

the
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To Feed a
Hungry World

“Thus Saith the Lord” | Find Time | The Dignity of Motherhood

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

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counting the cost

Salvation is a human impossibility. None can earn salvation by personal effort. Yet salvation is a free gift from heaven, fully possible for God.

When talking about salvation we must avoid two extremes: 1. Saying that salvation is a path free from difficulties; 2. Saying that the way of salvation is without joy and happiness. Salvation is not an easy process; it has a cost for us. We cannot live for this world and at the same time live a Christian life. Christ was very clear: “You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world” John 16:33 (Contemporary English Version).

In Matthew 7, Christ presented two ways before humanity: the narrow way, which takes us to heaven, and the broad way, which takes us to eternal perdition. He bids us: “Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it” (verses 13, 14). (Holman Bible).

In Luke 14:25–33, Christ presents, in a kind of shocking way, the cost of salvation, the cost of following Him. He says: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (verses 26, 27, Holman Bible).

Is Christ saying that we literally need **to hate** our family so that we can be His disciples? In 1 Timothy 5:8,

we read that “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” In reality, the true Christian believer should be the best, most loving member of the family.

What Christ is revealing in His intentionally shocking statement is that our surrender to Him must be the absolute priority in our life, above earthly family tie—and even above our own life.

He said also: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:24, 25).

When we surrender our life to Christ, we need to count the cost. We shouldn’t expect an easy life, free from duties and responsibilities. Our sinful desires need to be denied. God gives His children a cross to destroy pride, selfishness, covetousness, sinful pleasures, perverted appetites and corrupt passions.

Complete surrender and submission from our part to the Lord involves complete separation from sin and from wrong habits and practices. The apostle urges us to “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).

“Paul had a keen sense of the conflict which every soul must wage with the agencies of evil that are continually seeking to deceive

and ensnare, and he had worked untiringly to strengthen and confirm those who were young in the faith. He had entreated them to make an entire surrender to God; for he knew that when the soul fails to make this surrender, then sin is not forsaken, the appetites and passions still strive for the mastery, and temptations confuse the conscience.

“The surrender must be complete. Every weak, doubting, struggling soul who yields fully to the Lord is placed in direct touch with agencies that enable him to overcome. Heaven is near to him, and he has the support and help of angels of mercy in every time of trial and need.”¹

As we thus surrender, “the refining influence of the grace of God changes the natural disposition of man. Heaven would not be desirable to the carnal-minded; their natural, unsanctified hearts would feel no attraction toward that pure and holy place, and if it were possible for them to enter, they would find there nothing congenial. The propensities that control the natural heart must be subdued by the grace of Christ before fallen man is fitted to enter heaven and enjoy the society of the pure, holy angels. When man dies to sin and is quickened to new life in Christ, divine love fills his heart; his understanding is sanctified; he drinks from an inexhaustible fountain of joy and knowledge, and the light of an eternal day shines upon his path, for with him continually is the Light of life.”² *R*

References

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 298, 299.

² *Ibid.*, p. 273.

t o f e e d a



What are your top three concerns about the world around you? What if the friend that spoke to you about his or her fears for the future suddenly committed suicide the following week? What if your neighbor from across the road is constantly subjected to discrimination because of skin color or ethnic background? According to the 2017 Australian Youth Survey, the top three concerns that Australian youth between the ages of 15–24 have are:

- Mental Health 33.7%
- Alcohol and drugs 32%
- Equity and discrimination 27.3%

The survey mentioned that more than 2x the proportion of young females than young males indicated that mental health was a barrier to their post-school goals. These have been perceived as the largest problems the youth in Australia are facing today. However, they can apply to any country. Do we care enough to see that these concerns will not go away unless we are prepared to find solutions and treat them for what they are—critical, and for many Christian youth, thieves robbing one of salvation? Do we feel

that it is not only in our power but actually our responsibility to relieve suffering in the world we live in? Each year, these concerns take the lives of youth between the ages of 15–24 every day. It becomes more and more difficult to discover what our society truly needs in order to be healed and restored.

Blessed are they...

During the time that Jesus was alive on the earth, He was very outspoken against the injustices that were occurring around Him. In His denunciations of the hypocrisy of Israel’s leaders, He put it very clearly when he said to them “*Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*” (Matthew 23:24). The Jews had a law that forbade the eating of any creeping thing.... These men would not dare to neglect to pay the tithe of mint, anise, and cumin, and such like herbs and seeds. Yet their conscience did not seem to require the doing of justice, showing mercy to others, or exercising faith in God and love toward Him.

