the truth.”⁹

“Our work is to be practical. We are to remember that man has a body as well as a soul to save. Our work includes far more than standing before the people to preach to them. In our work we are to minister to the physical infirmities of those with whom we are brought in contact. We are to present the principles of health reform, impressing our hearers with the thought that they have a part to act in keeping themselves in health.”¹⁰

Preaching the Word of God

“Evangelistic work, opening the Scriptures to others, warning men and women of what is coming upon the world, is to occupy more and still more of the time of God’s servants.”¹¹

“The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teachings is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ’s servants to teach. ‘The law and the prophets,’ with the record

of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ’s name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom.”¹²

Sacred music

“Song is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart. Often by the words of sacred song, the springs of penitence and faith have been unsealed.”¹³

Publications

“Let the publications containing Bible truth be scattered like the leaves of autumn. Lift Him up, the Saviour of souls, lift Him up higher and still higher.”¹⁴

“If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public, thus leading them to search the Scriptures. Missionary work—introducing our publications into families, conversing, and praying with and for them—is a good work.”¹⁵

Conclusion

“Let us go forth therefore unto him

without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Hebrews 13:13).

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (John 4:35, 36).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). May the Lord Jesus Christ, through His Holy Spirit, awaken us and make us able to fulfill His wonderful work! *R*

References

- ¹ *Evangelism*, pp. 184, 185.
- ² *Welfare Ministry*, p. 60.
- ³ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 139.
- ⁴ *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 186, 187. [Emphasis added.]
- ⁵ *The Upward Look*, p. 346.
- ⁶ *Evangelism*, p. 116.
- ⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.
- ⁸ *Counsels on Health*, p. 34.
- ⁹ *Evangelism*, p. 513.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 261.
- ¹¹ *The Review and Herald*, August 2, 1906.
- ¹² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 826.
- ¹³ *Evangelism*, p. 500.
- ¹⁴ *In Heavenly Places*, p. 323.
- ¹⁵ *Christian Service*, p. 145.



True Forgiveness

"Forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our
debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Adapted from an article penned by an unknown author.

Forgiveness as a duty is an attitude of mind, rather than an act. In this, forgiveness is more than pardon. A pardon, even in a legal sense, requires the action of two parties—the pardoner and the pardoned. A pardon is not complete until it has been accepted. But forgiveness is complete in the mind of the forgiving one, whether it be asked for, or be recognized by the offender, or not. A pardoner remits all penalties consequent upon an offense. Forgiveness does away with all severity or harshness of feeling against the offender. But neither a pardon nor forgiveness in itself settles the estimate which is to be had of the guilty one's personal characteristics and trustworthiness. Forgiveness makes the wrong against the forgiver as if that wrong as a wrong had been done. But forgiveness does not make the forgiven one such a person in himself as he would have been if he had not committed the offense which is forgiven. And the forgiver's estimate of the forgiven one's character will naturally be formed in view of the added knowledge of that character which the offense has furnished.

A man who shows himself thoughtless or forgetful, and thereby injures

one who committed a trust to him, may be forgiven for that failure, so that he is held as dear as if he had not failed. But it may be the forgiver's duty to prefer another person for a similar trust in a new emergency. Although, again, it may be thought that the lesson of this failure is in itself an added guard for the future. For example, if a trusted clerk in a merchant's counting-room has stolen money from his employer, that employer can so thoroughly forgive the clerk that he will even have a new and more loving interest in the one who has yielded to temptation and is now penitent for it. It may be that he will trust him again in his own service. So far, the forgiven one is restored to favor as though he had never fallen. But the employer could not trustfully recommend that clerk for a responsible position in a banking house, as a person who had never wavered in his honesty of purpose or of action.

When we seek God's forgiveness, we do not ask Him to look upon us henceforth as those who are strong against temptation, and to believe that we are in no special danger of sinning again; but we do ask Him to forgive us for the sins we have committed, and to look upon us so far as if we had not

sinned. Similarly we ought to forgive those who have wronged us, looking upon them in a spirit of forgiveness, and forgetting their trespasses against us. This is what forgiveness is—as a duty. How to attain to the unvarying spirit of forgiveness is another matter. That involves our possession of the Spirit of Christ, and our charitable and sympathetic recognition of the same moral weakness in others which we bemoan in ourselves.

"If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters—if envy, malice, bitterness, evil surmisings, have existed, confess these sins, not in a general way, but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. **If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender.** Take them by the hand, let your heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and say, 'Will you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want to make right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against me in the books of heaven. I must have a clean record.' Who, think you, would withstand such a movement as this?"¹

¹ *The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1884.
[Emphasis added.]

Perfect

The second of two articles

[Emphasis added throughout.]

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in the human heart, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness.

“No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. **Christ came to demolish every wall of partition**, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan’s circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise.

“In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood. (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:13.)

“Whatever the difference in religious belief, a call from suffering humanity must be heard and answered. **Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service. Loving ministry will break down prejudice, and win souls to God.**

“We should **anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the**

troubles of others. We should **enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor.** ‘Freely ye have received,’ Christ says, ‘freely give’ (Matthew 10:8). **All around us are poor, tried souls** that need **sympathizing words and helpful deeds.** There are widows who need sympathy and assistance. There are orphans whom Christ has bidden His followers receive as a trust from God. Too often these are passed by with neglect. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; yet they are God’s property. They have been bought with a price, and they are as precious in His sight as we are. They are members of God’s great household, and Christians as His stewards are responsible for them. ‘Their souls,’ He says, ‘will I require at thine hand.’

“Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. But not all can be reached in the same way. There are many who hide their soul hunger. These would be **greatly helped by a tender word or a kind remembrance.** There are others who are in the greatest need, yet they know it not. They do not realize the terrible destitution of the soul. Multitudes are so sunken in sin that they have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have neither faith in God nor confidence in man. **Many of these can be reached only through**

acts of disinterested kindness.

Their physical wants must first be cared for. They must be fed, cleansed, and decently clothed. **As they see the evidence of your unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.**”¹

“It is fellowship with Christ, personal contact with a living Saviour, that enables the mind and heart and soul to triumph over the lower nature. Tell the wanderer of an almighty hand that will hold him up, of an infinite humanity in Christ that pities him. It is not enough for him to believe in law and force, things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. He needs to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. Keep his mind stayed upon the thought of a divine presence ever beside him, ever looking upon him with pitying love. Bid him think of a Father’s heart that ever grieves over sin, of a Father’s hand stretched out still, of a Father’s voice saying, ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace’ (Isaiah 27:5).

“As you engage in this work, you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. **Angels from the heavenly courts stand by all who do God’s service in ministering to their fellow men.** And you have the cooperation of Christ Himself. He is the Restorer, and as you work under His supervision, you will see great results.

“Upon your faithfulness in this work not only the well-being of others but your own eternal destiny depends. Christ is seeking to uplift all who will be lifted to companionship with Himself, that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. He permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness; He seeks to develop in us the attributes of His character—compassion, tenderness, and love. By accepting this work of ministry we place ourselves in His school, to be fitted for the courts of God. By rejecting it, we reject His instruction, and choose eternal separation from His presence.”¹

Your neighbor

We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Who is the neighbor that you must love?

“This question Christ answered in the parable of the good Samaritan. He showed that **our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church**

or faith to which we belong. It has **no reference to race, color, or class distinction.** Our neighbor **is every person who needs our help.** Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God.”²

“The great difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was a difference in religious belief, a question as to what constitutes true worship. The Pharisees would say nothing good of the Samaritans, but poured their bitterest curses upon them. So strong was the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans that to the Samaritan woman it seemed a strange thing for Christ to ask her for a drink. ‘How is it,’ she said, ‘that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?’ ‘For,’ adds the evangelist, ‘the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans’ (John 4:9). And when the Jews were so filled with murderous hatred against Christ that they rose up in the temple to stone Him, they could find no better words by which

to express their hatred than, ‘Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?’ (John 8:48). Yet the priest and Levite neglected the very work the Lord had enjoined on them, leaving a hated and despised Samaritan to minister to one of their own countrymen.

“The Samaritan had fulfilled the command, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,’ thus showing that he was more righteous than those by whom he was denounced. Risking his own life, he had treated the wounded man as his brother.

This Samaritan represents Christ. Our Saviour manifested for us a love that the love of man can never equal. When we were bruised and dying, He had pity upon us. He did not pass us by on the other side, and leave us, helpless and hopeless, to perish. He did not remain in His holy, happy home, where He was beloved by all the heavenly host. He beheld our sore need, He undertook our case, and identified His interests with those of humanity. He died to save His enemies. He prayed for



His murderers. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, 'These things I command you, that ye love one another'; 'as I have loved you, that ye also love one another' (John 15:17; 13:34).

"The priest and the Levite **had been for worship to the temple** whose service was appointed by God Himself. To participate in that service was a great and exalted privilege, and the priest and Levite felt that having been thus honored, it was **beneath them to minister to an unknown sufferer** by the wayside. Thus they neglected the special opportunity which God had offered them as His agents to bless a fellow being.

