# REFORMATION Vol. 60, No. 2

## Preparing for the Latter Rain

### REFORMATION Volume 60, Number 2

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

Editor D. P. Silva
Assistant to the Editor B. Montrose
Layout and Design E. Lee

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### Pharisaical Righteousness vs. Christ's Righteousness

n His sermon on the mount, Christ declared to His audience: "I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

The Lord here made a clear distinction between Pharisaical righteousness and His own righteousness—and He identified the possession of the true righteousness as an essential condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

The scribes and Pharisees were well respected and reverenced by the people because of their show of pretentious righteousness. The people were deceived by the public behavior of their leaders. They professed high spirituality—yet their actual life contradicted their profession. What were the basic differences between the righteousness of the Pharisees and the righteousness of Christ? The former was made up of exterior things: outward show, appearance, and pretense—but the latter came genuinely from the heart.

"The rabbis counted their righteousness a passport to heaven; but Jesus declared it to be insufficient and unworthy. External ceremonies and a theoretical knowledge of

truth constituted Pharisaical righteousness. The rabbis claimed to be holy through their own efforts in keeping the law; but their works had divorced righteousness from religion. While they were punctilious in ritual observances, their lives were immoral and debased. Their so-called righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Summarizing, we see the righteousness of the Pharisees:

External ceremonies;

Theoretical knowledge;

Based on their own efforts:

Punctilious in ritual observances.

On the other hand, regarding the righteousness of Christ, we quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

"The righteousness which Christ taught is conformity of heart and life to the revealed will of God. Sinful men can become righteous only as they have faith in God and maintain a vital connection with Him. Then true godliness will elevate the thoughts and ennoble the life. Then the external forms of religion accord with the Christian's internal purity. Then the ceremonies required in the service of God are not meaningless rites, like those of the hypocritical Pharisees."<sup>2</sup>

The righteousness of the Pharisees comes from the outside and never reaches the heart. It is the result of human effort. It is human righteousness. And the Bible says that our righteousness is just filthy rags. It cannot satisfy God's requirements. In contrast, the righteousness of Christ comes from above, is received by faith—and, taking root in the heart, it then reflects outwardly to the external life. It is obtained by faith through vital connection with Jesus.

"Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. . . . Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:21-24, 28, 31).

Christ's righteousness is the only true passport to heaven. And we can obtain it through faith and vital connection with Him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 310. [Emphasis added.]



ho wants to be deceived?
None of us! The Bible is
foremost in helping us
avoid being deceived.

The sacred scriptures also make it clear that the worst, most subtle form of deception is self-deception. Our human nature likes to assume we're okay regardless of whatever we might think or do. But the Word tells us:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived:** neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Corinthians 6:9). "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts" (Proverbs 21:2).

So we need to search our hearts: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

"There is great necessity for close self-examination in the light of God's word; let each one raise the inquiry: 'Am I sound, or am I rotten at heart? Am I renewed in Christ, or am I still carnal at heart, with a new dress put on the outside?' Rein yourself up to the great tribunal, and in the light of God examine to see if there be any secret sin that you are cherishing, any idol that you have not sacrificed. Pray, yes, pray as you have never prayed before, that you may not be deluded by Satan's devices, that you may not be given up to a heedless, careless, vain spirit, and attend to religious duties to quiet your own conscience."

In what ways might we be deceiving ourselves?

### 1. Comparing ourselves with others

It's easy to deceive ourselves into thinking we are doing well when we compare ourselves with others whose lives might not be prospering very successfully in some areas of life. But the apostle warns: "We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

"We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is, Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard? Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?"<sup>2</sup>

"The hope of eternal life is not to be received upon slight grounds. It is a subject to be settled between God and your own soul—settled for eternity. A supposed hope, and nothing more, will prove your ruin. Since you are to stand or fall by the word of God, it is to that word you must look for testimony in your case. There you can see what is required of you to become a Christian. Do not lay off your armor, or leave the battlefield until you have obtained the victory, and triumph in your Redeemer."

### 2. Flattering ourselves

"The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

"To a superficial observer, persons who are naturally amiable, who are educated and refined, may appear perfect in life. 'Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart' (1 Samuel 16:7). Unless the life-giving truths of God's Word, when presented to the conscience, are understandingly received and then faithfully carried out in the life, no man can see the kingdom of heaven. To some, these truths have a charm because of their novelty but are not accepted as the Word of God. Those who do not receive the light when it is brought before them will be condemned by it."4

"He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonably good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ.

Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person. Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, therefore they go away empty. Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed."5

Throughout history, the poor in spirit, the meek, the humble, have always been rare jewels in the sight of God. For the majority of the professedly religious world, however, it's easy to presume that simply by adhering to distinctive doctrines found in Scripture—however valuable they may be—automatically makes one also immune to the problem of self-deception. Not necessarily!

"We may flatter ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our moral character has been correct and we need not humble ourselves before God like the common sinner. But we must be content to enter into life in the very same way as the chief of sinners. We must renounce our own righteousness and plead for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to us. We must depend wholly upon Christ for our strength. Self must die. We must acknowledge that all we have is from the exceeding riches of divine grace. Let this be the language of our hearts: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake." "6

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' (Psalm 19:7). Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God, or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin, and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God's law, they do not realize their need of the atoning blood of Christ. The hope of salvation is accepted without a radical change of heart or reformation of life. Thus superficial conversions abound, and multitudes are joined to the church who have never been united to Christ."7

"All, high or low, if they are unconverted, are on one common platform. Men may turn from one doctrine to another. This is being done, and will be done. Papists may change from Catholicism to Protestantism; yet they may know nothing of the meaning of the words, 'A new heart also will I give you.' Accepting new theories, and uniting with a church, do not bring new life to anyone, even though the church with which he unites may be established on the true foundation. Connection with a church does not take the place of conversion. To subscribe the name to a church creed is not of the least value to anyone if the heart is not truly changed."8

"It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. 'He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.' 'Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments' (1 John 3:24; 2:3). This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness."9

### The battle is real

"Let no one suppose that conversion is the beginning and end of the Christian life. There is a science of Christianity that must be mastered. There is to be growth in grace, that is constant progress and improvement. The mind is to be disciplined, trained, educated; for the child of God is to do service for God in ways that are not natural, or in harmony with inborn inclination. Those who become the followers of Christ find that new motives of action are supplied, new thoughts arise, and new actions must result. But they can make advancement only through conflict; for there is an enemy that ever contends against them, presenting temptations to cause the soul to doubt and sin. Besides this ever vigilant foe, there are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. The training and education of a lifetime must often be discarded that the Christian may become a learner in the school of Christ, and in him who would be a partaker of the divine nature,

appetite and passion must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. There is to be no end to this warfare this side of eternity, but while there are constant battles to fight, there are also precious victories to gain, and the triumph over self and sin is of more value than the mind can estimate. The effort put forth to overcome, though requiring self-denial, is of little account beside the victory over evil." 10

### Overcoming through God's grace

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:17, 18).

"When true conversion takes place in the heart, it is made manifest in the transformation of character, for those who are converted become Christlike. Pride no longer lives in the heart, sin seems abominable. The converted soul hates the thing that depraves his moral sensibilities. He hates that which crucified the Lord of life and glory. Those who are truly converted grow in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and as knowledge of Christ increases, they see more clearly where their own

weakness lies; they realize the deep depravity of their natures. They understand the strength of sin, and know the power of their old habits.... They have daily a sense of their entire inability to do anything without the help of Jesus Christ, therefore they say to Him, 'I cast my helpless soul upon Thee. "In my hand no price I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling." '""

### The One who began this work will finish it in us

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

"There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, 'These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous' (1 John 2:1). And do not forget the

words of Christ, 'The Father Himself loveth you' (John 16:27). He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance." <sup>12</sup>

"There is no excuse for sin or for indolence. Jesus has led the way, and He wishes us to follow in His steps. He has suffered, He has sacrificed as none of us can, that He might bring salvation within our reach. We need not be discouraged. Jesus came to our world to bring divine power to man, that through His grace we might be transformed into His likeness. When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit."13 R

- <sup>1</sup> Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 144.
- <sup>2</sup> Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 321.
- <sup>3</sup> Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 163, 164.
- <sup>4</sup> Faith and Works, p. 32.
- <sup>5</sup> Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 219.
- <sup>7</sup> The Great Controversy, p. 468.
- <sup>8</sup> Evangelism, pp. 290, 291.
- <sup>9</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 312, 313.
- <sup>10</sup> Christian Education, p. 122.
- <sup>11</sup> That I May Know Him, p. 62.
- <sup>12</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 64.
- 13 That I May Know Him, p. 229.