Christ could see that there were others that were hungry for solutions

both to their own problems and those of their society. There were people who were outraged and appalled at the injustices occurring around them. To those who were searching for truth and justice, the Lord pronounced a special blessing, “**Blessed** are they which do **hunger and thirst after righteousness**: for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6) Instead of starting a revolution, instead of becoming the poster boy for freedom from the Romans, Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of God and thereby freedom, had come to the world. Not by setting up a perfect world government then, but by reaching the individual at a heart level. So where did Jesus see the root of all problems? “All true obedience comes from the heart. **It was heart work with Christ**. And if we consent, He will so blend our hearts and minds in conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses”¹

If Jesus is working on our hearts, then He is working to implant principles of living that will govern our actions and impulses in the right channel as well. What principles did Jesus Himself live by in order to

If the kingdom of God has power, then it has great active force to make a “visible” change.

relieve suffering in the world? The book of Luke paints the most beautiful description of Jesus’ mission on this earth. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to **preach the gospel to the poor**; he hath sent me to **heal the brokenhearted**, to preach **deliverance to the captives**, and **recovering of sight to the blind**, to **set at liberty them that are bruised**” (Luke 4:18).

Doesn’t that seem like a comprehensive way to solve the world’s problems? I believe so. In fact, based on what was brought out in the Australian survey mentioned earlier, Jesus’ mission actually serves each one of those areas that are major concerns.

Here is a quick recap:

- Mental Health 33.7%
- Alcohol and drugs 32%
- Equity and discrimination 27.3%

How does Jesus’ mission serve each of those areas—and how is it occurring today? If we acknowledge that what we need is more truth in the world, then our search for righteousness and justice would begin there. So, what is truth? Jesus Himself answered that question for us when He said, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”. (John 14:6). Could it be that the solution to the world’s problems is not only the knowledge we seek but instead a divine Person, wholly committed to the cause of restoring this world and bringing true freedom?

The value of truth

So, what makes truth valuable? In July 2015, a young woman living under the ISIS regime in Raqqa was

murdered for telling the truth about life under the regime. Countless others have given their lives for speaking the truth in situations and places where it would mean pain, torture and even loss of life (Revelation 6:9). We understand something is valuable because someone was willing to give up something for it—something that is usually called sacrifice. What could be the highest price anyone could pay? It is when they pay for it with their lives. Proverbs 23:23 says “**Buy the truth, and sell it not**; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” Truth comes at a cost. What price was paid in order to have the Truth come into our world?

Jesus revealed in Scripture

I love reading. As a child and later a teenager, I remember spending hours poring over books, reading deep into the night and losing all sense of what was going on around me because of the riveting story that was in my hands. It was as if the characters and their feelings, scenery and activity all leaped out of the page and surrounded me. I wasn’t just reading a book, I was **in** the book! That might be a little spooky if you are not really into reading, but I am sure many of you can relate. This is one of the reasons that I find it fascinating when I read about another story where the main character leaped out of the page and became a real person. This person was Jesus. In Revelation 19:13, a name is mentioned that implies this leaping out of the page, this name is “**The Word** of God.” Looking a little deeper into the Bible itself reveals who this “Word of God” is and where it came from. John 1:1 says “In the beginning **was the Word**, and the **Word was**

with God, and the Word was God.” In other words, this “Word of God” was not just words sitting on a page but a divine person, Jesus Christ. When you read further about what this Word did, it becomes clear that the Word of God did something that affected us deeply and personally. John 1:14 says that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and **we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,**) full of grace and truth.”

This word of God, which was with God and was God also was made flesh (or human) and lived among us! The words on the page leaped out and became real and living flesh to us. This was not like the characters in the stories I read that became alive in my imagination but actually one that walked right out of the page and became my Saviour.

Mission and purpose

What was Jesus’ mission while on earth? “**I have glorified thee on the earth**: I have **finished the work** which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). Clearly Jesus was not just paying us a visit; He came with a specific purpose to do something. What was He to do? He declared, I have “**manifested thy name unto the men** which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” Jesus’ mission was to glorify God in heaven and to show His name and to finish the work. What was God’s name that Jesus was to manifest to the world? The story goes that Moses wanted to see God’s glory. Instead of showing him His glory, because no sinful human could behold the glory of God and live, God instead proclaimed His name to Moses.

Transforming power, love and a new life await all who will invite Jesus into their heart.