"Many today are making a similar mistake. They separate their duties into two distinct classes. The one class is made up of great things, to be regulated by the law of God; the other class is made up of so-called **little things**, in which the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' is ignored. This sphere of work is left to caprice, subject to inclination or impulse. Thus the character is marred, and the religion of Christ misrepresented.

"There are those who would think it **lowering to their dignity to minister to suffering humanity**. Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. Others neglect the poor from a different motive. They are working, as they believe, in the cause of Christ, seeking to build up some worthy enterprise. They feel that they are doing a great work, and they cannot stop to notice the wants of the

needy and distressed. In advancing their supposedly great work they may even oppress the poor. They may place them in hard and trying circumstances, deprive them of their rights, or neglect their needs. Yet they feel that all this is justifiable because they are, as they think, advancing the cause of Christ.

"Many will allow a brother or a neighbor to struggle unaided under adverse circumstances. Because they profess to be Christians he may be led



to think that in their cold selfishness they are representing Christ. Because the Lord's professed servants are not in cooperation with Him, the love of God, which should flow forth from them, is in great degree cut off from their fellow men. And a large revenue of praise and thanksgiving from human hearts and human lips is prevented from flowing back to God. He is robbed of the glory due to His holy name. He is robbed of the souls

for whom Christ died, souls whom He longs to bring into His kingdom to dwell in His presence through endless ages."³

Proof of origin

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is **perfect**" (Matthew 5:43-48).

"Throughout the Sermon on the Mount [Jesus] describes [the righteousness that God accepts], and now in one sentence He points out its source and its nature: Be **perfect as God is perfect**. The law is but a transcript of the character of God. **Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government.** . . .

"It is **His nature to give**. His **very life** is the **outflow of unselfish love**. 'His glory is His children's good; His joy, His tender Fatherhood.' He **tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner**. We are

to be centers of light and blessing to *our little circle*, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. 'In His borrowed goodness good,' we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His."⁴

"The **children of God** are those who are **partakers of His nature**. It is **not earthly rank**, nor **birth**, nor **nationality**, nor **religious privilege**, which proves that we are members of the family of God; **it is love**, a **love that embraces all humanity**. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit, will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is **only the Spirit of God** that **gives love for hatred**. **To be kind** to the **unthankful** and to the **evil**, to **do good hoping for nothing** again, is the **insignia of the royalty of heaven**, the **sure token** by which the **children of the Highest reveal their high estate**."⁵

What makes us children of heaven? "If thou wilt walk in my ways." "If thou wilt keep My charge," the Lord declares, 'I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by'—even among the angels that surround His throne. (Zechariah 3:7). By cooperating with heavenly beings in their work on earth, we are preparing for their companionship in heaven. 'Ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation' (Hebrews 1:14), angels in heaven will welcome those who on earth have lived 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister' (Matthew 20:28). In this blessed companionship we shall learn, to our eternal joy, all that is wrapped up in the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' (Luke 10:29)."⁶

Perfect

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy

name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21–23).

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:16–22).

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them,

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:31–46).

When is a person perfect?

"Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously.

The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance."⁷

"Let us not love in word,' the apostle writes, 'but in deed and in truth' (1 John 3:18). . . . It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life and enables God to bless his work."⁸ R

References

¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 386–389.

² *Ibid.*, p. 376.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 380–382.

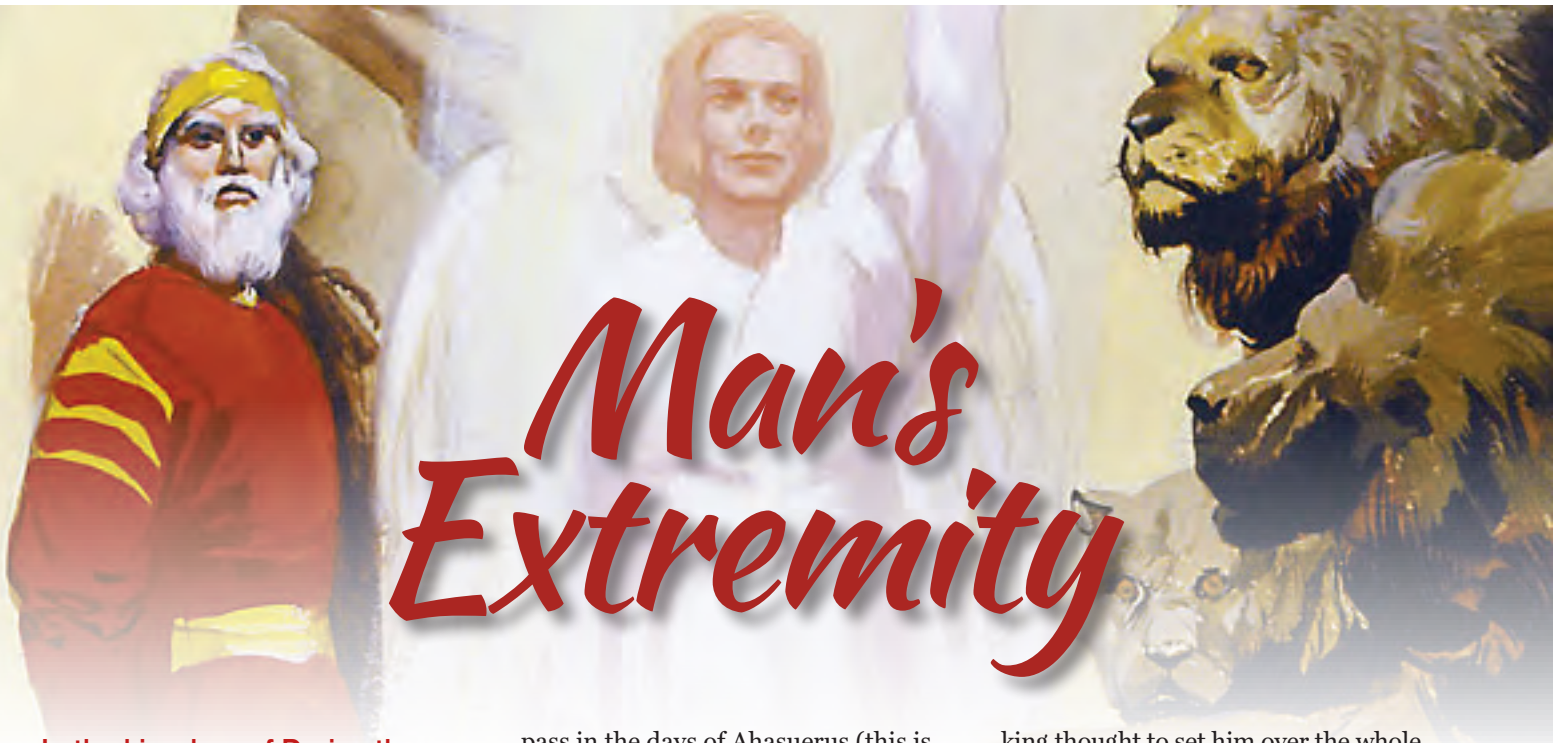
⁴ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 77.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁶ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 389.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁸ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.



Man's Extremity

In the kingdom of Darius the Mede

The first five chapters of the biblical book of Daniel deal with the empire of Babylon. Chapter 6 deals with Medo-Persia.

The Medes were completely unknown before this time—at least as far as a great nation is concerned. They originated from Madai (see Genesis 10:2).

Many years before, the Israelites from Samaria and the northern kingdom were taken to the cities of the Medes. “In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6).

For about two centuries before the fall of Babylon, the Jews were mingled among the Medes.

In order for a kingdom to be strong, there must be a strong organization working harmoniously. So what did Darius do? “It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom” (Daniel 6:1).

By the time of Esther, Medo-Persia grew to 127 provinces. ‘Now it came to

pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces)’ (Esther 1:1). Basically we see that each prince was responsible for his own province. Uriah Smith writes that “Darius set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, there being, as is supposed, at that time a hundred and twenty provinces in the empire, each one having its prince, or governor. By the victories of Cambyses and Darius Hystaspes, it was afterward enlarged to a hundred and twenty-seven provinces.”¹

Three presidents—with one who was outstanding

In order to organize things even better, Darius appointed three presidents over those princes. “And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage” (Daniel 6:2). Why the three presidents? There was accounting to be done (to levy taxes). Why was Daniel the first president? “Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because **an excellent spirit was in him**; and the

king thought to set him over the whole realm” (verse 3, emphasis added).

How could it be that a former slave in one kingdom (recently made the third ruler, directly under the two kings) had come into such a high position in a conquering kingdom and in such a short time?

It happens when we please the Lord. “**When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him**” (Proverbs 16:7). Daniel was obviously diligent in his business affairs. “Seest thou a man **diligent** in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before [obscure] men” (Proverbs 22:29, margin).