# HINDRANGES to spiritual growth

By Justin Kambe [Emphasis added throughout.]

e are bidden to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Our Christian (spiritual) growth (also known as the Christian ladder, or "Peter's ladder") consists of seven steps, which indicates completeness in Christ Jesus. (See 2 Peter 1:3–10.)

"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (Verses 5–7).

Let's assume that faith stands for the two poles on which these seven steps of this Christian ladder are fixed: (i) Virtue (ii) Knowledge (iii) Temperance (iv) Patience (v) Godliness (vi) Brotherly kindness (vii) Charity.

The apostle Peter says "giving all diligence," meaning showing much carefulness and attentiveness, thoroughness of thought; being meticulous about this matter.

### Making our calling and election sure

Let us start by considering the first step of the Christian ladder, for in everything we do the beginning is very important. Virtue means moral excellence; goodness, or of good quality. When we possess moral excellence, the other steps (qualities) will be achieved without much struggle.

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Verses 8–11).

We can therefore conclusively say that our spiritual barrenness and blindness is as a result of not paying much attention to the cultivation and climbing of our Christian ladder.

How important, then, is this Christian ladder?

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and goodliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue [moral excellence]: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped

the corruption that is in the world through lust" (Verses 3, 4).

Divine power has provided to every human being the necessary means of attaining to goodness through the highest calling extended to us—not by a fellow mortal being, but by the One who was there in the beginning and later came and "dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), who came not "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13).

In the world, people of the same social status will reciprocate invitations extended—and each may aim to outdo the display of the other. But our calling is the "highest" one because we "in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:10), "for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

Let us now consider the five evils that are hindrances to our spiritual growth.

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking" (1 Peter 2:1).

Here the apostle uses **plural not singular**; he says "**ALL**"—not

part, thus showing how serious and important it is to our spiritual growth that we lay aside all the following things:

### 1. Put away malice

This refers to all intentions to do evil to another, or tending toward the desire to tease. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. . . . Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Corinthians 5:8; 14:20).

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31).

### 2. Put away guile

This refers to all craftiness in our speech—deceit, cunning or sly behavior.

"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile" (Psalm 34:13).

Speaking of those who have the seal of the living God, it is declared: "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:5).

Craftiness in speech has caused many to stumble and draw back, and even has caused some to become spiritual dwarfs by our belittling of the truth as it is in Jesus.

"There should be a continual effort to imitate the society we expect soon to join; namely angels of God who have never fallen by sin. The character should be holy, the manners comely, the words without guile, and thus should we follow on step by step until we are fitted for translation."

"Those who would have that wisdom which is from God must become fools in the sinful knowledge of this age, in order to be wise. They should shut their eyes, that they may see and learn no evil....

And they should guard their tongues, lest they utter corrupt communications and guile be found in their mouths."<sup>2</sup>

truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." He bids us "see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Anything

short of this is hypocrisy.

Our Master Teacher expounded more on all types of hypocrites in Matthew chapter 23, especially in verses 13–33.

A hypocrite will pretend to be a good Christian on Sabbath yet will appear worldly the rest of the week, thus deceiving himself/herself and

> others who are not climbing the Christian ladder.

Another way hypocrisy might occur is through morally impure behavior: "The unhappiness and degradation that follow in the train of licentiousness cannot be estimated. The world is defiled under its inhabitants. They have nearly filled up the measure of their iniquity: but that which will bring the heaviest retribution, is the practice of iniquity under a cloak of godliness. The Redeemer of the world never spurned true repentance, however great the guilt; but He hurls burning denunciations against Pharisees and hypocrites. There is more hope for the open sinner than for this class....

"As Christ's ambassador, I entreat you who profess present truth to promptly resent any approach to impurity and forsake the society of those who breathe an impure suggestion. Loathe these defiling sins with the most intense hatred. Flee from those who would, even in conversation, let the mind run in such a channel; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Matthew 12:34.

"As those who practice these defiling sins are steadily increasing in the world and would intrude

### 5 STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- 1. Put away malice.
- 2. Put away guile.
- 3. Put away hypocrisy.
- 4. Put away envy.
- 5. Put away evil speaking.

### 3. Put away hypocrisy

"Hypo" means "below" and "crisy" is derived from the root word for "belief"—in other words, this is behaving at a level that is lower than what we believe. There are many ways this can happen, but it definitely includes all double dealings, pretenses, and dishonesty.

The apostle explains that our souls are **purified "in obeying the** 

themselves into our churches, I warn you to give no place to them. Turn from the seducer. Though a professed follower of Christ, he is Satan in the form of man; he has borrowed the livery of heaven that he may the better serve his master. You should not for one moment give place to an impure, covert suggestion; for even this will stain the soul, as impure water defiles the channel through which it passes.

"Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering, rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God's law, should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the most solemn, purifying truths of God's word, we must elevate the standard far higher that it is at the present time. Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church."3

Hypocrisy is manifested when professing to know God; but in works we "deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work and reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

### 4. Put away envy

This refers to all our feelings of discontentment at the excellence of others or their good fortune. It includes jealousy, bitterness, covetousness.

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14). "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying" (Romans 13:13).

"What is lying against the truth? It is claiming to believe the truth while the spirit, the words, the deportment, represent not Christ but Satan. To surmise evil, to be impatient and unforgiving, is lying against the truth; but love, patience, and long forbearance are in accordance with the principles of truth. Truth is ever pure, ever kind, breathing a heavenly fragrance unmingled with selfishness."

As we climb to the last step of our Christian ladder which is "charity," we shall learn to suffer long, and be kind; and "charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"

"Let not pride and selfishness prevent us from doing the good which we may do if we will work in Christ's name and with loving, tender spirit."

(1 Corinthians 13:4); and will lead us not to seek our own benefit, but rather that of others. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself" (Romans 15:1–3).

"As Christ has pitied and helped us in our weakness and sinfulness, so should we pity and help others. Many are perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be as a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon God. Oh, this is a blessed work! Let not pride and selfishness prevent us from doing the good which we may do if we will work in Christ's name and with a loving, tender spirit."5

### 5. Put away evil speaking

To speak evil means to use words that are morally bad, wicked and harmful in nature.

The apostle Paul forewarned the believers in Corinth that he would not be pleased to hear such, and he wrote: "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Corinthians 12:20).

Debates, backbiting, whisperings, swellings, and tumults, etc., all are forms of evil speaking that hinders the spiritual growth both of ourselves and others. Let us just consider two of these forms of evil speaking: swellings, and tumults:

**Swellings:** heaving or enlarging of sea waves that cannot break. With such a manner of speaking, Christian growth is impossible.

**Tumults**: angry demonstrations, uproar, riot, etc. Quarreling of any nature is strongly condemned in the word of God.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:34–37).

"What a world of gossip would be prevented if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others will as freely publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. These are often the result of envy or misunderstanding, or they may proceed from exaggeration or a partial disclosure of facts. Jealousy and suspicion, once allowed a place, will sow themselves broadcast, like thistledown. Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for

**his redemption**. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

"A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed. Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows. The same cruel spirit is indulged by men and women who bear the name of Christians. They manifest a pharisaical zeal to stone others less guilty than themselves. There are some who point to others' faults and failures to divert attention

### from their own, or to gain credit for great zeal for God and the church."

A true Christian will educate his/ her tongue to speak well of others, by dwelling on positive traits of their characters than on the negatives.

"It is not the opposition of the world that endangers us the most; it is the evil cherished in the hearts of professed believers that works our most grievous disaster and most retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening our spirituality than by being envious, suspicious of one another, full of faultfinding and evil surmising."

We may be church members for many years, but if we remain slaves to these five evils, our spirituality



will remain stagnant and we shall eventually leave the fold.

On the other hand, "those who, in the spirit and love of Jesus, will become one with Him, will be in close fellowship one with another, bound up by the silken cords of love. Then the ties of human brotherhood would not be always on the strain, ready at any provocation to snap asunder. 'All ye are brethren' will be the sentiment of every child of faith. When the followers of Christ are one with Him, there will be no first and last, no less respected or less important ones. A blessed brotherly fellowship one with another will bind all who truly receive the Lord Jesus Christ in a firm loyalty that cannot be broken. All will be equally one with Christ."8

There are some words of hope and encouragement to every repenting sinner who, after realizing that any of the five evils mentioned above have had hindered spiritual growth due to any or all of the above problems, now desires "the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:2, 3). We shall echo the words of Jeremiah and Job: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Our wonderful experience will be spiritual strength.