When we read what this name was, we see that it reveals God's attributes as well, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abundant in goodness and truth**" (Exodus 34:6). Since we are speaking of finding truth, we see that God Himself possesses the trait of goodness and ... truth. Jesus came to supply us with what we desire most in this world before we even knew that we were going to begin looking! In a quest for truth and justice, things tend to come around full circle and point to one who actually has truth as part of their name. So, if God is truth, as well as love, justice and mercy, what is Jesus? Jesus said "**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**" (John 14:6). In other words, the truth we seek is Jesus. And where can we find both truth and Jesus? Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth**" (John 17:17).

True freedom

The Bible itself contains the words that lead us to the giver of true freedom. How do we know that we receive true Freedom in Jesus? "And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free** (John 8:32). As a child I used to long for true freedom. Freedom to stay up until whatever time I wanted, the freedom to eat whatever I wanted and the freedom to choose to play over study and chores. However, as I grew older, I quickly discovered that complete freedom to just do whatever I desired for as long as I wanted did

not always equal to happiness and fulfillment. More often than not, it ended up leaving a dissatisfied, restless feeling within and a big hole in the heart. It was out of this gaping hole, this dissatisfaction from a perfectly normal life I was leading, that put me on the start of a quest for Jesus.

One day of light vs. one day of evil

Understanding that the Word of God is actually Jesus in the flesh and that Jesus is every part of truth that we need, makes it so much easier to understand why the world needs Jesus. He is not something that I use once and then discard; He is not a band-aid for my problems or a crutch. Jesus is not someone that I go to only at Easter or once a week to meet at church. If we can see that a world without truth even for one day equals to chaos, death and darkness (1 John 1:8) then we can also see that a world with Christ even for one day equals to progress, order, light and life (Psalm 33:4). Following this light leads us out of the abyss that we find ourselves in and also gives us the freedom to live fearlessly and genuinely. If we search for purity of life and true security, then we need look no further than the Bible. "**Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.** (Proverbs 30:5). How does finding truth bring us to more truth? John 3:21 says that "**he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in**

God." If we are genuinely seeking to find truth, then the closer we look into the Word of God, the more we begin to see about ourselves. We begin to see the web of lies that have been taking shape in our lives and by Jesus' blood we can be cleansed from those lies and be set straight on the path that God has for us.

The power of truth

How does this happen, though? How does Jesus reshape our paradigm of truth? When Jesus was on earth, He preached that the kingdom of God was within us: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you**" (Luke 17:21). What did He mean by this?

God's kingdom is described as having power (1 Corinthians 4:20). We understand the word "power" by the effect that can be seen as a result of it. If we say that there was a powerful storm, we understand that it had much force and even great potential for destruction. If we say that a monarch, president or ruler is powerful, then we understand that that person in power has the ability to make things happen. If the kingdom of God has power, then it has great active force to make a "visible" change. When was this visible change first made? Hebrews 11:3 takes us back to the beginning "Through faith we understand that **the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Quite**

simply, it is speaking of power that can create worlds! How was our own world created? With nothing more than the word of God!

Psalms 33:6 confirms this saying “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”

This is where the power of the truth lies. Truth is powerful, because it can literally and quickly produce massive changes. This is the reason that truth has been deemed as “dangerous” by those who wished to control others through fear and lies. Another way that we can see the power in the word of God is because of the instantaneous way in which He as the Creator can make things appear. God said “Let there be light”—and guess what? There was light! No waiting time, no need for millions of years to pass before it actually happened. If it would take that long, then it would not be so powerful. But many times, we do not get to see the power of the word as we should, why is this? Jesus Himself said that if He would be uplifted on the cross, He would draw all the people on the earth to Himself (John 12:32). But why has this not happened? Did this mean that Jesus would accomplish this through wielding His power and commanding all to follow Him and accept Him? Of course not. The biggest underlying principle of God’s kingdom is compacted into one small, four letter word: Love. So small and yet so powerful. It is out of this deep, and unconditional love that God seeks to create in us something new. This is how we can see the power of God in the world today. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17) How does a person become new? God describes His miraculous power in the assurance: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Conclusion

What is it that the world perceives that youth need today, right now?

Solution presented in the article

- Opportunities to re-engage with education
- Effective career guidance and support to overcome barriers to employment
- Age appropriate mental health supports and drug and alcohol programs
- Safe and affordable accommodation
- Wraparound holistic support services

Solutions presented in Jesus

- John 1:12 “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”
- Mathew 11:29 “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;
- Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”
- Luke 4:18 “Preach the gospel to the poor;... “heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”
- John 14:2 “In my Father’s house are many mansions.”
- Galatians 5:13 “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; but by love serve one another.”

In the quest for truth and justice, there is no place for middle grounders or fence sitters. There is no place for those who say they look for truth but are too lazy or unbelieving to go the whole way. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John 1:6).