Since Daniel also had an excellent spirit (Daniel 5:12), he was known for his wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. “The king’s favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame” (Proverbs 14:35).

So again, why was this Daniel’s experience? “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **But his delight is in the law of the Lord**; and in his law

doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and **whatsoever he doeth shall prosper**" (Psalm 1:1–3).

Daniel was "**not slothful in business**; [but] fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

Daniel was not bound to any political parties or governments. He did the business affairs of each kingdom wholeheartedly as unto the Lord.

As King Darius saw the qualities in this man of God, he set him in charge of all the princes in his realm. Why? "And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage."

"The king, then, was in danger; not in danger of losing his life, but these officials were scheming politicians who were robbing the government in every possible way. If they had taxes to gather, they turned a large percent to their own account."² There was bribery, cheating, and other evil doings. What great danger was the kingdom to face if these evil ways continued? "The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it" (Proverbs 29:4).

Could Daniel, as a servant of the Most High, be bribed? God's Word commands: "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous" (Deuteronomy 16:19).

Daniel obeyed God's Word; therefore he was exactly the man for such a position!

Jealousy intrudes

Because Daniel was upright and guarded the interests of the king, what could he expect? "**The wicked plotteth against the just**, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth" (Psalm 37:12).

Why? "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5:10).

What is their nature? These are those "that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought" (Isaiah 29:21).

What plans did the wicked have for this man of God who could not be bribed? "The presidents and princes **sought to find occasion against Daniel** concerning the kingdom; **but they could find none occasion nor fault**; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (Daniel 6:4).

They could not find one error or fault in him concerning the kingdom.

"The king thought to set [Daniel] over the whole realm. Then was the envy of the other rulers raised against him, and they set about to destroy him. But Daniel's conduct was perfect so far as related to the kingdom. He was faithful and true. They could find no ground for complaint against him on that score. Then they said they could find now occasion to accuse him, except as concerning the law of his God. So let it be with us. A person can have no better recommendation."³

These jealous men were bent on mischief. Where did they look to find fault? "Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning **the law of his God**" (Daniel 6:5).

But even then they dared not make an open accusation against Daniel. They presented their case to the king: "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree" (verses 6–9).

"They came together to the king—came tumultuously, says the margin. They came as though some urgent matter had suddenly sprung up, and they had come unanimously to present it before him. They claimed that all were agreed."⁴

They began with a lie: "**All** the presidents"—but Daniel was not there!

The king had utmost confidence in Daniel, so if he recommended something, the king would have accepted it without any further investigation.

"Mark the subtlety of these men—the length to which people will go to accomplish the ruin of the good. If they had made the decree read that no petition should be asked of the God of the Hebrews, which was the real design of the matter, the king would at once have divined their object, and the decree would not have been signed. So they gave it a general application, and were **willing to ignore and heap insult upon their whole system of religion**, and all the multitude of their gods, for the sake of ruining the object of their hatred."⁵

But these princes were now stepping on dangerous ground. They were not just bothering Daniel. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts: . . . he that toucheth you toucheth the **apple of his eye**" (Zechariah 2:8).

How closely is God connected with His people? "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9).

Since Daniel was obedient to his God, what promise could he claim?

"The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31).

Daniel did nothing unusual in his daily activities. "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, **as he did aforetime**" (Daniel 6:10). What divinely inspired teaching was he practicing? "As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. **Evening, and morning, and at noon**, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:16, 17).

How would Daniel react to being deprived of prayer? “To sever the intercourse with God would be as painful to Daniel as to deprive him of natural life.”⁶

“Daniel foresaw the conspiracy going on against him, but took no means to thwart it. He simply committed himself to God, and left the issue to His providence. He did not leave the empire on pretended business, or perform his devotions with more than ordinary secrecy; but when he knew the writing was signed, just as aforetime, with his face turned toward his beloved Jerusalem, he kneeled down in his chamber three times a day, and poured out his prayers and supplications to God.”⁷ If our trials are great, let’s open the windows toward heaven to be filled with His strength.

Of course the spies were there. “Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king’s decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every

many that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, **That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah,** regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but **maketh his petition three times a day**” (Daniel 6:11–13).

The faith of Darius

Notice: “That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah.”

For the first time the king knew the real reason of the decree. “Then the king, when he heard these words, was **sore displeased with himself**, and set his heart on Daniel to **deliver him**: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him” (verse 14).

He spent the rest of the day trying to release Daniel. But what did he meet with when he presented his

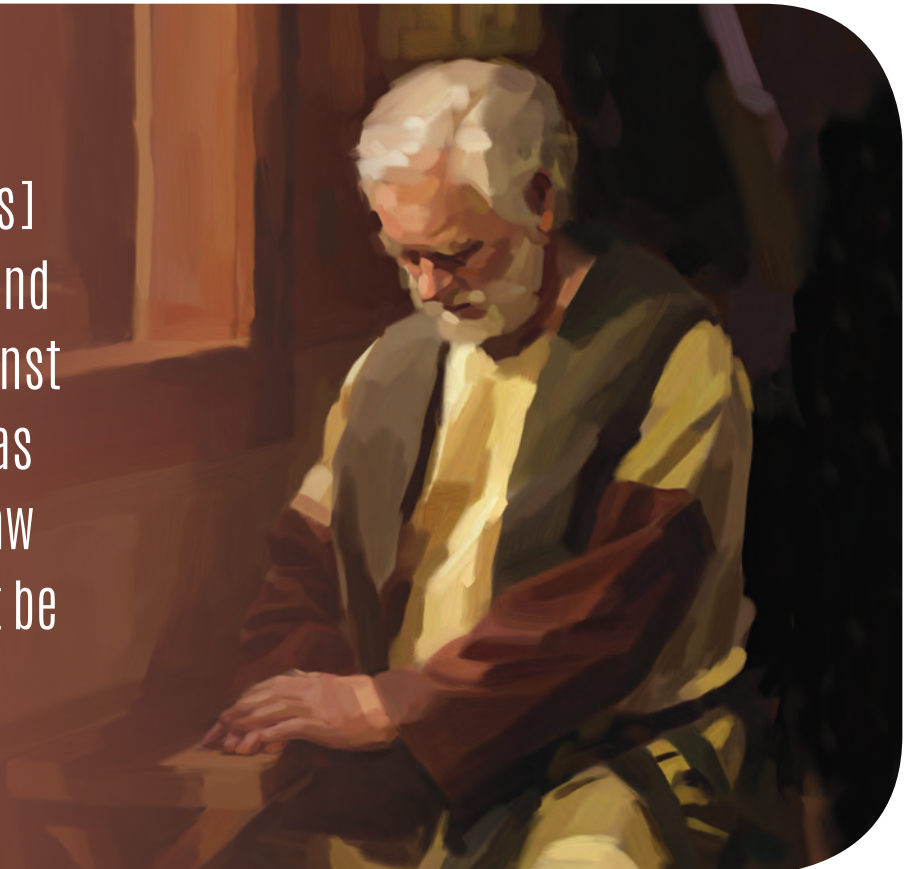
objections? “Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no **decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed**” (verse 15). So he was forced to go along with the plan.

But when the hands of people are tied, then it is time for God to work. “Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, **Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.** And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel” (verses 16, 17).

Notice how much faith in God the king already had at this time.

Upon what promise could Daniel meditate? “And in that day will I make **a covenant** for them **with the beasts of the field**, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creep-

“[The other rulers] could find no ground for complaint against Daniel ... except as concerning the law of his God. So let it be with us.”



ing things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and **will make them to lie down safely**" (Hosea 2:18).

Who was there with this man of God? "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7).

Darius did not wait in idle expectancy. "Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night **fasting**: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and **his sleep went from him**" (Daniel 6:18).

The miracle

Then the wonderful experience came early the next morning: "Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. **My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me**: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God" (verses 19–23).

Why was there no hurt? Because of his innocence and his faith in his God.

The spirit of a saint

"At earliest dawn [Darius] repaired to the den where his prime minister had passed the night in company with hungry and ravenous beasts. Daniel's response to his first salutation was **no word of reproach** for the king's course in yielding to his persecutors, but a term of **respect and honor**, 'O king, live forever.' He afterward, however, reminds the king, in a manner which he must have keenly felt, but to which he could take no exception,

that before him he had done no hurt. And on account of his **innocency**, God, whom he served continually, not at intervals, nor by fits and starts, had sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths."⁸

Thus the faith of Daniel's accusers was tested. "And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den" (verse 24).

Why were they thrown into the den of lions? "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and **the wicked cometh in his stead**" (Proverbs 11:8).

The impact on the empire

How did Darius react to all of this? "Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (Daniel 6:25–27).

Daniel was God's agent in proclaiming the message of salvation throughout the then-known world.

What happened with Daniel as a result? "So this **Daniel prospered** in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (verse 28).