"There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that is rarely seen in these times." 9

It is by desiring and studying the sincere word of God that we shall finally possess the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

"To adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour, we must have the same mind which was in Christ. **Our likes and dislikes, our desire to favor self to the disadvantage of others must be overcome.** Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Christ must be in us a living, working power." <sup>10</sup>

No true Christian will fail to attain to having the mind of Christ, for the scripture says "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2); we are to allow Him "which hath begun a good work" in us to "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

### **Conclusion**

"We are fellow pilgrims, seeking a better country, even a heavenly. God will never say to us 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' at the end of our journey, if we now cherish a spirit which craves to crowd out and supplant others. Malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking are things which God abhors, and no one who reveals those fruits in his life will enter the kingdom of heaven."

May the experience of our Saviour be ours too, Who, after He had accomplished His mission on earth said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

"We are not to serve God as if we were not human, but we are to serve Him in the nature we have, that has been redeemed by the Son of God; through the righteousness of Christ we shall stand before God pardoned, and as though we had never sinned. We will never gain strength in considering what we might do if we were angels.

### We are to turn in faith to Jesus Christ, and show our love to God through obedience to His commands....

"Amid impurity, Christ maintained His purity. Satan could not stain or corrupt it. His character revealed "When the followers of Christ are one with Him, there will be no first and last, no less respected or less important ones."

a perfect hatred for sin. It was His holiness that stirred against Him all the passion of a profligate world; for by His perfect life He threw upon the world a perpetual reproach, and made manifest the contrast between transgression and the pure, spotless righteousness of One that knew no sin. This heavenly purity annoyed the apostate foe as nothing else could do, and he followed Christ day by day, using in his work the people that claimed to have superior purity and knowledge of God, putting into their hearts a spirit of hatred against Christ, and tempting His disciples to betray and forsake Him."12

May we learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart!  $\mathscr{R}$ 

- $^{1}$  Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 216.
- <sup>2</sup> The Adventist Home, p. 404.
- <sup>3</sup> Counsels on Health, pp. 625, 626.
- <sup>4</sup> The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 936.
- <sup>5</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 246.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 58, 59.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, p. 242.
- <sup>8</sup> The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1098.
- <sup>9</sup> Christian Education, p. 58.
- <sup>10</sup> The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 921.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 940.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, p. 1142.

### A HEART-SEARCHING WORK FORTODAY

### By Marco Alonso

ave you ever wondered if all your past sins have been thoroughly confessed? Have you ever conceived of the idea that perhaps one sin might not be confessed and hinder you from being saved? After deep soul-searching, I have found myself echoing the words of Paul as among the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). I'm realizing that we should search our hearts as never before, or we may be found wanting. (See Daniel 5:27.)

The ideology of being a Christian was not always apparent to me. I used to be under the impression that serving God meant the faithful practice of our dues to the church and God, leaving us with room for a few personal and seemingly indispensable indulgences. The world usually disguises such deceptions by suggesting self-worth, self-love, and to believe in yourself. In a popular statement from Shakespeare's Hamlet, the character Polonius advises his son Laertes to prioritize himself by urging, "to thine own self be true."

On the other hand, the word of God explains in contrast that we are blessed in order to bless others—thus making the purpose of life to serve God and likewise bless humanity.

### Faith requires spiritual fidelity

Meditating on James 4:4 transformed my perception of my profession of faith.

In the initial verses, James starts by comparing the merely partial loyalty of the professed children of God to an act of adultery. The apostle categorizes friendship with the world as animosity against God. It is interesting how throughout the Bible there is a recurring analogy of the relationship between a husband and wife in order to depict our relationship to our Lord. And when we compare our human relationships, we are able to fathom the enormity of our sin when we refuse to surrender all—thus maintaining ties with the world.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

Let us consider the following scenario. Imagine that you are married or courting. Both parties understand that the relationship demands loyalty and fidelity to each other. However, after marriage, one of you decides to maintain a friendship with the opposite sex. Perhaps it's a friendship through social media that involves occasional chatting and reminiscing of old times. And while you are still married, this friendship hinders you from 100% dedication to your spouse, possibly chiseling away at the sacred bond of communication so vital for your pledged commitment to function and truly flourish as it should.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Verse 7).

Now imagine that the friend you have maintained is an insistent one, eager to rob your attention by novelties and by apparently innocent seductions. One compromise here, another one there. And soon you find yourself compromising everything, until one day you realize you have betrayed your husband/wife and vou didn't realize it until now. You know in your heart that it is a great offense to your husband/wife for you to be maintaining this. Therefore, realizing that if done to you, it would wound your heart. But the very and only solution is to resist the outside friendship, make a decided decision, and the "friend" will flee from you.

As in earthly relationships, our allegiance to God can only be defined when both parties commit to such. The word of the Lord clearly states, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Therefore, God's love to us is a given; His fidelity and promises to us are sure, and He changes not (Malachi 3:6). We need to remember that God is not emotionally unstable as we are as human beings. We are bidden to be loyal to our vows even to our own disadvantage, as He describes the one to abide in His tabernacle and stand in His holy hill as being "he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not" (Psalm 15:4). God set the example for this as He was willing to give His only begotten Son to die the agonizing death on the cross in our stead. He poured out His soul into death; now the final decision to accept so great salvation remains up to us.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Do we see ourselves depicted in this analogy? Committing adultery against God by maintaining friendship with the world—the king of this world? How many times have we sat in the pews, participated in church programs, preached, knocked on doors, and lacked love—availing to nothing?

In 1 Corinthians 13, it is interesting to note the very core of God's love and character. This inspired chapter depicts God's love as one that transcends the gift of prophecy, mysteries, charities, faith, and even martyrdom when the nucleus of such actions is not love. Yet it begins by stating that love suffers long. In the previous characteristics mentioned, all had an ending; prophecies had an ending and so did charities. It then states the negatives—of what love is *not*.

What then is love? What my finite mind could grasp was the perception that love is a state of being; it is unchangeable because it's God's character. The death of God's only-begotten Son for humanity was not confined to the cross. Jesus was eternally pledged and became our Elder Brother. This is God's love, as we can faintly fathom it. A state of permanence.

### It's time to examine our hearts more thoroughly

We are bidden in this final hour of earth's history to "be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:9, 10).

During the day of atonement performed once a year—the priest would enter the most holy place in order to cleanse the sanctuary from the year of morning and evening sacrifices, which were sprinkled on the veil thereof. Throughout the year—every morning and evening—the people of God would come to offer sacrifices to atone for their sins during the course of the day. Then, by the end of the year, the veil would be heavily stained with the blood of the animals and had to be cleansed. Yet, before this could be done, all the sins of the people had to be repented of.

On that day, two goats would be taken to the door of the tabernacle where lots would be cast on them. This enabled them to separate one goat for the final atoning of the people's sins and the other goat, known as the scapegoat, was led to die in the wilderness where it would bear the sins of the people. Consequently, the blood of the goat was to be sprinkled on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant beyond the veil. However, while these rituals were being performed, businesses were closed and all the people fasted and prayed while humbling and searching their hearts for unconfessed sins.

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

The message of 1844—from when we first understood the time of the investigative judgment—is no longer new to us. The novelty of this discovery may have worn off, but does that make the reality any less vivid and real? "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). Can we conceive of even a faint perception of the work that is being done at this very moment in the heavenly sanctuary? As you read this, you may be unaware of whether your case might be withdrawn from the file and ready for review. But God in His great mercy toward us, still insists on graciously knocking at the door of our hearts.

As we are reminded yet again to search our souls, we ask the same

question that the disciples asked before partaking of the Holy Supper, as they inquired with contrition, "Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:22). During this time, Judas was about to commit spiritual adultery against Jesus—so to speak—by betraying his Lord. And as Jesus revealed this to His disciples, they began to search their hearts and became "exceeding sorrowful" each as if they were the one.

In Psalm 51, we have one of the most heartfelt and yet systematic prayers, which portrays the steps toward genuine repentance and its outcome.

"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51:13).