Have you ever started out on a trip to go shopping but then stopped halfway because you couldn’t see what was around the bend before you were actually there at the shop? Of course not! The goal is to get to the shops and it would be ridiculous to not go around the bend simply because you cannot see what is behind it before you get there. If you are following a map, then you are taking it on faith that there is an intersection marked exactly where it says it will be. Once you round the bend and you see the intersection, it strengthens your faith in the map, and the next time, you are more likely to follow it. The Word of God works in a similar way. We read in the Word of God “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and **he shall direct thy paths**” (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

God is more than willing to help us. He has given us His own Son, full of power and truth to keep us on the path of truth and righteousness. What has God pledged Himself to do for us? “**And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight**” (Isaiah 42:16). He has promised to bring light to those in darkness and open the eyes of the blind. These are not the words of a loser or a failure. These are the words of a conqueror—a warrior! One who is absolutely confident that they can and are able to change your life beyond your wildest dreams!

Our world is hungry, hungry for truth, love, justice and something that actually works! Don’t you want something that actually works for a change? Something that is real, truthful and centered on true, outflowing love? If you do, then there is no time to lose. Transforming power, love and a new life await for all those who will ask Jesus into their hearts, so prepare to see changes in your life and in those around you! *R*

References

¹ *In Heavenly Places*, p. 448.

“thus saith THE LORD”

Studying, understanding, and practicing the principles of God’s Word are the essential pillars of a healthy Christian life. We are not talking about just reading the Bible but rather **studying** it deeply under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The second pillar is **understanding** the Bible. Since the scriptures were written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit, we need to be under the control of the same Spirit to understand it. Besides this principle, we need to follow other steps to enjoy the blessings of God’s Word.

I remember a crisis we went through in our church in the 1970’s, when a large group of young people took the initiative to attend universities. There was a group of brethren who fought hard against that plan, and one good brother quoted a mistranslated Bible verse to support his argument. That wrong translation of Romans 12:3 said that “we don’t need to know more than what is necessary.” The right translation says: “For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he should think.**”

This is just an example of the problems faced with some Bible translations. That is the reason why we need to compare different versions of the Bible to have a clear understanding of the Word of God.

In Romans 12:19, we find another example: Most of the Bible versions quote this verse this way: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*” (King James Version).

Our safety is found in the study of and obedience to the Word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but **leave it to the wrath of God**; for it is written...”* (Revised Standard Version).

*“Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: **stand back and let God punish if He will**”* (Phillips).

*“My dear friends, do not seek vengeance, **but leave a place for divine retribution**”* (New English Bible).

These differences in Bible versions also affect very important and even fundamental doctrines.

For instance, in Philippians 2:5, 6, we find:

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being **in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.**”* (King James Version).

*“Let Christ Jesus be your example as to what your attitude should be. For He, **who had always been God by nature**, did not cling to His prerogatives as God’s equal.”* (Phillips).

Let us consider Revelation 3:14:

*“Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning of the creation of God**”* (King James Version).

*“To the angel of the Church at Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the prime source of all God’s creation**”* (New English Bible).

A right interpretation of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy

When Christ faced the fiercest temptation from Satan, His victory was based on His infallible weapon, “It is written.” On the other hand, Satan also made use of this weapon, but only perverting it.

Today we are facing an identical situation. From time to time some perhaps well-intentioned person or a group comes with messages based only on human opinion, interpretation, or tradition to call sympathizers after them.

In this kind of work, those involved in false teachings misuse the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and we should be very well guarded among these attacks.

During His face-to-face struggles against Satan, the archenemy challenged Christ to transform stones into bread. Christ refused to use His divinity to save Himself from trials. Even though He was and still is fully divine, He came as the Son of man to give a perfect example of submission and obedience to the revealed will of God. If He would have used His divinity to save Himself, He couldn’t be our example. His answer to the tempter was: “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

In his second temptation, Satan used an isolated Bible verse out of context to seduce Christ to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. When we use an inspired quotation out of context from the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy, we are using a satanic method.

Regarding the words of inspiration, we face different problems: From time to time we face some people using an isolated Bible verse or paragraph from the Spirit of Prophecy trying to establish a false doctrine. Even words

that were never spoken by the Lord in the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy are quoted in the name of the Lord.

Some years ago, I was invited to preach at a large gathering, and I had forgotten all my neckties at home. Then a friend offered me his available tie, which happened to be red, and I used it during the divine service. After finishing the message, one very zealous sister came to me with a question: “Brother Silva, do you know that Sister White wrote against the use of red ties?” My reply: “Could you show me in her writings where it speaks against red ties?” The sister said to me: “I don’t know the source, but she wrote it.” And she left.