"The result of Daniel's deliverance was that **another proclamation went out through the empire in favor of the true God, the God of Israel**. All men were to fear and tremble before him. What Daniel's enemies designed to prove his ruin, resulted only in his advancement. In this case, like in the case of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, the seal of God is set in favor of two great lines of duty: (1) . . . **not to yield to any**

known sin; and (2) . . . **not to omit any known duty**. . . .

"The decree of the king sets forth the character of the true God in fine terms. (1) He is the living God; all others are dead. (2) He is steadfast forever; all others change. (3) He has a kingdom; for he made and governs all. (4) His kingdom shall not be destroyed; all others come to an end. (5) His dominion is without end; no human power can prevail against it. (6) He delivereth those who are in bondage. (7) He rescueth his servants from their enemies when they call upon him for help. (8) He worketh wonders in the heavens and signs upon the earth. (9) And to complete all, he hath delivereth Daniel, giving before our own eyes the fullest proof of his power and goodness in rescuing his servant from the power of the lions."⁹

If we are God's children, what can we expect in the trials that come our way? "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Some may be called to a martyr's death, but let's not forget to be faithful unto death. Our Lord bids us: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life**" (Revelation 2:10). *R*

References

- ¹ Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 129. [1907 edition.]
- ² Stephen N. Haskell, *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, p. 80.
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Are You *A Church Member?*

Part 2 of 2

By Tobias Stockler

In the second part of this series, we are going to address the topic of church and church relationship in the context of Paul's advice to us in the book of Ephesians. Not that church is the most important or most influential relationship any of us will have. It is down the list a little bit. But the lessons about church relationships we will bring out will help in any other relationship you have. We can learn from Paul's advice to the church how to have good marriages, good families, and good friendships.

Looking at the church means that we are looking at people. Human nature is divisible into two. All of us fit into one or the other of these two groups. It's more than just fitting into one of these two groups—we are contributing to every relationship in one of two ways. We are either acting like Cain to Abel or Abel to Cain. Our actions are the actions of Cain or Abel. Now let us do a little math. All of us can add, $1 + 1 = 2$. So one Cain plus one Cain equals hell. Yes, put two haters together and you don't have just two people. You have a living, growing hell.

The opposite is true also. Abel plus Abel equals heaven. Put two decent, kind, caring people together and you have a living, growing heaven. But

then you have another way to hell. That is what happens when you put Abel together with Cain. It starts out with half of the equation unhappy and ends up with everyone who is still alive, unhappy. It only takes one representative of hell to ruin any heaven. You know it is true, for when a group of friends are happy together, it only takes one whiner or one hater to spoil everything for the rest of the group. But Jesus demonstrates that we can be heavenly in the pit of hell. He taught us to sing in prison by a life of joy in the midst of chaos; contentment rather than victimhood.

But back to the two main kinds of church members. . . . Cain represents those who will contribute to the church on their own terms. Everything revolves around their own selves. Their merits are what they think God needs. Their way of thinking is the way everyone should think. But Abel represents those that are humble enough to accept God. They consider other ways of thinking besides their own. They do not trust only in themselves.

Cain and Abel

"Cain and Abel represent two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time. One class avail

themselves of the appointed sacrifice for sin; the other venture to depend upon their own merits; theirs is a sacrifice without the virtue of divine mediation, and thus it is not able to bring man into favor with God. It is only through the merits of Jesus that our transgressions can be pardoned. Those who feel no need of the blood of Christ, who feel that without divine grace they can by their own works secure the approval of God, are making the same mistake as did Cain. If they do not accept the cleansing blood, they are under condemnation. There is no other provision made whereby they can be released from the thrall-dom of sin.

"The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation. It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development—that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. The history of Cain shows

what must be the result. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope. 'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' 'Neither is there salvation in any other' (Acts 4:12).¹

Anytime we decide to trust ourselves as wiser and better than God we offer the sacrifice of Cain. Anytime we trust ourselves to direct another in his or her duty before God we offer the sacrifice of Cain. Anytime we ask others to trust someone else than God to guide their conscience we offer the sacrifice of Cain.

Paul could have mimicked Cain according to Philippians 3:4: "I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." But Paul learned that there was something more valuable, as he says in verses 7–9: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own

righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This then leads Paul to define church membership differently than his Jewish family and friends did. In verses 2 and 3 he tells us that real church membership is defined by an internal condition, not an external circumstance. "Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which (1) worship God in the spirit, and (2) rejoice in Christ Jesus, and (3) have no confidence in the flesh." He repeats the same definition in Romans 2:25–29.

Paul tells us that successful church members are those that live a life of Christian fruits. "Only let your conversation [that is, behavior: Oxford English Dictionary: "Action of living . . . among persons"] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:12–15). "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any

comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (verses 1–4).

And Paul teaches us how to be the best church members. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (verses 5–8). Jesus sacrificed His life but not His character, His comfort but not His integrity. That is how to be a team player in the church. That is how to be a successful church member.

This life manifests itself in an appreciation of other's life and circumstance, in contentment, in self-control of one's thoughts, in gratitude, in humility, and in a lack of anxiety or fear. This internal condition comes from God through prayer and



submission to Him. It leads us to ask not what your church can do for you, but what you can do for your church. We are to contribute to the well-being of the church as did Paul and Jesus. Church is what we make it. What will you make it?

Paul is a prime example. He could be an example because he was selfless and God was his helper. He gave up his life in Jerusalem on the prestigious Sanhedrin for a life of incessant travel and great sacrifice.

“Uniting with the church, although an important and necessary act, does not make one a Christian nor ensure salvation. We cannot secure a title to heaven by having our names enrolled upon the church book while our hearts are alienated from Christ. . . .

“Many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship. . . . Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church, and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice. Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed. . . .

“Church relationship is not to be lightly canceled; yet when the path of some professed followers of Christ is crossed, or when their voice has not the controlling influence which they think it deserves, they will threaten to leave the church. True, in leaving the church they would themselves be the greatest sufferers; for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence, they subject themselves to the full temptations of the world.

“Every believer should be wholehearted in his attachment to the church. Its prosperity should be his first interest, and unless he feels under sacred obligations to make his connection with the church a benefit to it in preference to himself, it can do far better without him. It is in the power of all to do something for the cause of God. . . .

“The observance of external forms will never meet the great want of the human soul. A profession of Christ is not enough to enable one to stand the test of the day of judgment. There should be a perfect trust in God, a childlike dependence upon His promises, and an entire consecration to His will. . . .

“If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them

in favor of the Christian religion. Dissensions, unhappy differences, and petty church trials dishonor our Redeemer. All these may be avoided if self is surrendered to God and the followers of Jesus obey the voice of the church. Unbelief suggests that individual independence increases our importance, that it is weak to yield our own ideas of what is right and proper to the verdict of the church; but to yield to such feelings and views is unsafe and will bring us into anarchy and confusion. Christ saw that unity and Christian fellowship were necessary to the cause of God, therefore He enjoined it upon His disciples. And the history of Christianity from that time until now proves conclusively that in union only is there strength. Let individual judgment submit to the authority of the church.

“The apostles felt the necessity of strict unity, and they labored earnestly to this end.”²

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Philippians 4:23). *R*

References

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 72, 73.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 16–19.

“If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them in favor of the Christian religion.”



Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow!

The voices rose in unison. "Praise Him, all creatures here below." Old Hundredth had never been sung so lustily as the congregation closed their hour of worship. "Praise Him above, ye heavenly host." The organist gave full measure to each magnificent chord. "Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" The minister thought how well the service had gone with his captive audience all ears, hanging on almost every word—well, almost! The deacon had been thinking about the plans for the forthcoming drive for church repairs. The organist had been wondering if the choir would be able to learn the new piece projected for two weeks' time. The deaconess was naturally concerned about the new family in need in her local block of apartments. The deacon's wife was staring at the new hat on the head in front of her and wondering how they could afford such a frippery piece of nonsense. Mary Lou's thoughts had wandered to the next party; and young Jimmy—well, while he was present in body, his mind had been down at the "old swimming hole." As the congregation sang, the minds of many wondered to another subject than the song coming from their lips. But they were going through the form with great enthusiasm!

Hymns, well known and well loved, have been the solace of many tempted, tried, and sometimes despairing saint in their march to the New Jerusalem.

Many a tribulation has been halved by the appropriate words of courage in song, while a scarce-remembered-snatch of a childhood hymn has brought a tear to the wistful eye of one almost lost to both heaven and earth.

The singing of praise to the God of our fathers has always been an integral part of the worship of the church in heaven and on earth. From the time, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7) till the present time, praise to God has always been appropriate for those whose sins have been forgiven through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gratitude and thankfulness from loving hearts and lips will always rise as incense before our heavenly Father.

David, the sweet singer of Israel, left such a paean of praise in the psalms, that some have thought that anything more could be superfluous. But the apostle Paul says that we should speak to ourselves, "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). This use of song is not alone to honor God, for Paul also says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). Notice that teaching and admonishing in song is integral with praise to God.

"Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor, in our songs of praise, to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs. The proper training of the voice is an important feature in education and should not be neglected. Singing, as a part of religious service, is as much an act of worship as is prayer. The heart must feel the spirit of the song to give it right expression."¹ Sadly, very often, the mind is far away when singing, and the lilt of the melody is remembered more than the words. Yet the whole purpose of setting good spiritual words to music is that the words might be remembered more readily.

"Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God. What a contrast between the ancient custom and the uses to which music is now too often devoted! How many employ this gift to exalt self, instead of using it to glorify God! A love for music leads the unwary to unite with world lovers in pleasure gatherings where God has forbidden His children to go. Thus that which is a great blessing when rightly used, becomes one of the most successful agencies by which Satan allures the mind from duty and from the contemplation of eternal things."²

Paul recognized three forms of religious music. Psalms, hymns, and

spiritual songs. Some have given much thought as to his meaning, and there is a place for all three forms of religious musical expression. The earliest Christian hymns in Latin appeared about the 4th century. Most composers during the Middle Ages made polyphonic arrangements of older chants, and these were originally sung by priest and/or choirs, almost never by the congregation. It was during the Protestant reformation of the 16th century that congregational singing became a common practice.

The translation of the psalms into French metrical verse encouraged congregational singing under the leadership of John Calvin. English translations of the psalms were published by 1562. About 100 years later an English Separatist clergyman, Henry Ainsworth, produced a collection of psalms in metrical form and it was this Psalter that was used by the Mayflower Pilgrims in 1620. English hymnody was brought to the fore by Isaac Watts, who wrote about 600 hymn texts during the 18th-century; but even greater impetus was given to the singing of hymns in English through the usage by the Wesleys of both Lutheran and Moravian hymns. To this was added the vast writing of hymns by Charles Wesley. These days there is not much usage made of the psalms. One hundred years ago, there was much psalm singing, both in the church and in the home. In the early churches the psalms were sung in chant form more commonly known as plainsong. This was used widely even in the early Protestant churches. To make the singing of psalms easier, metrical forms were introduced; the words of scripture were put into a more regular poetic form that made it easier to remember the words; and melodies became easier to follow. Perhaps the most remembered of these metrical psalms is the twenty-third Psalm as set by Baker and Dykes in 1868. This is sung as in the *Church Hymnal*, No. 86, as published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is." "Old Hundredth" ("All People That on Earth Do Dwell," *Reformation Hymnal*, No. 2) was a tune originally

used for the one hundredth Psalm and comes to us from the Genevan Psalter of 1551; our present words are a paraphrase of the 100th Psalm by William Kethe of 1561.

While the singing of psalms has tended to decline, the use of hymns has been a constant form of praise in the Christian family. Praise to God, prayer forms, and doctrinal concepts are often the subject of hymns. Careful selection of appropriate music is one of the hallmarks of a good hymn. It would be quite inappropriate to endeavour to sing the strains of "Abide With Me" (*Reformation Hymnal*, No. 39) to the tune of Freeport ("Again the Day Returns," Hymn No. 154). While it is possible, because the meter is the same, the musical sense would not be the same. It would be like trying to sing *Reformation Hymnal*, No. 484, "In the Heart of Jesus," to the tune of *Reformation Hymnal*, No. 647 "Onward Christian Soldiers." Words and music should match in rhythm, cadence, and sense.

Paul's third category of church music is referred to as "spiritual songs." Recent years have seen a strong development of these songs in church music. While spiritual songs as distinct from hymns had a great impact on the evangelistic work of the 19th-century, especially the work of Moody and Sankey, it has been especially so since the 1960s. Hymns mostly lift up the heart of the singer to God, and rarely have a chorus or refrain sung alternately between verses, but spiritual songs usually have a chorus or refrain and tend to be rather subjective in word and thought. Twentieth-century spiritual songs were much influenced by the Social gospel movement with the result that there has developed an emphasis on text expressing the social mission of the gospel. This has been noted by many writers looking at the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations, and other religious groups.

This swing towards light spiritual songs began with the big evangelistic programs of Moody and Sankey and received a great impetus with the modern Pentecostal movement of the early 20th century. Much earlier

though, the same influence had been seen. Even among the early Adventists some of the same activities were experienced. Speaking of this, the servant of the Lord wrote: "Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only to man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good. 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.' Fanaticism and noise have been considered special evidences of faith. Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a powerful and happy time. They work for this and get up an excitement of feeling. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial. When the happy flight of feeling is gone, they sink lower than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source. **The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ.**"³

In an article entitled: "Holy Spirit Gifts and Power" by Paul Walker, published in "The Spirit Filled Bible" by Nelson Publishers, it is stated, "Without a doubt the Pentecostal revival of the early 1900s and the Charismatic renewal, which had its beginning in the late 1950s, together constitute one of the most innovative and impactful renovations in history."

This came about as the result of the early failure of the drive to bring all the Christian churches together under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. It was fostered by the Roman Catholic Church, but the first meetings in 1948 were a dismal failure. They could not agree as to whether Christ was the hope of the world. It was

seen that the doctrinal differences held the churches apart. Amos was certainly correct when he stated: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The question then became, "How can we encourage the churches to unite, despite their doctrinal differences?" The answer appeared to be, "Encourage a form of worship that places doctrine in the background. Spend more time with those things that let people feel happy, without thinking deeply about their real need!"

This idea took shape in an official capacity during the discussions of Vatican II in the early 1960s. The Roman Catholic Church set up their own Catholic Renewal Movement and used this as a platform to introduce similar forms of worship among Protestant churches, leading to the development of songs for worship of a very different character from those sung previously. The plan has been characterized by several changes:

1. The frequent use of various forms of syncopation in the music.
2. The introduction of a usually heavy beat in the music.
3. The frequent use of unnecessary repetition of words and phrases.

4. A rather heavy use of sentimental words with allusions to "falling in love with Christ."

5. A heavy accent on praise to God.

6. Almost no allusions to deep commitment to Christ (which would bring about a change in the actual life).

Let us look back in history a little. Israel, during the reign of Ahab had, under the influence of Jezebel, become a nation of idolaters. Worshipping Baal the sun god, they had forgotten the Creator, the God of their fathers. At that time, God's man was called to do God's work. Elijah (whose name meant "Jehovah is my God") called the nation to repentance, to worship not the sun, but the Maker of the sun. At his insistence a grand test was to be made. The 850 priests would make an offering to their god Baal, and if he could light the fire under the bullock then Baal would be recognized as God. They tried. They sang, they cut themselves, they pranced and danced in idiotic contortions in an effort to try and get Baal to answer their call to defend himself; but to no avail.

At the setting of the sun, when it was obvious that Baal was silent,

Elijah called the people. Now it was the time for his God to reveal His power. Rebuilding the broken altar on the top of Carmel, Elijah knelt down before the heavenly host. He did not dance. He did not chant. He did not sing, he did nothing that the priests of Baal had done. He quietly knelt down and spoke with God as a Friend. And immediately God answered by fire. Perhaps there is something for us to learn here. God is not interested so much in great display. It is honesty of purpose and submission to His will in all things that He accepts. Much display in musical attainments may be a snare rather than a blessing.

Satan's use of music and song in this period of earth's history is arranged for a specific purpose. "The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.

God is not
interested so much
in great display.
It is honesty
of purpose and
submission to
His will in all things
that He accepts.



“The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. . . .

“When the camp meeting is ended, the good which ought to have been done and which might have been done by the presentation of sacred truth is not accomplished. Those participating in the supposed revival receive impressions which lead them adrift. They cannot tell what they formerly knew regarding Bible principles.

“No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. The same kind of influence came in after the passing of the time in 1844. The same kind of representations were made. Men became excited, and were worked by a power thought to be the power of God. . . .