After recognizing his sin and asking for a transformation of heart, king David realizes that after that experience, he becomes a missionary by stating that only then will he be able to teach sinners God's ways.

When we are able to fathom the urgency of our preparation it becomes apparently impossible to offer a halfhearted and adulterated service to our God. We all have a work to do in His vineyard. Though a small mite it may be, we all have a work to do.

Let us therefore begin by asking the question: "Lord, is it I?" Indeed, it truly is time to search our hearts as never before.

"A season of great trial is before us. It becomes us now to use all our capabilities and gifts in advancing the work of God. The powers the Lord has given us are to be used to build up, not to discourage and to tear down.... He will purify His church even as He purified the temple at the beginning and close of His ministry on earth. All that He brings upon the church in test and trial comes that His people may gain deeper piety and more strength to carry the triumphs of the cross to all parts of the world. He has a work for all to do."

### References

<sup>1</sup> Sons and Daughters of God, p. 260.

### "ALMOST DISCOURAGED"

The Signs of the Times, November 30, 1888.



(Numbers 14:26–29). They said they could not go, and they did not; but Caleb and Joshua, who said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are able to overcome it," did enter the promised land.

Distrust and faint-heartedness are as displeasing to God now as then. His promises are abundant. Listen to a few: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1: 5). God does not upbraid us, does not taunt us with our weakness. A child has not the strength of a man, and no father will ridicule his infant child because of its weakness. Its very helplessness appeals to his sympathy. So God says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:13, 14). But it is necessary to "ask in faith, nothing wavering," for "without faith it is impossible to please him" (James 1:6; Hebrews 11:6). Again we are exhorted: "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). And yet again, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). One more passage ought forever to stop all our murmurings and doubtings: "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

"No father will ridicule his infant child because of its weakness. Its very helplessness appeals to his sympathy."

10:13). Read also Hebrews 2:18; 12:1–4; 13:8; Philippians 4:4, 13, and especially Psalm 139:17, 18, and Lamentations 3:22–33.

Do we really believe these promises? If we did, would we not appropriate them to ourselves? We read them, and say we believe them, and vet to very many they seem vague and unreal. But if they are to be of any benefit to us we must consider them as real, and make our requests accordingly. Our belief is measured by our actions, not by our words. Is it not as much infidelity to disbelieve a promise that God has given as it is to disbelieve any other portion of His word? Let us take heed lest there be found in any of us "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

But ought we not to be sensible of our weakness? Certainly; the more so the better. But we are not to think of it in such a way as to become discouraged. There are two ways of looking at our own frailties: One is to brood over them, lose sight of God's willingness to help, and become discouraged. This pleases Satan. If we are prone to doubt and become faint-hearted, he will assist us to see more lions in the way than really exist.

And such a course is really a form of selfishness. The individual becomes so intensely self-conscious that he can take cognizance of nothing else. He thinks of himself so much that he loses sight of Christ. He imagines that he himself must do the great work that is to be done. After a few attempts show him the impossibility of it, he becomes discouraged. Another way to consider them is in the light of the promises of God. When we do this we have every reason to be encouraged, and God is pleased with us. The more we distrust ourselves while trusting God, the stronger we will be, for God has said: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And in view of this, Paul was led to say: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10). No man ever had more trials than Paul had, or felt less confidence in himself; but he believed God's promises, and it was no vain boast for him to say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Thus it was with Caleb and Joshua. It was not vain self-confidence which led them to say, "We are well able to overcome it." Hear them: "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" (Numbers 14:8, 9). So the Lord is with us; His promises are multiplied to us. We have the accumulated proofs of His power and goodness through thousands of years past. It is far more sinful for us to distrust God now, than it was for ancient Israel. Then "let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." R

# To Be One FOR LIFE

### By Kay Clark

In our previous article on marriage, we explored the words brought forth from inspiration as found in the Scripture and in the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the true principles upon which marriage should be based. We found that marriage was the first institution to be given to Adam and Eve by their Creator and thus is virtually as old as creation itself. We also discovered that through yielding to temptation and through disobedience to God our first parents entered the controversy between good and evil which had been instigated in heaven.

his downfall has, since its occurrence, affected all our relationships, not only with God but with one another. Sad though it is, the happy and blissful relationship which should attend the man and his wife who vow before God to love, honor, and cherish one another has also been marred. In today's world, much sinful practice prevails upon what should be a blessed and pure relationship, and many divorces and remarriages are the result. Even in religious circles,

wrong actions are condoned in this matter. Our purpose in this study will be to find a "thus saith the Lord" concerning these issues.

### A union for life

The apostle Paul writes in 1
Corinthians 7: 3, 10, 39, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. . . . And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. . . . The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."

"The marriage vow . . . links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which nought but the hand of death should sever." 1

"Wherefore [a man and his wife] are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

In the beginning it was God's plan that husband and wife would be together for a lifetime, as long as both

should live. Thus would be established unity and happiness and a stable home into which children could be born.

### Satan's attack against the family

He who attacked the happiness of the first pair in Eden has continued his work of destruction throughout the centuries as he has sought to destroy the sacredness of the marriage institution. He takes advantage of every opportunity available to bring strife and discord into the life of those who have vowed before God to live in harmony with Him and with one another.

"Satan is ever ready to take advantage when any matter of variance arises, and by moving upon the objectionable, hereditary traits of character in husband or wife, he will try to cause the alienation of those who have united their interests in a solemn covenant before God. In the marriage vows they have promised to be as one, the wife covenanting to love and obey her husband, the husband

## "If the law of God is obeyed, the demon of strife will be kept out of the family."

promising to love and cherish his wife. If the law of God is obeyed, the demon of strife will be kept out of the family, and no separation of interests will take place, no alienation of affection will be permitted."<sup>2</sup>

### What does God say about divorce?

In Mark 10:2-9 we read the following, "And the Pharisees came to [Jesus], and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"A woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the sight of God and according to the higher law. There is only one sin, which is adultery, which can place the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God. Although the laws of the land may grant a divorce, yet they are husband and wife still in the Bible light, according to the laws of God." 3

Here we find that it was not in the plan of God that divorcement should enter into the marriage relationship, for the two who became joined as one should remain so as long as they both should live. But the question arises, "What happens when divorce does occur; does God permit a remarriage of either or both parties?" Let us study further into this question.

### Is remarriage lawful following divorce?

We read in Mark 10:11, 12 that Jesus declared, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

As these verses plainly state, whichever spouse does the putting away and then marries another is guilty of adultery.

There are several verses in the Bible which advise the same thing and bear out the same truth. In Luke 16:18 we read, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." This brings in another party: Whoever marries one that has been put away is also guilty of adultery.

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Romans 7:1-3).

Thus we are finding that, according to Scripture, remarriage for either party, whether the guilty or innocent one, is unlawful as long as the other is alive. And we know that committing adultery constitutes the breaking of the seventh commandment of the moral and binding law of God. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

### The innocent party

The innocent one who has been wronged and cast aside by a spouse guilty of committing adultery will be faced with numerous problems. He or she will need to decide whether to remain or seek a separation.

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10, 11).

"In cases of the violation of the seventh commandment where the guilty party does not manifest true repentance, if the injured party can obtain a divorce without making their own cases and that of their children, if they have them, worse by so doing, they should be free.

"If they would be liable to place themselves and their children in worse conditions by a divorce, we know of no scripture that would make the innocent party guilty by remaining."

In whichever decision is made, neither party has the lawful right in the sight of God to remarry if a divorce ends the marriage. This is plainly upheld in the Scriptures.

### The truth as put forth by John the Baptist

We are familiar with the account in the scriptures concerning the call to repentance as put forth by John the Baptist. He had fearlessly admonished King Herod that he was living in an adulterous relationship because he had married his brother's wife. Matthew 14:3–5 states, "For Herod had laid hold on John, and

bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet."

"'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, . . . and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.' John dealt with him faithfully, denouncing his iniquitous alliance with Herodias, his brother's wife. For a time Herod feebly sought to break the chain of lust that bound him; but Herodias fastened him more firmly in her toils, and found revenge upon the Baptist by inducing Herod to cast him into prison."

In this admonition to the king, John was speaking of the unlawfulness of remarriage as long as the other spouse is alive. As was true of John, we must never be fearful of calling sin by its rightful name.