Many times, we used to preach that “the last work of Jesus in the most holy place would be answering the prayers of mothers in behalf of the wayward children.” Once, when I was preparing a sermon about the work of intercession of Christ, I tried to find that quotation, and to my dismay, I concluded that that quotation simply doesn’t exist. What a disappointment! The quotation had been published in Portuguese, mentioning the source in English. Yet it was just a fake quotation.

Besides using only “it is written,” we need to use the Word of God in an honest and proper way.

To understand the Bible, we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and willingness to do God’s will (John 7:17). The Bible explains itself. When studying one doctrine, we need to search in the entire Bible those verses which talk about that subject. It is very risky to take an isolated verse and come to a hasty conclusion based on that verse alone. We need to compare it with other verses that relates to it.

From understanding to practice

The Bible reveals two fundamental truths: Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation, which includes obedience to the divine Law. By the way, the whole Bible is an amplification of God's Law. The essential points for our salvation are: 1. Believing in Jesus as our personal Savior; 2. Obeying God's Law.

If we study the Bible considering these two essential points, we will be on the right track to understanding God's Word (see Isaiah 8:20).

"The questions that most concern us are, Do I believe with saving faith on the Son of God? Is my life in harmony with the divine law? 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.' 'And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.' John 3:36; 1 John 2:3."¹

When Christ occupies the center of our studies and investigation of the Scripture, we find the right way to interpret the Bible. When we study prophecies, Christ must be in the center of that interpretation. Otherwise, we will come to wrong results.

The same principles of interpretation are applicable to the Spirit of Prophecy.

We should focus our attention on central issues. This way leads to an accurate understanding of the message.

We need to emphasize subjects of major importance. Ellen White wrote that "the enemy of our work is pleased when a subject of minor importance can be used to divert the minds of our brethren from the great questions that should be the burden of our message."²

We need to study all available information on a topic. Like the Bible, also in the Spirit of Prophecy we cannot establish a doctrinal point based on an isolated quotation.

We need to avoid extreme interpretations. Like the Bible, the

Spirit of Prophecy is very balanced. For instance: Ellen White says that we cannot be saved by works, but we cannot be saved without works as well. We are not saved by our obedience, but we cannot be saved without obedience.

We need to take time and place into consideration. "Regarding the testimonies," Ellen White wrote, "nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered."³

We need to find the underlying principles. At the turn of the twentieth century Ellen White wrote: "If girls ... could learn to harness and drive a horse"⁴ That was practiced in her



day but is not of much use today. However, the principle undergirding that counsel is very important today. That is, young women should be self-sufficient in regard to transportation. Thus, in our day they should be able to drive a car and change a tire.

We should avoid making the inspired writings prove things they were never intended to prove. When we try to prove our own points and use EGW writings to confirm our position, we commit serious mistakes that create big problems for the church, and many souls are deceived.

We need to be sure that Sis. White actually said it. Many statements are attributed to Ellen G. White that she

never made. The only safe course is to utilize those statements that can be found in her published works. "And now to all who have a desire for truth I would say: Do not give credence to unauthenticated reports as to what Sister White has done or said or written. If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works. Are there any points of interest concerning which she has not written, do not eagerly catch up and report rumors as to what she has said."⁵

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10, last part. The expression "Spirit of Prophecy" is applied to the Bible and to the inspired writings of Ellen G. White.

In our journey to heaven, our safety is found in the study and obedience to the Word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, without preconceived ideas. When we quote God's Word, either the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy, we should be sure that the Lord really said that.

Said the apostle John in Revelation 22:18, 19: "I testify to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, written in this book" (Holman CSB). *R*

References

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 396.

² *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 164, 165.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴ *Education*, pp. 216, 217.

⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 696.

A TIMELY MESSAGE

from the pen of ellen g. white

Our duties and obligations

A great work is to be done in a short time. There is power in the present truth; but Satan is working in every conceivable way to keep the light away from the people. The controversy between Christ and Satan is not yet ended. The latter is constantly seeking to establish his own power and authority. If he can entangle minds, he will do it. If he can lead them to depend on human beings instead of upon the living God, he is well pleased. The deceptions of Satan are manifold, but the Lord will be our helper if we seek Him earnestly. . . .

How is it, brethren? Have you not been giving up to self-indulgence, rather than growing into greater self-denial? Have you not backslidden upon health reform? Has the light which God has been pleased to give His people been cherished? Have not life and health been sacrificed through the indulgence of appetite and carnal lusts? Will my brethren consider this matter carefully, and see if they have closely followed the self-denying Saviour?