“Those things which have been in the past will be in the future. Satan will make music a snare by the way in which it is conducted. God calls upon His people, who have the light before them in the Word and in the Testimonies, to read and consider, and to take heed. Clear and definite instruction has been given in order that all may understand. But the itching desire to originate something new results in strange doctrines, and largely destroys the influence of those who would be a power for good if they held firm the beginning of their confidence in the truth the Lord had given them.”⁴

“Musical entertainments which, if conducted properly, will do no

harm, are often a source of evil. In the present state of society, with the low morals of not only youth, but those of age and experience, there is great danger of becoming careless, and giving especial attention to favorites, and thus creating envy, jealousies, and evil surmisings. Musical talent too often fosters pride and ambition for display, and singers have but little thought of the worship of God. Instead of leading minds to remembering God, it often causes them to forget Him.”⁵



“Young men and young women, I saw that God has a work for you to do; take up your cross and follow Christ, or you are unworthy of Him. While you remain in listless indifference, how can you tell what is the will of God concerning you? and how do you expect to be saved, unless as faithful servants you do your Lord’s will? Those who possess eternal life will all have *done well*. The King of glory will exalt them to His right hand while He says to them: ‘Well done, good and faithful servants.’ How can you tell how many souls you might save from ruin if, instead of studying your

own pleasure, you were seeking what work you could do in the vineyard of your Master? How many souls have these gatherings for conversation and the practice of music been the means of saving? If you cannot point to one soul thus saved, turn, oh, turn to a new course of action. Begin to pray for souls; come near to Christ, close to His bleeding side. Let a meek and quiet spirit adorn your lives, and let your earnest, broken, humble petitions ascend to Him for wisdom that

you may have success in saving not only your own soul, but the souls of others. **Pray more than you sing.** Do you not stand in greater need of prayer than of singing? Young men and women, God calls upon you to work, work for Him. Make an entire change in your course of action. You can do work that those who minister in word and doctrine cannot do. You can reach a class whom the minister cannot affect.”⁶

The song of praise can be offered in entirely different ways. We can choose what form our praise can take. No matter if it sounds almost heavenly it may be sung in harmony with Satan’s minions. Let us rather offer our praise to God from true hearts, in simplicity, without any display, without any inflection of self. When we meet for

worship may we seek to know ourselves better and, confessing our sins, seek always to praise God for His love revealed in and through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. David says, “For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding” (Psalm 47:7). *R*

References

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 412. [Emphasis added.]

⁴ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 36–38. [Emphasis added.]

⁵ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, pp. 390, 391.

⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 513. [Emphasis supplied.]

The Reformation of *Asa*

A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with comments by Barbara Montrose

In the days when Israel and Judah were first divided, there was a period of about forty years of consistent evildoing in the land of Israel. After Jeroboam died, this time of ongoing apostasy continued under the culpable kings of Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri.

However, during much of this period, a brighter picture was found in the kingdom of Judah. We read in 2 Chronicles 14:2–5 about Asa, the ruler of Judah.

“Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God: for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the sun [margin] images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.”

Praise God for this step in the right direction! Asa took a stand and took action—and Judah was blessed with peace. But eventually, as is often the case when a person or nation shuns the powers of darkness and progresses toward heaven, a time of test was inevitable. We read in verse 9 that “Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots” came to invade Judah.

On Asa’s part, every precaution had been taken; he had made practical preparation. He had built fenced cities in Judah, equipping them with walls, towers, gates, and bars. His carefully

trained army consisted of over half a million mighty men of valor.

But let’s face reality. Logically speaking, even 580,000 soldiers are no match for 1,000,000 soldiers “and three hundred chariots.” “The opposing armies now stood face to face. It was a time of test and trial to those who served the Lord. Had every sin been confessed? Had the men of Judah full confidence in God’s power to deliver? Such thoughts as these were in the minds of the leaders. From every human viewpoint the vast host from Egypt would sweep everything before it. But **in time of peace Asa had not been giving himself to amusement and pleasure; he had been preparing for any emergency.** He had an army trained for conflict; he had endeavored to lead his people to make their peace with God. And now, although his forces were fewer in number than the enemy, his faith in the One whom he had made his trust did not weaken.”¹

How is it with us today? How are we investing the fleeting moments of this present hour of relative peace? Day by day the signs of the end are fast fulfilling. Are we too caught up in the rush of things to be preparing for the emergency soon to come? Are we truly making our peace with God, searching our hearts to see that every sin is confessed—or are we chasing after as many “borderline” amusements and pleasures as we can squeeze in before the great and powerful day of the Lord? Often there are places to go and things to do which are not entirely

against our principles. They may be in “gray” areas where a divided heart will insist on loitering. Might we even be wasting time on “good” things to the neglect of the **best** things? The psalmist prayed, “unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psalm 86:11). He, like Asa, yearned to render wholehearted, undivided service to his Lord. When the crisis came to Asa, “having sought the Lord in the days of prosperity, the king could now rely upon Him in the day of adversity. His petitions showed that he was not a stranger to God’s wonderful power.”²

As today we seek the Lord in days of peace and prosperity, enjoying the blessed privileges of health, comfort, and sound nutrition, our minds have every advantage for clear thought processes. Are we using these best energies to establish a closer walk with the Lord? Or are we frittering away precious moments, fraught with eternal weight? Can we echo the consistent experience of the apostle Paul: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:11–13).

Seeking the God of impossibilities

When the crisis came to Asa, what did he do? We learn in 2 Chronicles 14:11 that “Asa cried unto the Lord his

God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.” “[Verses 12–14 quoted.] Here is brought before us the fact that when ancient Israel trusted in the Lord their God He always wrought for them. Here was a large army; thousands and thousands were brought up against them, and it looked to them that with their small army they would certainly be overcome. But here we see that **Asa’s trust was in the Lord God of Israel. It was not in their number, but he believed that the Lord could deliver them by few as well as by many. . . .**

“This is an appropriate prayer for us to make. Our prospects are anything but flattering. There are vast numbers arrayed against the truth, whom we must meet in presenting the light to others. **Our hope is not in our knowledge of the truth, and in our own ability, but in the living God.** And if, like king Asa, we have educated ourselves, and educated and trained others, to be familiar with the truth, who wear the armor of righteousness, ready to meet the enemies of God and the truth, we have done our part of the work in the way of preparation; and then the living faith in God must be exercised to work with the efforts of the workers. God’s glory is at stake. And there should be decided effort as far as human effort is concerned, and living faith for the mighty God to manifest His power, else all will prove a failure.”³

How did the Lord reward the faith of Asa and his people? “The Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil” (verses 12, 13). Thus, God intervened to disrupt the enemies to their own destruction. How is it with us? Where is our battlefield?



“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). The present warfare is heated, but we must remember that we are to “be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s” (2 Chronicles 20:15). The servant of the Lord elaborates: “Oh that we could take this point into consideration, that the work in which we are engaged is not our work, but God’s work, and we as humble instruments are laborers together with Him; and with an eye single to God’s glory, not mistake the beginning of the Christian life for its consummation, but see the necessity of training upon the earth to prepare us for doing God’s will! We are not to lift up ourselves, not to be self-confident, but to trust in God, knowing that He is willing and able to help us. God will work with His people, but we want to be in that position where our

trust and confidence will become firm in Him.

“I wanted to bring these things before you, that you might see the importance of our coming into working order individually. We should examine our own hearts and see that everything that is not in accordance with God’s will is separated from us. There is with human nature one great difficulty: where the individual is not connected with God in any wise, the natural disposition reveals itself. Now, if Satan can crowd selfishness in among those connected with this precious work of God, if they become self-righteous, independent of their brethren, independent of God, we need not expect that the blessing of God will attend our work; but if our hearts are pure, and uncorrupted with selfishness, we shall present the truth as it is in Jesus; and then we will have the blessing of the Lord.

“There is constant danger of dropping Jesus out of your labor; but when the truth is presented in meekness and

grace as it is in Jesus, it is then you reveal Jesus Christ in every effort you make, and as you seek to approach souls you are revealing Christ to all those with whom you are brought in contact. If you are resting upon the loving Saviour as your only hope, if self is hid with Christ in God, God will be with you, and you will be with Him. You will feel and know the power of true religion; your influence will be used wholly for God's glory; you will not have a high estimate of yourselves. The path is narrow that leads to eternal life. You will find many difficulties in your way, which you must meet and overcome in the name of Jesus. What discouragements the disciples met when they saw Him in whom their hopes were centered mocked in the judgment hall, scourged, and suffering the most shameful death by crucifixion! And what triumph on the part of Satan as he bruised His heel when Jesus was nailed to the cross, amid the revilings of evil men who claimed the highest piety! After He had been enclosed in the tomb, His enemies expected to see the disciples discouraged, ashamed, and deny, as did Peter, all knowledge of Him. But when these disciples went forth in faith, in holy boldness preaching a risen Saviour, their enemies marveled; for they did not present Jesus but as a Prince of life, risen from the dead, ascended into the heavens to make intercession for His followers, when their enemies and others took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Thus should it be with believers of the truth.

"Here, then, is the power that the people of God are to have, and which will give them the victory in these last days. Every ism is existing. Every kind of false doctrine is prevailing everywhere, and the truth of God that is preached now involves a cross. But the truth must go to all cities and villages, into the highways and hedges. The apostle exhorts believers to 'fight the good fight of faith,' and 'run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith' (1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrew 12:1, 2). Men are always trying to make an easier way to heaven than that which the Lord has provided.

They do not want to run and to strive as the Lord has commanded. But we can see that there were conditions that the children of Israel were to comply with on their part. They were to seek the Lord, the children with the parents. This is the very work we are to do. There is not one half the seeking of the Lord there should be with us. We know not how soon our cases may come up in the Judgment, and in our present condition many will be disowned of Jesus. We are too apt to let the little cares of this life take our attention, and as soon as we do this we are bereft of our strength.