### **Ouestions that arise**

Matthew 5:31, 32 reads: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." How can this act of putting away one from the marriage relationship cause him or her to commit adultery? When one has been cast away from the marriage, that person will more than likely desire to be married again,

and would thus be guilty of the sin of adultery if the spouse remains alive when the remarriage occurs. If the one who is being divorced has been already guilty of breaking the seventh commandment, the one getting the divorce is not causing the problem because the unfaithfulness has already occurred.

We read a similar verse in Matthew 19:9, where Jesus declared: "I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Here we find the same principle. Whatever the reason for the divorce and whoever is the guilty or innocent party, if he or she remarries while the other party remains alive, the sin of adultery is present. Separation is allowed in the case of violation of the seventh commandment but never remarriage.

The Bible does not contradict itself and we must base our understanding about each subject on the weight of evidence from all the texts given on that subject.

"God gave only one cause why a wife should leave her husband, or the husband leave his wife, which was adultery." <sup>6</sup>

### Conclusion

The scriptural study warning against remarriage after divorce brings many questions to mind but, as we have found, we need to base our decisions and teaching upon the weight of evidence given by God Himself through the words of holy writ. In the beginning He ushered in the marriage institution and put His blessing upon it; it was to remain a blessing for all humanity throughout the ages of time. The vow, "Till death do us part" is to be upheld and honored by those who take it.

If one spouse should be taken away by death, the Scriptures state that the remaining one is free to remarry, as stated in Romans 7:2, 3 and 1 Corinthians 7:39, which have previously been quoted. Otherwise the only reason for separation of a spouse should be in the case of adultery; but even then the ideal decision would be for a reconciliation of the two if the guilty party repents of his or her sin. In no case is remarriage lawful as long as both remain alive.

### **Appeal**

Let it be the desire of each one of us, as followers and representatives of Christ, to live out the principles which He has given us and to teach others to do so.

- <sup>1</sup> The Faith I Live By, p. 253.
- <sup>2</sup> The Adventist Home, p. 106.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 344.
- <sup>4</sup> The Review and Herald, March 24, 1868.
- <sup>5</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 214.
- <sup>6</sup> The Adventist Home, p. 342.



### THE DIGNITY OF

### Motherhood

### Part 1 of 2

### By Inneka Lausevic

any years ago, I read a magazine article written by a mother who was trying to find a full-time babysitter for her children. She was going back to work, and she had very high standards for the person who would care for her children. Among other traits, the babysitter would have to be kind, firm, fair, loving, honest and, above all, must have the ability to love the children in her care as if they were her own. Applicant after applicant was interviewed, but they were all turned down. Nobody fit the profile. Eventually, this woman realized that the person she was looking for was herself. And that, she said, was why "such an intelligent woman like her" was at home looking after her children.

I loved this article, as it highlighted not only the general attitude of society toward a mother's occupation, but also the fact that a mother cannot be replaced by a babysitter or childcare worker, no matter how talented and competent.

"There is no other who can accomplish the mother's work for her. Neither nurse nor governess can supply the mother's place, or fulfil her obligations."

The really sad thing about today's society is that motherhood is viewed as a career break. You read about a mother "putting her career on hold" to raise her children, and of mothers "resuming their careers" when their children are grown. Let me say something that should be self-evident:

Motherhood is a career. A woman's life is not "on hold" until the business of raising a family is over; motherhood is her life. Even if a woman does get a job or go back to college when her children are in school or grown, she never relinquishes the job of motherhood. Motherhood demands a lot from our talents and abilities, as one mother stated: "I looked on childrearing not only as a work of love and duty, but as a profession that was fully as interesting and challenging as any honorable profession in the world, and one that demanded the best that I could bring it."

Women have a lot of skills that are unique to her gender: "multitasking," sympathy, emotional bonding, and so forth. We were purpose-made



by God to be mothers. It has been said: "Of all the rights of women, the greatest is to be a mother." The women's liberation movement, which fought for women's rights, did a lot of good. It established that a woman is equal to a man in worth, intellect, and capability, and it granted her the same rights that a man enjoys. We are indebted to the liberation movement for the acknowledgement that just because we are custom-built for child-rearing, it doesn't necessarily follow that we have to be mothers, or that we are incapable of carrying out any job other than homemaking. Unfortunately, the movement was a little over-enthusiastic, and as a result of the liberation effort, the esteem once given to the occupation of motherhood was snatched away. This is a pity, as it really didn't have to end up like that. One mother put it this way; "Women do not have to sacrifice personhood if they are mothers. They do not have to sacrifice motherhood in order to be persons. Liberation was meant to expand women's opportunities, not to limit them. The self-esteem that has been found in new pursuits can also be found in mothering."

However, it is so easy for us busy mothers to adopt the perception that our intelligence and talents are seemingly dormant and unusedmaybe even wasted-when we devote ourselves to homemaking. After the novelty of motherhood wears off, we are faced with the endless routines of feeding, bathing, hair-brushing, dishwashing, and cleaning. We expend so much time and energy on home duties that we don't have the chance to pursue our interests and hobbies and, as a result, we tend to lose our identities. I am speaking from experience, as I, too, have felt frustrated and trapped while rotating on the child-care/housekeeping merry-go-round. Motherhood seems to be a messy, tiring, 24-hour job that attracts very little appreciation.

"The mother seldom appreciates her own work and frequently sets so low an estimate upon her labor that she regards it as domestic drudgery. She goes through the same round day after day, week after week, with no special marked results. She cannot tell at the close of the day the many little things she has accomplished. Placed beside her husband's achievement, she feels that she has done nothing worth mentioning."<sup>2</sup>

These conclusions might be very common and even natural, but are they accurate or erroneous? And what is it that causes such ideas? Recently, I took a long, hard look at my role as a mother. As a result, I gained a deeper appreciation of my work and discovered just how much fulfillment can come with it. I realized that I can only become discontented with my career if I allow myself to underestimate the value

"It is the mother's privilege to bless the world by her influence, and in doing this she will bring joy to her own heart."

and accomplishment of motherhood. My home and children deserve and need my best efforts, and if I wish to be a success, I need to devote myself completely to motherhood.

"There are opportunities of inestimable worth, interests infinitely precious, committed to every mother. The humble round of duties which women have come to regard as a wearisome task should be looked upon as a grand and noble work. It is the mother's privilege to bless the world

by her influence, and in doing this she will bring joy to her own heart."<sup>3</sup>

So how do we change our thinking about our jobs as mothers? My theory is that it is all about education. In fact, I think there should be a college course for homemaking. The course would need to be at least a Bachelor's degree to cover everything necessary for a qualified homemaker, and it would take about four years to complete. Here are some of the essential unit studies for such a course:

- Psychology
- Nursing
- Economics/Accounting
- Nutrition
- Chef Training
- Teaching
- The Dignity of Motherhood
- Missionary Training
- Patience Development
- Assertiveness
- Scheduling
- Agriculture
- First Aid
- Handyman Skills
- Dressmaking
- Child Care
- Occupational Health & Safety

Believe it or not, a mother uses all of these skills and more in her day-to-day job, and most of it is learned from on-the-job training. It is a real pity that we are not formally trained in any or all of those disciplines. It would make life so much easier if we were, and maybe there would be less dissatisfaction in our profession if it were taken that seriously.

But perhaps just the "Dignity of Motherhood" unit would suffice. It is the most important of all, although is more of a belief system than a skill. It involves who you are: your relationship with God; your education; homemaking skills; and even your attitude to homemaking. It calls for the molding of the character and perceptions, a process that is best begun in early womanhood for

the best success (although any time will do). Let's start with the most important part of mothering: Your relationship with God.

### **Complete surrender to God**

"It is only when she seeks in her own life to follow the teachings of Christ that the mother can hope to form the characters of her children after the divine pattern." 4 This requirement is definitely of the most value if begun as soon as possible, before even the adult years are entered. There are so many decisions that are made between the early teen years and the birth of her children that have such an impact on the quality of motherhood a woman provides for her children. Her history, her choice of a husband, and her values all affect her motherhood abilities, and are best guided by an all-wise and loving God. A woman who in her youth is led by God will have a solid base on which to build her marriage and home.