There has been a great departure from God in this matter. There has been a loss of zeal for the truth, and the light contained in the "Testimonies" has been disregarded. May the Lord help you, my brethren, to come into a position where the

animal powers will not predominate over the moral and the spiritual. May your eyes not be blinded by self-indulgence, so that you cannot discern between the sacred and the common. God forbid that the precious truth should be held in unrighteousness, and that you should dishonor God and the truth by a corrupt and unconsecrated life. Study your true position before God. At this time, when the prayers of faith should be going up to God, you are not ready to lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Have you not a work to do, to seek the Lord with humiliation of soul, with fasting and prayer? Is it not time, high time, for you to awake out of sleep, and shake off this carnal security? "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him



while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6). This privilege will not always be granted us, therefore we should make diligent use of our present opportunities. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (verse 7). Then make no delay. The gracious promise is yours today. Set your heart and house in order. God sees the defects in your character, and He desires that you should see them, and feel your great need of the help which He alone can give. . . .

Eternity demands of you individually a solid experience, such as will stand the test; and it is in this probationary period that you must obtain thorough transformation of character. Pure and undefiled religion is to be brought into the sanctuary of the soul. Each has a work to do, and no friend or minister can do it for him; each must repent for himself, and confess his sins to God. Make thorough work of it. Believe for yourself; have the grace of God in your heart for yourself. God will have His true, faithful witnesses in every walk of life, testifying to the power of His grace. They may be humble, but they will be living in the sunshine of God’s countenance, with the Bible as their guide.

See, O see, where your duties have been neglected, and where you have given an example to both believers and unbelievers which would lead them away from God, away from righteousness and the spirit of the truth. Jesus would have men come to Him, trust in Him, rely upon Him, and have their experience founded upon Him alone. Light and counsel have been sought of human beings who

were as much in the dark and as far from living in the favor of God as were those who looked to them for aid, and therefore could not give the help sought. The result has been just what might have been expected—counsel tainted with human weakness and defects. God has been dishonored, and souls have been robbed of that grace and light which Jesus is ever ready to impart to all who would seek His face. We have been interweaving with our experiences more and more of human appliances and human aids, and have sought less and less divine counsel, until our work is marked with grave defects, and is destitute of divine power.

Another grievous sin existing in our midst, is self-sufficiency—Pharisaism—feeling that we are righteous, and all our acts are meritorious, when we are far from cherishing the right spirit toward God or toward our brethren. It is a spirit of wanting to be first. Self-esteem has been cherished, and you have had a spirit of criticism toward others because you were not first. Envy, jealousy, suspicion, fault-finding, and false witnessing have existed. There are unconsecrated hearts among you, who turn everything said or done, even under the special direction of God, in a wrong way. The power of Satan’s temptations is strong upon these, and they view things in a perverted light. They please the enemy by their criticisms, and by making a man an offender for a word. In many of these cases that are criticized there is no actual sin; the suspicion is the result of the condition of the mind that entertains it. If one crosses their path, they have no unity or fellowship with him. They feel disgusted with all he may say or do. Those who have

confidence in them share their feelings and sentiments. A spirit of retaliation is secretly at work; yet those who are thus creating disaffection and disunion, and planting the seeds of jealousy, all the while claim to be firm believers in the truth. Such do not practice the spirit of the truth. The leaven of their evil surmisings permeates the company where it exists, and God is dishonored, the principles of truth are degraded, and the Christian experience is marred and dwarfed.

Now, is it not high time to change this order of things, and seek true repentance. This unsanctified element has weakened the church, and given a large place to the devil. Is not this something to repent of, something to bring us to the foot of the cross in deepest humiliation, until Jesus shall be found of us, and be chosen as our guide, our counselor, our Alpha and Omega? He is the Rock that is higher than we. He is our sun and our shield. He is our life, our wisdom. It is through His righteousness that we are saved, and his truth, as an abiding principle in the soul, sanctifies the man. But there is hope for the erring; it is not too late for wrongs to be righted.

The psalmist inquires, “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor” (Psalm 15:1–3). Then should we not fear to be found sowing seeds of distrust, of jealousy, and of envy? Shall we not be afraid to transgress the word of God?

“It is in this probationary period that you must obtain thorough transformation of character.”



“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:30–32). What an appeal is this! and we should heed it if we expect the forgiveness of God for our sins. We must have the mind of Christ, and forgive just as freely the sins of others. . . .