"What we want at the present time is to examine our own hearts, to discover if there is anything in them that is not right before God. If we teach the truth according to our own ways, we shall see that there will not always be perfect harmony as there should be. But if we teach the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall teach it in the spirit of the true Educator; and we will not have various opinions, and cling to our own ideas with tenacity, but we will see eye to eye. And while we thus teach, believing that Jesus will help us to present the truth as it is in Him, then we may expect His help, and we will have it."⁴

The secret of success

Following Judah's success, the prophet Azariah confirmed to Asa, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them" (2 Chronicles 15:2-4). As they sought the Lord still more fervently, He foiled the plots of their adversaries.

Greatly encouraged by seeing the fulfillment of God's sure promises, "Asa soon led out in a second reformation in Judah. He 'put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the

Lord, that was before the porch of the Lord' (verse 8)."⁵

Pressing on the upward way

Dear brethren and sisters today, after enjoying many fruits of victory in Christ, are your hearts now ready for a "second" reformation—a **further** reformation? Have you come up one step toward higher ground, yet hesitate to go for the next? Are you afraid of following Jesus all the way up the narrow path—especially when the incline is steep?

"We must press the battle to the gate. There is no time for us to lose. There is no time for us to try to make a smooth path for our feet. We must take it as it is, with all its inconveniences and troubles, knowing that the God of Israel is by your side, and we shall see of His salvation.

"My brethren and sisters, let us remember here is the evidence that God will work. You are not to trust in any power but that of the Lord God of Israel. But if you have enmity in your hearts, you cannot expect that God will let His blessing rest upon you. No one will enter the city of God with anything that defiles. We must get ready for the latter rain. The earth is to be lighted with the glory of the third angel—not a little corner only, but the whole earth. You may think that the work you are doing now is lost; but I tell you it is not lost. When the message shall go with a loud cry, those who hear the truth now will spring to the front and work with mighty power. But you must have faith. It is no use to enter cities unless you have faith in God, and believe that a work is to be accomplished there. You must believe that it is Christ who is by our side, and is finding access to souls; and when you have done the best you can, you must believe, and commit it all to Jesus."⁶ *R*

References

- ¹ *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 110, 111 [Emphasis supplied].
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, May 10, 1887. [Emphasis added].
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 112.
- ⁶ *The Review and Herald*, May 10, 1887.



The Glories of the New Jerusalem

By Stephen N. Haskell

*“Where wast thou when I laid the
basis of the earth?
Declare: if thou art acquainted with
understanding.
Who planned her measurement,
if thou knowest?
Or who stretched forth
the measuring line upon her?
Into what were her sockets sunk?
Or who laid her key-stone,
While the morning stars exulted
together,
And all the sons of God
shouted for joy?
Or who enclosed the sea within doors
When it burst forth as if issuing
from the womb?
When I used the clouds for its vesture,
And thick darkness for
its swathing band?
When My decree brake silence over it,
When I established its bars and
its doors;
When I said: Thus far shalt thou
come, but no further,
And here appoint I the boundary of
thy tossing wave?”*

Spurrell’s translation of Job 38:4–12.

In the beginning, when all things in the universe perfectly obeyed the divine law; when worlds performed their revolutions throughout space in perfect unison, and in the universe of God there was not one note of discord, then He spake, and our world came into existence; He commanded and it stood forth, and a shout rang from the sons of God; for they saw another work of His hands. Man upon it was as truly in harmony with the law of God as nature itself; and God pronounced all things very good. In innocence man was placed here in a home prepared of God, and there was but one thing for him to accomplish—this was strength of character, which would link humanity and divinity into one. With the fall of man, a cloud rested on the face of the whole earth: the first glory was shrouded, and the world itself was, at the time of the flood, turned out of its course. At creation, the waters filled the earth and there were no rains; but the ground was watered from beneath, by a mist which arose. At the flood, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the waters poured forth in

great streams. Since that time, a large portion of the surface of our world, has been covered with vast seas. This was not so in the beginning. When sin filled the earth, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven. Those two cities in the plain of the Jordan were destroyed for an object lesson of the destruction of the earth; and since that time, there has been fire within the earth—the elements of its own destruction, pent up, awaiting the command of Jehovah, to perform their appointed work. At the end of the thousand years, fire will destroy the earth together with the wicked. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1). Through the open heavens, Christ and the saints beheld the “new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Verse 2). Jerusalem is a name interwoven with all the history of the chosen people from the days of the establishment of the nation in the land of Palestine. The name means

“possession of peace;” and when the heathen were driven from its strongholds, and it became the capital of the Jewish nation, the promise was given that should Israel adhere to the commandments of God, Jerusalem would become an everlasting city. But the conditions were unheeded, and that city, which in the days of Solomon was raised to the highest pinnacle of fame as the capital of the world, has been degraded, desecrated and burned, until today the very ground about it seems unable to support life; and the city itself is in the hands of the Mohammedans, the smoke of the bottomless pit. Here the Prince of heaven was crucified; here, on the site of the cross, He will at last erect His throne.

If the plan of God had been followed, the Garden of Eden would have become the center of the city of God. That plan failed; and the Jews had the privilege of making their city the house of Jehovah. They failed, and Christ ascended to heaven, there, to prepare a city, the New Jerusalem, as the capital of the universal kingdom. The New Jerusalem will be located on the precise spot where the city once stood. The Mount of Olives parts asunder, one half moving to the north, and one half to the south; and on the great plain between the peaks, the capital of the new earth will rest. Christ’s mission to the earth was to save that which was lost. Sin robbed man of the beauties of Eden; sin defeated the plans for the Jews; and what man might have done, but did not do because of evil, Christ does through the power of His love. In spite of the delay caused by sin, the final triumph will be greater than it could have been, had sin never entered the world. Such is the infinite depth of redeeming love.

The story of Jerusalem is salvation’s story; and throughout eternity, that glorious home of the saved, will tell to every saint who enters there, and will proclaim to all the universe, the cross of Christ and life through Him. When the city descends as a bride adorned for her husband, the redeemed receive it with shouts of triumph, and Christ receives it as the trophy of His struggles. Christ and His followers enter

the city, and there is spread for them the marriage feast of the Lamb.

From heaven the voice of Jehovah proclaims: “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” (Verse 3). In Christ the God-man, Jehovah tabernacled. His name was Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” In the human form, divinity was veiled by the same cloud which sin cast over the face of Eden; but in the New Jerusalem, the people meet God face to face, with no dividing veil between. From the most exalted position in the kingdom of God to utter destruction; this is the story which sin has written: from death to life immortal; from degradation to the capital of the universe; this is the story of redemption. (Revelation 15:3, margin; 19:6.)

What wonder that those who have passed through these experiences sing, “Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of [nations].” “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” There is no longer cause for sorrow and weeping; for the former things have passed away. Tears came when sin entered the dominion of God. There were no tears before that; and when the traces of sin are gone, tears will have forever passed away. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him” (verse 7).

Words cannot express the fullness and beauty of the law of compensation which is revealed in the entire history of salvation. This will be partially understood by those who gather in the city, and behold all things made new; those who see Christ as the Alpha—Him who first created; the Genesis, in which was hidden the fullness of God’s love; and the Omega, the final completion, which rising above the fall, and having banished every trace of sin, sits as King of kings, surrounded by subjects who are better able to appreciate the spiritual nature of Jehovah and His kingdom than they could have been, had sin never entered. This is infinite love, the character of our God and His Christ. And above all, as the most supreme manifestation of that love, is

the promise that he that overcometh through Christ, shall inherit all these things. The new earth is not awarded like charity gifts, parceled out to the poor of earth; it is not bought, but men are born into the family of God, and as joint heirs with Jesus Christ, they receive the new earth as an inheritance. Christ spoke to Nicodemus of the new, the spiritual birth, which brings the inheritance. The soul hungering and thirsting in this life opens the springs of heaven, and Christ Himself gives unto those who are athirst of the water of life freely.

Every well of water has been a token of this promise which will be fulfilled in the new earth. The living fountains there will contain the water of life which will give eternal life and unbounded wisdom. Rivulets flowing from that eternal fountain bring life to the earth today, and those who drink now, have a pledge that they shall drink in the kingdom of God. This is the wine of the living grape, typified by the cup given at the Passover table on that last night of the Saviour’s life, when He said: “I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God” (Mark 14:25). This new wine will be given to the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

“Let not your heart be troubled,” said the Saviour, and John was one of the number to whom He spoke: “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1–3).

After a life on earth with the Saviour, and after being shown the sorrows through which man must pass before the end, John was prepared to appreciate the city which Christ had gone to prepare. One of the seven angels who carries the vials of God’s wrath, revealed to the prophet the beauties of the New Jerusalem.