"A mother should be a woman of pure morals. She should love God. She should love the father of her children. She should love her little ones."5 That being said, some of us mothers had not an exemplary role model in our early life. If this is your situation, I can only say that it is never too late to give your life to God. Even if your history has some black spots, if you made an unwise marriage choice, or if you have neglected your duty to your children, a constant surrender to God can only make you a better wife, mother, and homemaker. "Those who have been training their children in an improper way need not despair; let them become converted to God and seek for the true spirit of obedience, and they will be enabled to make decided reforms. In conforming your own customs to the saving principles of God's holy law, you will have an influence upon your children."6

### Attitude toward homemaking

Whatever the opinions of society, friends, or family about the occupation of homemaking, the one

factor that will make you either happy or discontented as a mother is your attitude to your career. If you choose to have satisfaction in your job and think of it as the most important in the world (which it is), you will bless both yourself and your family. The best part of this is that your children will pick up your views on motherhood and consider it to be an honorable occupation. Nothing that others can say will erase the consequence of it in the eyes of your children. "The mother is the queen of the home, and the children are her subjects. She is to rule her household wisely, in the dignity of her motherhood. Her influence in the home is to be paramount; her word, law. If she is a Christian, under God's control, she will command the respect of her children."<sup>7</sup>

- $^1$  The Health Reformer, July 1, 1889.
- <sup>2</sup> The Adventist Home, p. 232.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 234.
- <sup>4</sup> The Signs of the Times, September 29, 1881.
- <sup>5</sup> The Health Reformer, July 1, 1889.
- <sup>6</sup> Child Guidance, p. 173.
- <sup>7</sup> The Adventist Home, p. 232.



### The Effect of a Mother's Prayers

By Jackson Zamy

ike many kids in the church today, I did not come from a Christian family. Although my mother was not a dedicated Christian woman, she would go to church occasionally. At our home in Haiti, we were surrounded by Pentecostal churches, which had a positive influence over my mother. At times, she would gather the family and would have us sing some hymns and pray. As a child, I grew up with both my father and my mother until I was six years old. Then, my father left us for a better life in the United States. After that, my mother began to play the role of my father as well as hers. Some years after my father left, something occurred between Mom and Dad, and they split, leaving us solely under the care of my mother.

As the eldest of a family of three children, I and my two sisters, I noticed that my mother kept a closer eye on me. At first, I thought she did not love me because I was punished the most. But I also realized that I was the one who caused her more problems. I loved to hang out with friends of the neighborhood. Those friends were not the best kids to get in contact with. We would engage in fighting without our parents knowing. At times, we would go fishing on the seaside or get into the water with great risk of being drowned. On several occasions, God spared my life as I adventured many dangerous things

in the company of those friends. As I look back, I could see the hand of God guiding my life.

### **Bad company**

As I grew up, I met different kinds of friends—smokers, singers, robbers, and even some gangsters, both in school and in my neighborhood. At times I would sit and listen to them share their experiences: I remember one of them explaining how he robbed a gas station with a gun in his hand. I also had some cousins with whom I learned to sing hip-hop. Then some others started introducing me into smoking cigarettes, but when my mother found out, she would rebuke those friends, until finally she moved to another city to protect me. Thank God, I did not continue smoking cigarettes as I was away from those friends.

On one occasion, a friend of mine from school visited me one day and told me he wanted to take me to a place to borrow a gun. I was very young and was a little afraid at first, but I decided to go. That place where we went later became so bad that even the police could go there only at the risk of their own lives. When we arrived at the house of the person who was supposed to lend us the gun, the man looked at me, and a little while after, my friend who took me to that place came to me and said, "he said

no." That's how God saved me from even touching a gun. Who knows what could have happened had I taken it home

Later, my cousins started having more experiences; they also began to smoke marijuana. One day, one of my cousins handed me a bag full of marijuana to keep at home for some days. My mother did not even have any idea of what that was. After some time, in my curiosity, I smoked a little, but at this time I was already in the process of leaving that lifestyle and getting into the church.

### How it all began

In my country, during every carnival season, groups of singers would unite and rehearse songs they would record and post them on the radio and TV for the public. At the place where my mother had moved in order to separate me from my other friends, I got to meet some new friends who were planning to record a hip-hop song for the carnival. So, they invited me to join them. The song was ready, my part in the song was all set. I remember asking my mother permission to go to the recording studio. That was the first time my mother allowed something like that without refusing me. But God was in control. We began recording. But the project could not continue. I wanted my part to enter in a different way,

but the person doing the recording did not have the experience and the equipment to do it that way. We had to stop the recording, and that was when things started to change in my life. At that moment, if the project had worked, I probably would have ended up deep in the world. But the Lord answered the prayers of my mother.

### My mother's prayers in my conversion

In this new neighborhood, I also started to make some new friends who were Pentecostals. Next to my house there used to be a house where they would hold prayer meetings. One day I was standing outside of the house. And I heard a pastor preaching about avoiding the things of the world. I really did not want to hear about what he was saying. It all sounded bothersome to me. But, I felt indignation in my heart. Something that came up to my mind was the attitude of some Christians, as I did not see a good example in many. And I remember I said in myself, "If one day, I should become a Christian, I have to be a true Christian."

Later, some friends invited me to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I started attending that church. Then after a while, I decided to give myself to the Lord. But there is something that I cannot forget. I had not been an easy child; I remember having caused a lot of problems and worries to my mother. I could not understand her in many things. When it came to coming back home, I was always the last one to come into the house at night. That really disturbed the peace of my mother because it was not safe to stay out late. But one day, my mother was in prayer before leaving for work; as I was still in bed, I could hear her praying loudly saying, "Lord change Jackson," "change him." As

I heard her praying on my behalf, loving my former life, I asked her why she was praying for me, and that I did not need prayer and requested her to leave me alone, but she would pray even louder; the words, "change Jackson" would keep resounding from her lips and fall as a hammer on my head. I felt disturbed, but not too long after, God answered those prayers. When I look back I could see how much damage I caused to my mother as I did not understand many things. After I became a Christian, there was such a link between me and my mother that it was amazing. She loved me more, and I also began to love her more. Besides that, she could not understand my dedication to the Lord and how devoted I was in the things of God. The Lord is good, and by experience, I know He hears the prayers of a mom.

### A word of comfort to mothers:

Now, as I go from place to place as a missionary, I can see families where parents are sad and feeling pained because their children are not in the church. Many happen to be discouraged as they see no hope. Others have done all they could in the training of their children but have not seen results. Some have also realized their mistakes in the education of their little ones. But, whatever the case has been, my words of encouragement for you is, do not give up the fight. Besides God, the life I now live is the result of my mother's prayers. There was a time when the words my mother would tell me did not have any effect on me. I was bold in the things that I was doing, and she could not stop me. This kind of struggle is not a fight between flesh and blood, but it is one against principalities in high places (See Ephesians 3:10).

Dear mothers, present the case of your children to the Lord. He will hear the cry of your hearts just like He did in my case. Fast and pray and wait unto the Lord. He has His own time. Remember the experience of those mothers who brought their children to Christ and how He blessed them.

"[Christ] is as verily the helper of mothers today as when He gathered the little ones to His arms in Judea. The children of our hearths are as much the purchase of His blood as were the children of long ago."

There is nothing that passes unnoticed by our Lord Jesus. He knows the struggles and suffering of every parent. And He will reach out to everyone who seeks Him for help. Mothers, always remember that your children belong to God. The psalmist declares under inspiration that "children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). Will not Jesus save those children who are His own? Will He not have mercy on them? Will He not listen to the cry of a worried mother? He "knows the burden of every mother's heart. He who had a mother that struggled with poverty and privation sympathizes with every mother in her labors. He who made a long journey in order to relieve the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman will do as much for the mothers of today. He who gave back to the widow of Nain her only son, and who in His agony upon the cross remembered His own mother, is touched today by the mother's sorrow."2

### God acts in His due time

A story is told of the experience of a mother who prayed all her life for the conversion of her son, but she died and did not get to see the answer to her prayer. The son became a captain in the marines, but he would avoid all

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religious matters. While in the army, one day, he was hit by an explosion and lost his heels; and as a result, he could not walk. He now became a disabled man in a wheelchair. As the years went by, he became old. One day, some of his friends took him to a meeting where the gospel was being preached. Charles Stanley, the speaker for that meeting, said that he felt inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak about Mephibosheth, a story found in 2 Samuel, chapter 9. Using this illustration, he spoke about the complete loss of a man, his moral handicapped condition, and the grace of God manifested through Christ. He also pointed out that God seeks the sinner to brings him to himself just like David went for Mephibosheth who was a lame and received him in his palace. As he concluded his sermon, he appealed to the congregation, "How about you, poor sinner, old and paralyzed, you whom they sought in order to bring you in the presence of God, where are you?" The captain felt that this was a direct call from God. He also felt that God knew about all his life. Trying to straighten up his body from his wheelchair, he cried, "Here I am." That night God answered the prayer of his mother and saved him. May his story give hope to all parents! God has His own time.