“Will you not, my brethren, examine yourselves, to see if there are not humble confessions to be made of evil surmising—watching for evil, thinking evil, and talking evil—for if these things are cherished, God cannot bless you. All this must be put out of the heart. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The

effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (verse 20). . . .

Our missionary efforts must not be limited by lack of means. The calls for help in new fields should arouse us to do something, and to do it now. Shall we let home and foreign missions suffer through selfishness and covetousness? It is possible to confess Christ with our lips, while in works we deny Him.

There are brethren who have little of this world’s goods, yet are ever ready with their donations. These poor men, believing the truth, and acting out their faith, may be looked upon by the more wealthy as deficient in worldly wisdom, and of

no special worth; yet God calls them rich, because as fast as money comes into their hands, they send it before them to the bank of heaven, where it is placed to their account. Such are precious in the sight of the Lord. Although they are not increasing in earthly possessions, they are laying up an incorruptible treasure in heaven. They show a wisdom as far superior to that manifested by the worldly-wise, acquisitive ones, as the divine and God like is superior to the earthly. It is moral worth that God values. A God fearing, Christian man, free from selfishness and avarice, possessing meekness and humility, is more precious in the sight of God than the gold of Ophir. Wealthy men will be tested more closely than they have ever yet been tested. If they endure the test, overcoming the blemishes of their characters, and as faithful stewards, obey the injunctions of Christ to render to the Lord His own, then they show that they have a sense

"The experience of God's commandment-keeping people now should correspond with the events that are crowding around us."

of the high claims of God upon them. But if they fail to do this, and invest the heaven lent treasures in earthly things, they are robbing God.

There are missionaries to be sent out to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. God calls for men and women to come to the front, and enlist in the various branches of the work. Awake, and see what can be done right around you for the Master. Error and sin are prevailing to an alarming extent close by you. Lay aside all romantic imaginings and castlebuilding. The Master calls you to meet the stern realities of the time in which we live. Christ says, "Without me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Begin in your own neighborhood, and strive judiciously to inculcate ideas of the truth, so that the contrast between truth and error may be seen. Sow gospel truth all around you, for each truth practiced and taught is a power which will live and accomplish a work as far-reaching as eternity.¹

The present crisis

We feel deeply over the present state of the church whose members have long possessed a knowledge of those events which are to transpire near the close of time in fulfillment of prophetic history. Christ is coming in power and great glory, and the dead are to be "judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12). The One who has stood as our intercessor; who hears all penitential prayers and confessions; who is represented with a rainbow, the

symbol of grace and love, encircling His head, is soon to cease His work in the heavenly sanctuary. Grace and mercy will then descend from the throne, and justice will take their place. He for whom His people have looked will assume His right—the office of Supreme Judge. . . .

The signs are fulfilling—nation rising against nation, startling calamities by land and by sea, famine, pestilence, fearful storms, sweeping floods, and great conflagrations. All these testify that we are approaching the grand consummation. The cry going up to God from the waiting ones, will not be in vain. The response will come, "It is done." "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still; . . . he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 21:6; 22:11). Can the church contemplate this hour with calm indifference?

The crisis is now upon us. The battle is to be waged between the Christianity of the Bible and the Christianity of human tradition. Is there not a criminal neglect in our present sleepy condition? . . .

Prophecy represents Protestantism as having lamb-like horns, but speaking like a dragon. Already we are beginning to hear the voice of the dragon. There is a satanic force propelling the Sunday movement, but it is concealed. Even the men who are engaged in the work, are themselves blinded to the results which will follow their movement. Let not the commandment-keeping people of God be silent at this time, as though we gracefully accepted the situation. There is the prospect before us, of

waging a continuous war, at the risk of imprisonment, of losing property and even life itself, to defend the law of God, which is being made void by the laws of men. This Bible text will be quoted to us, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. . . . The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1).

When the disciples preached Christ and him crucified, after his resurrection, the authorities commanded them not to speak any more nor to teach in the name of Jesus. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19, 20). They continued to preach Jesus and Him crucified, and afterward raised from the dead. . . .

O, do not sleep now, and in your inactivity feel that you are doing the will of God! The experience of God's commandment-keeping people now should correspond with the events that are crowding upon us.

It should be the business of all the righteous in the land, as they see signs of the approach of peril, to arouse to action, and not sit in calm expectation of ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that this work must go on, because prophecy has foretold it, and that the Lord will shelter His people in the day of trial. Effectual, fervent prayers should be ascending to Heaven, that this calamity may be deferred; for we are not ready to meet it.