The city lieth four square, perfect in its dimensions, measuring three hundred and seventy-five miles each way, with a wall of precious stones. This wall measures in height, one hundred

and forty-four cubits, or between two hundred and sixteen and two hundred sixty-six feet. The city in all its details represents salvation; also the people within its jasper walls, represent the salvation of God. At creation the gold, the silver, and the precious stones, lay on the face of the earth. Men used them for selfish purposes; and for this reason at the time of the flood, they were buried beneath the surface, and are brought to light only as the result of hard labor. In the New Jerusalem, they will be so arranged as to tell the story of infinite wisdom and love.

Some have given the following imaginative interpretation to the various colors of the stones: "At the base is the crimson jasper, typical of the suffering and death of the Saviour slain from the foundation of the world. Above this, is laid the sapphire, like a blue flame of truth. In the pure white chalcedony is reflected the purity of the Christ life. The emerald green, like the rainbow about the throne, offers hope to those who rest upon the others. The sardonyx reflects many colors, but above it, is the deep red sardius, covered by the chrysolite. This is overlaid by the beautiful blue beryl, whose light mingles with the blazing topaz in telling the story of joy and peace in the Lord. The eleventh is the purple of royalty, crowned with the purity of the amethyst." The foundation, composed entirely of precious stones, is beautiful beyond description; but besides this, it is ornamented, or garnished, with *all manner of precious stones*.

Stones have voices, although they speak in tones seldom heard by men. Christ told His disciples that if men held their peace, the very stones would cry out. The story which they tell is the old, old story; and as they form the walls of the New Jerusalem, and the glory of Christ and the Father shines on them, they will not meet the eye with a dull, lusterless surface, but with a glory known only in the purity of a spiritual world. Inanimate

nature partook of the curse of sin; but the foundation of the city of our God, like all things in the earth made new, will shine in its original splendor. On these twelve foundations are written the names of the twelve apostles, the pillars of the Christian church. The prophet on Patmos had been condemned, his name recorded on the books of Rome as a criminal and an exile; what joy, then, must have come to him, when he saw in heaven his name engraved on one of the foundations of the city. Here is the difference between human and divine judgment.



The streets of the city are of pure gold—so pure that they are transparent like crystal. The light from the countenance of Christ falls upon the beautifully blended colors of the wall, and then is reflected again and again on the polished streets. Men have lavished wealth on buildings, but no earthly edifice ever equaled the beauties of this capital city. In this wall are twelve gates; in number the same as the twelve tribes of the children of Israel—the twelve patriarchs, whose

names appear graven in living characters upon them. Each gate is a single pearl. The pearl, as we know it, is formed by the life fluid of the oyster covering a foreign substance. The pearls of heaven represent the abundant righteousness of Christ called forth by sin; but which, flowing full and free, covers every blemish in the character to which it is applied.

As the redeemed enter the city, they are arranged according to the tribes of ancient Israel, character forming the basis of division. The twelve taken together reflect the fullness of Christ.

The character portrayed in the blessings pronounced upon the sons of Jacob, reveals the many sides of the life of the Son of God, as manifested in redemption.

In the city, the saints meet Jehovah face to face. Even God veiled His glory during the reign of sin; and not until the work of Christ is entirely finished, and He leaves the temple in heaven preparatory to coming to earth, does the undimmed glory of the Father burst forth. This was typified in the sanctuary service, by the veil which protected the Shekinah from the gaze of the people, and by the cloud of incense, which went up before the priest when he ministered in the inner apartment on the day of atonement. Had it been otherwise, the consuming glory would have slain all. In the New Jerusalem, there is no veil, no temple; but God and Christ are the light of it. The

veiling of Jehovah's glory is likewise typified by the sun and moon in our own heavens. The light of these bodies seems intense to mortal eyes; but in the new earth, the sun will shine with a light seven times brighter than today and the moon will be as our sun. Even then, their light is hidden by the glory of celestial rays. Day and night, that light of life shines forth throughout eternity. This light causes spiritual life, just as our sunshine makes the earth to bring forth and bud.

The glory is not wholly confined to the city; for the earth itself is Eden restored. The redeemed have houses outside the city. The earth brings forth in abundance, and labor is a pleasure. As it was God's plan to people the earth, and have all nations come to the Garden of Eden, so in the new earth the nations, or tribes, under their kings, bring their glory and honor into Jerusalem, coming there to meet with God.

Christ was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. God placed man in a perfect earth, and bade him subdue it; in other words, to make the whole earth like Eden; but Satan thwarted the plan, and for six thousand years he has reigned on the earth. When the earth is restored, it will not be as it was in the beginning, but far more beautiful. It will be as it would have been in the same length of time, if sin had never entered. All the works of the devil will be destroyed. The work that man would have done, if sin had not entered, Christ will do. Instead of their home being simply a garden, there will be the beautiful city enclosing the garden.

The human mind can but faintly grasp the idea of spiritual existence; and the best that mortal man can do, is to compare the glory of eternity with those things which are divinely appointed to foreshadow the things of the eternal world.

The ear of man catches but the smallest proportion of the sounds which are everywhere about him; his eye sees but little that light in reality reveals; so narrow is the sphere in which we live. God has spoken of the other world, and He has described it in human language. There are things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but God hath revealed them by His Spirit; so of the glories beyond, one can truthfully say, The half hath not been told.

Through eternity those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will receive new revelations of Jesus Christ; and they themselves will reflect more and more of the divine character. Then it will be known what life really is. As the Saviour leads to fountains of wisdom, men will know that He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).—*The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pp. 338–348. *R*

Sometime

Sometime, when all life's lessons have been learned,
And sun and stars forevermore have set,
The things which our weak judgment here have spurned—
The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet—
Will flash before us out of life's dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue,
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,
And how, what seemed reproof was love most true.

And we shall see how, while we frown and sigh,
God's plans go on as best for you and me;
How, when we called, He heeded not our cry
Because His wisdom could the end foresee;
And even as prudent parents disallow
Too much of sweet to craving babyhood,
So God, perhaps is keeping from us now
Life's sweetest things, because it seemeth good.

And if sometime, commingled with life's wine
We find the wormwood, and rebel and shrink,
Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine
Pours out this lotion for your lips to drink.
And if some friend we love is lying low,
Where human kisses cannot reach his face,
Oh! Do not blame the loving Father so,
But wear your sorrow with obedient grace.

And you shall shortly know that lengthened breath
Is not the sweetest gift God sends His friend;
And that, sometimes, the sable pall of death
Conceals the fairest boon His love can send;
If we could push ajar the gates of life
And stand within and all God's workings see;
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,
And for each mystery could find a key.

But not today. Then be content, poor heart;
God's plans, like lilies, pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart—
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.
And if, through patient toil, we reach the land
Where tired feet with sandals loose, may rest—
When we shall clearly know and understand;
I think that we will say, "God knows the best."

—Author unknown



Uganda

A week-long camp meeting in Western Uganda, June 2017.

Mexico

Missionary school, "Reform Bible Institute J. N. Andrews" inauguration, May 2017.

Ukraine

East European Union missionary school in Chernovtsy, May 2017.



U.S.A.

The East Central US Field
annual camp meeting,
Bethany, WV, June 2017.

Northern California
Conference music camp,
Moriah Heights, July 2017.

Tennessee camp meeting in
Jamestown, TN, May 2017.



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MOVING? Please let us know.

Victory Over Greed

*“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house”
(Proverbs 15:27, first part).*

What an interesting proverb from God’s word! What does it mean? Most of us know what greed is. It is the grown-up form of selfishness. Perhaps you have seen a group of children playing, with one or two selfish ones always grabbing what they want. Selfishness is part of human nature, and babies are born with it. Babies are helpless little creatures with many needs. Crying and grabbing are their first ways of trying to get what they want. But as we grow, selfishness is something we should overcome.

Ellen White tells of a practice that she and her sister had when they were children:

“With my sister I learned a trade, and although we would earn only twenty-five cents a day, from this sum we were able to save a little to give to missions. We saved little by little until we had thirty dollars. Then when the message of the Lord’s soon coming came to us, with a call for men and means, we felt it a privilege to hand over the thirty dollars to father, asking him to invest it in tracts and pamphlets to send the message to those who were in darkness. . . .

“With the money that we had earned at our trade, my sister and I provided ourselves with clothes. We would hand our money to mother, saying, ‘Buy so that, after we have paid for our clothing, there will be something left to give for missionary work.’ And she would do this, thus encouraging in us a missionary spirit.”¹

Where did these children get such an unselfish spirit? Perhaps it was by learning from Jesus and following His example. In writing about His childhood, Sister White explains: “Jesus worked to relieve every case of suffering that He saw. He had little money to give, but He often denied Himself of food in order to relieve those who appeared more needy than He. . . . When [His brothers] spoke harshly

to poor, degraded beings, Jesus sought out these very ones, and spoke to them words of encouragement.

To those who were in need He would give a cup

of cold water, and would quietly place His own meal in their hands.”²

Dear young reader, do you want to be like these children? Pray to God for His Holy Spirit to help you be unselfish and kind, and always remember His promise, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).—BHM.

¹ *The Adventist Home*, p. 384.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 87.