Something parents should avoid while praying

While talking about my conversion and relating it to the youth of our church, there are two major things that I would like for parents to consider as they pray for their children:

### 1. Be a consistent example

Parents should pray and ask the Lord for wisdom and spiritual discernment, so they can be a good example for their children. A young pastor was visiting a family from the church. The pastor asked one of church member's son about his decision and if he had any desire to go to church and decide for Christ. The boy answered, "I don't want to be a hypocrite. I would not like to be one type of person at home and another person at church."

### 2. Speak well of fellow church members

Besides failing to be an example, there is another mistake committed when parents talk about their church to their children in a negative way. The inspired pen states that it happens that "the minister's



character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated. . . . Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children." This may lead to a condition where "the good seed finds no place to take root, and Satan catches it away." 4

Parents, if you want to see your sons and daughters in church and giving themselves to Christ, do not speak in front of them about the mistakes or defects of the church members. If the pastor of the church and the members are depicted as bad people, they will not go to them for advice or help.

### Conclusion

Parents, if you have done all that is in your power, by God's grace, to be an example for your children in everything, and avoid those things mentioned above, pray that the Lord may save your children. Be still and wait upon the Lord. He will help you in the battle. Some parents die before they can see the results of their prayers. But if their prayers went to God constantly, they will see in Heaven their children whom they loved and prayed for.

And dear youth, ask the Lord to help you to show love to your parents and listen to them. "Do not wound and grieve their hearts and cause them to spend sleepless nights in anxiety and distress over your case." 5

One thing I did not tell you in the story of my conversion is that my mother died some years after we became very good friends, and after I became a Christian. This is what she prayed for—a change in my life. But now that I have more knowledge in the things of God, she is no more. I wish she were alive, so I could show more love to her, but this is not possible. My friends, if you have parents, especially believing parents, cherish them, love them, and obey them. Now is the time to do so. "If you have sinned in not rendering love and obedience to them, begin now to redeem the past. You cannot afford to take any other course; for it means to you the loss of eternal life." 6

- <sup>1</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 512.
- $^2$  Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 45, 46.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 46.
- <sup>5</sup> The Adventist Home, p. 302.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.

# Preparing for the Latter Rain

Part 1 of 2

A study from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy with comments by Bethany Montrose [Emphasis supplied throughout.]

sk ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zechariah 10:1).

### Introduction

Preparing—preparation—is something that we find ourselves doing all the time, isn't it? Think about a really hard exam. What would happen if you didn't prepare yourself properly—what would happen on test day? We all know that the results of such neglect wouldn't be good. Even those who aren't faced with typical exams prepare themselves in other ways—through the proactive pursuit of knowledge and a strong personal commitment to achieving their goals.

It seems that everything worthwhile in life requires some kind of preparation in order to be a success. Even something as simple as a meal requires thought and preparation if it's going to be palatable and enjoyable. Every successful endeavor must be preceded by careful planning, hard work, and perseverance. How much more so in the Christian experience?

One of the most exciting things ever to occur in human experience is the latter rain. In the closing hour of history, if we miss out on this, we're also missing out on the seal of God and eternal life.

### I. Rain in ancient Israel

We read in Zechariah 10:1 that the Lord will send "rain in the time of the latter rain." Therefore, by the word "latter," we can infer that there must have also been a similar event preceding it—or in other words—a former rain.

The ancient Israelites lived in an agricultural society where much of their lives depended on crops—and therefore rain. If they were faithful, God promised two main rainfalls. In Deuteronomy 11:13, 14 we read: "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command

you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil."

"Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church."

### II. The former rain

To better understand the latter rain, let's first take a quick look at the former rain, "the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season" (Jeremiah 5:24). Therefore, there must have been a time (season) for the former rain. When was this?

We read that "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain." So, what exactly happened on the day of Pentecost?

We read that the disciples "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). They were actively engaged in prayer and supplication, not only individually, but also collectively. Leaders and lay members alike were seeking God in humility. In Acts 1:23-25 we see that they were an organized group and conducted church business in a systematic, consecrated manner. In Acts 2:1, "they were all with one accord in one place" and then the Holy Ghost came upon them in tremendous measure.

"On this day of divine appointment, the Lord graciously poured out His Spirit on the little company of believers, who were the firstfruits of the Christian church."<sup>3</sup>

This is not necessarily describing a huge church with lots of people, grandiose buildings, or impressive institutions. Rather, Christ looks for those who are sincerely seeking to adhere to the present truth, and who are united in their efforts to serve Him. These are only His firstfruits, which means there are more to come.

### III. The latter rain

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month" (Joel 2:23). In reference to the former rain (also known as the "early" rain) in the days of the early apostles, we read that "the glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost bounds of the inhabited world.... Sinners united with Christians in seeking the pearl of great price. . . . Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of benevolence and love. One interest prevailed. One object swallowed up all others. All hearts beat in harmony. The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character.

and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. [Acts 4:32, 33; 2:47 quoted.] The Spirit of Christ animated the whole congregation; for they had found the pearl of great price.

"These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fullness by the Holy Spirit's power."

"The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character, and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom."

### IV. When is the latter rain to be poured out?

Under the former rain, "hundreds proclaimed the message: 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. The Lord spoke through them; and, wherever they went, the sick were healed, and the poor had the gospel preached unto them.

"So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit.

"To us today, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the Day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word."

### V. It's our duty to ask for it

Seeing that it is time for us to be receiving the latter rain, what is one of our duties in this regard? "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zechariah 10:1). "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:7, 8). "Let Christians . . . ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come."6

"My brethren and sisters, **plead** for the Holy Spirit, God stands back of every promise He has made."

### VI. What is the purpose of the latter rain?

### Understanding the Holy Spirit's work

We know that the latter rain is synonymous with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in fullness. Often, however, people fail to understand how the Holy Spirit is manifested.

"There is danger of those in our ranks making a mistake in regard to receiving the Holy Ghost. Many suppose an emotion or a rapture of feeling to be an evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. There is danger that right sentiments will not be understood, and that Christ's words 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:20) will lose their significance." <sup>8</sup>

So, if evidence of the Holy Spirit is not to be found in a rapture of feeling or emotion, what then **is** the work of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus explained that the Comforter would "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8).

### A. Reproves of sin

"Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy **Spirit...** The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments, and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts."9

### B. Reproves of righteousness

"Ministers and people, if saved at all, must be saved day by day, hour by hour. They must hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ, the illumination of the Holy Spirit." <sup>10</sup>

### C. Reproves of judgment

"The people must be warned to prepare for the coming judgment. And for this purpose God calls for workers who are true and faithful, pure and holy, for those who have felt their own need of the atoning blood of Christ and the sanctifying grace of His Spirit."

### D. Gives power for witnessing

In Matthew 24:14, we read: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). "The message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be **given with greatest power**, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to

will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven. . . .

"As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God's downtrodden law, Satan is astir. **The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it**. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor

to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists

and Protestants unite.
As the movement for
Sunday enforcement
becomes more bold
and decided, the
law will be invoked
against commandment
keepers."12

Is this persecution something we need to be afraid of? "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:10–12).



His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people

### E. What about for us?

"The 'latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and **prepare the saints to stand** in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out" (*Early Writings*, p. 86). But the saints are already called saints,

they are already purified, and able to be entrusted with the last message of mercy to a fallen race. This is not referring to a time for us to be still fixing our own faulty characters which we were too lazy to deal with before. Remember, we read that: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). The Investigative Judgment must take place . . . and probation will close for those who know this message before it does for the rest of the world.

As mentioned, those led by the Holy Spirit have pure consecration and missionary work as the primary aims in life. The apostle Paul is an example of someone who put others first: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8). Why did he do this? "For the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

"The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day."13

"[God] has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry when we come to Him confessing our unworthiness and sin. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word to us."14

### VII. Why have we not received the latter rain vet?

### A. Lack of prior depth of spiritual experience

"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28).

"Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost." 15

### **B.** Being content with mere profession

Jesus asks, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

> their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, 'I believe,' but to practice the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character,

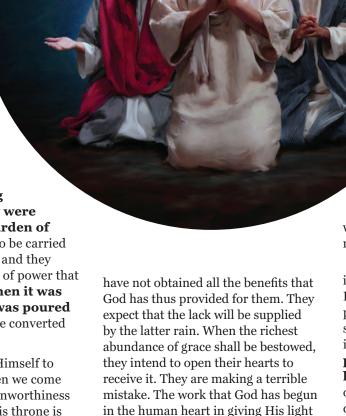
"None can depend upon

that we prove our connection with Him."16

### C. Lack of interest

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John 7:17). We must want to do God's will.

"Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. But the promise is not appreciated as it should be; and therefore its fulfillment is not seen as it might be. The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the



and knowledge must be continually

going forward. Every individual must

divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plenitude."<sup>17</sup>

"If the mind is filled with other things, present truth is shut out, and there is no place in our foreheads for the seal of the living God. I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished and that time can last but a very little longer. What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day." 18

### D. Lacking fruit

"Even so **faith, if it hath not** works, is **dead**, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:17, 18).

"Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works." 19

### E. Unwilling to realize our need

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17).

"Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it

and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father.... I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence."<sup>20</sup>

By confession and forsaking of sin, prayer, and consecration, the disciples prepared for the Holy Spirit.

### F. Iniquity & rebellion

"Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:22-31).

"God wants to put His Spirit upon you, but He cannot do this while you are so full of self." <sup>21</sup>

### G. Lack of consecration

"The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden. What influence would these unconsecrated members have on new converts? Would they not make of no effect the God-given message which His people are to bear?" 22—To be continued.

- $^{1}$  The Faith I Live By, p. 333.
- <sup>2</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 121.
- <sup>3</sup> The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 265.
- <sup>4</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 121.
- <sup>5</sup> Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 20.
- <sup>6</sup> Evangelism, p. 701.
- <sup>7</sup> Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 23.
- 8 Ye Shall Receive Power, p. 327.
- <sup>9</sup> Counsels for the Church, p. 296.
- <sup>10</sup> Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 240.
- <sup>11</sup> The Watchman, June 30, 1908.
- $^{12}$  The Great Controversy, pp. 606, 607.
- <sup>13</sup> Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 21.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- $^{15}$  Testimonies to Ministers, p. 507.
- <sup>16</sup> Counsels for the Church, p. 296.
- $^{17}$  Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 21.
- <sup>18</sup> Early Writings, p. 58.
- <sup>19</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 213, 214.
- <sup>20</sup> Early Writings, p. 71.
- <sup>21</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 11, p. 288.
- <sup>22</sup> Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 371.

### "The Most Precious Message"

### **Seminar on Doctrines**

Porumbacu Campus, Sibiu, Romania

y God's grace, the majority of gospel workers—ministers, elders, Bible workers—of the European Region of our church were present for a seminar on Bible doctrine in Porumbacu, Sibiu, Romania, from October 29—November 4, 2018. During this week we deeply felt the presence and the blessing of God through the topics presented, through the warm brotherly fellowship, and the beautiful natural ambience of the campus which hosted the event.

The theme of the seminar was the very most important subject that should engulf all our attention and interest concerning our salvation, the subject of all subjects: "Christ Our Righteousness," the truth that will prepare a people to be ready for the soon coming of our dear Saviour.

The topics were presented by Br. Davi Paes Silva, the President of the General Conference, and Br. Peter Lausevic, the first Vice President. We were privileged as well with some medical topics presented by Br. Dragan Ivanov, the Medical Missionary Department Director and Br. Emil Barbu, his assistant in this department.

In this seminar, the presentations of Br. Silva were based on the apostle

Paul's letter to Romans—accompanied by the Spirit of Prophecy, in which the inspired Word of God unveils the precious truth of righteousness by faith. Paul declares: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16, 17).

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. He stated his position on the questions which were agitating the Jewish and the Gentile churches, and showed that the hopes and promises which had once belonged especially to the Jews were now offered to the Gentiles also.

"With great clearness and power the apostle presented the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. He hoped that other churches also might be helped by the instruction sent to the Christians at Rome; but how dimly could he foresee the far-reaching influence of his words! Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered

the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace. For the epistle to the church at Rome, every Christian has reason to thank God."

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure."2

Br. Peter Lausevic's presentation, "Married to Christ," brought anew to attention the beautiful biblical comparison between the marriage of a man with his wife and the "marriage" of Christ with the believer. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law.) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ: that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:1-4).

"Every association we form, however limited, exerts some influence upon us. The extent to which we yield to that influence will be determined by the degree of intimacy, the constancy of the intercourse, and our love and veneration for the one with whom we associate."

In the same way the husband becomes one with his wife, sharing the same spirit as they associate together in life, likewise, the more we associate with the "old man"—the desires and inclinations of the flesh—the more we become like it. In contrast, by dying to the claims of the flesh, by crucifying the old man, we resurrect with Jesus in newness of life, ready for the marriage with Him, a marriage that will last throughout eternity. "Thus by acquaintance and association with Christ we may become like Him, the one faultless Example." 4

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). The "new birth" (John 3:3–5) brings us to partake of the divine nature.

In the presentation "What is Righteousness?" was revealed the meaning of righteousness and how it can be achieved and expressed in the Christian's daily experience.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

"The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship." 5

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7). This means to have a character like that of the Lord Jesus.

Beside the spiritual topics, we also enjoyed some very important subjects relating to the medical field, presented by the brethren Dragan Ivanov and Emil Barbu—topics such as "The Open Windows to Heaven," "The Benefits of Autophagy," and "The Resurrection and Reincarnation in the Light of God's Word." As Gospel workers busy serving the people, we have to take care of our own health—a talent so valuable that we should make every effort to ensure that the level of both our spiritual and physical health be as high as possible, and as close as possible to the Lord's will for us!

After the presentations, both spiritual and medical, opportunity was given for written or verbal questions. All of us gained a better understanding of various aspects of the precious truths presented, in a dynamic ambience.

Every morning and evening worship provided a chance for all of the participants to deepen our understanding of the topics of the seminar, as our colleagues, fellow gospel workers of the European Region presented timely meditations from God's Word.

On the weekend, on the Sabbath day, besides the gospel workers present in the Seminar, many other brethren from the neighboring churches, some of them coming from longer distances, came to enjoy the Word of God, the brotherly fellowship, and the praise and experiences program of the afternoon. On Sunday, November 4th, the seminar concluded under the special blessing of the Lord, and the workers left to their respective homes and missionary fields.

We thank the Lord for every moment spent in this seminar, and may He make that everyone present, together with the entire people of God may accept wholeheartedly this all-important message of justification by faith! And under the power of the Holy Spirit may He help us all to proclaim this saving message to all the corners of the world; and when the Lord will come, may He give us the great joy to continue with Him in His holy kingdom forever!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 373, 374.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 91, 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 222, 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 189.



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### Picturing a Goal

By Barbara Montrose

any years ago in England, there was a boy named William Carey. His father was a weaver—but the young son was not well built for that kind of work. So, at age 14, he had to learn

his trade from a cobbler, a person who

mends shoes.

By age 18, William rejoiced in knowing Jesus as his Saviour and tried in many ways to tell his unbelieving boss, Mr. Nichols, about the Lord. It took a long while, but before the older man's death, he finally accepted Jesus into his heart. This victory inspired young William to want to find more souls with whom he could share the Gospel.

Where might these souls be, wondered William....

He decided to make a huge map out of brown paper and pieces of leather and hang it up in his cobbler shop. He studied about the many countries of the world, the number of people in each place, what their life was

like, and what they believed. As he looked at his map, William thought about all the people around the world who did not know Jesus, and he would weep for them.

Years passed before the young cobbler could do much about his goal, but finally, at the age of 32, together with his wife and children, he traveled to India to take the gospel

message to that nation. There in India, for 7 long years, the Careys worked every day to try to win souls to Jesus. It wasn't easy as they saw no fruits from their labor, but they did not give up. ....

> Then at last, someone accepted the message! Soon after, with the help of God, thousands more followed.

How about you? You might have your own wallor at least a notebook-where you can put a picture. What is in your favorite picture? Cars, airplanes, animals or pretty clothes, perhaps? Think of the map that William madeand how it helped him to stay focused and make his life more special. He became famous for his faithfulness as a brave missionary for Christ. He was glad because he was doing

the best work in the world—winning souls for the Lord. His goal can be ours:

"Expect great things from God! Attempt great things for God!"