Every passing hour now is one of activity in the heavenly courts, to

make ready a people upon the earth to act a part in the great scenes that are soon to open upon us. These transient moments, that seem of so little value to us, are weighty with eternal interests. They are molding the destiny of souls for everlasting life or everlasting death. The words we utter today in the ears of the people, the works we are doing, the spirit of the message we are bearing, will be to human souls the savor of life unto life or of death unto death. We must be washing our robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. If we would be saints above, we must first be saints below.

We have lost much time in inaction, because we have not realized the time in which we are living. This we deplore, and would humble our souls before God, pleading with him for pardon for sleeping at our post of duty, and allowing the enemy to gain the advantage over us. Many have chosen to do nothing, when they should have been diligent to repulse the enemy. Let your services now be dedicated to God. Gird on the armor for vigorous work, saying, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

It is essential that we be much in prayer to God, that his voice and his power may be manifested in behalf of his people, and that the angels may hold the four winds until the truth is more fully proclaimed, and the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. God is not pleased with the attitude of His people. Satan is taking the world captive, and the sentinels for God and the truth are letting him do it. "Watch then, stand fast in the

faith, quit you like men, be strong." Arouse, and come to the front. Be staunch to defend your religious liberty.

Many of our people are registered in the books of heaven as slothful servants. They have buried their talents of money and capability in the world, and the work they should have done has been left undone. Some to whom the Lord has entrusted means, have been ease-lovers, and have not done their duty in the fear



and love of God. Many have left the smaller churches, to unite with larger ones, where they carry no burden of responsibility, and are only in the way. Such lose their spirituality and vital force, because they do comparatively nothing for the truth. What account will these have to give to the Master when He shall say, "Give account of thy stewardship"? . . .

Every true child of God should now

be inquiring, "What wouldst thou have me to do?" Brethren, for Christ's sake, do something, and do it now. Satanic influences are all around us, to be met and resisted. The tares are mingled with the wheat, error with truth, coldness with zeal, darkness with light. There must be a returning to our first love. We must battle nobly with tribulation and danger, in the midst of trials, tests, and provings of God. We must be rich in faith and good works. The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to those who have been made the repository of rich truth.

This church is distinguished in prophecy by its great profession of advanced light; yet it was filled with spiritual pride and lukewarmness in religion. They had a religious theory, but were greatly lacking in moral power and holiness. They are pronounced wretched, poor, blind, and naked. O that our people would realize the danger, and heed the counsel of the True Witness, "Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; . . . and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18).

Will we now, who have such great light, make some sacrifice for Jesus, who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich? We must arouse, and through piety and earnest work for the Master, partake of His spirit of love for souls, of faith in God, that He may work with us, by us, and through us.² *R*

References

- ¹ *The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888.
² *Ibid.*, January 1, 1889.

Preparing for the

LATTER RAIN

part 2 of 2

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

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).

I. Who receives the latter rain?

A. Those who have the seal of the living God

What is this seal? “... the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved.”¹

B. How does the sealing process occur?

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but

fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the





charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. **Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain,** and thus be fitted for translation.”²

C. What are some factors we need to realize about the importance of this?

1. **“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.”**³

2. “Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were **no longer striving for the highest place**, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord.”⁴

3. “The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it, and the use we shall make of the light and knowledge that shall be given to us.”⁵

D. How can we be prepared to receive the Latter Rain?

1. We must be living up to the light we already have

“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). We are bidden to **“grow in grace**, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

“Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily **advancing in** the exemplification of the **active Christian virtues**, we

shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.”⁶

2. We must not have guile in our mouths

John the Revelator declares: “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:1, 5).

What Bible story immediately comes to mind when we think of beguilement? “And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he [Jacob] said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou **beguiled** me?” (Genesis 29:25).

Laban caused Jacob to think one thing and then switched the person for the sibling. The Bible says that Leah was tender-eyed, while Rachel was well-favored. This wasn’t simply about good looks. Rather, it was about a personality. I get the impression that Rachel was more of the proactive, leading type. After all, she was the one who had been out tending Laban’s flocks. In any case, she was the one to whom Jacob had become attracted over the years. Laban had previously seemed to encourage the prospect was not honest with Jacob about the political excuse he was coming up with to try to justify the substitution.

The book *Patriarchs and Prophets* states the following: “...Laban, desiring to retain so valuable a helper, practiced a **cruel deception** in substituting Leah for Rachel.”⁷

How would you feel if you were Jacob and someone did that to you? This is what guile does.

“Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and **in whose spirit there is no guile.**” (Psalm 32:2). We can’t even have guile in our mind/spirit if we want to be sealed.

3. We must be overcomers

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15–17).

“The evils condemned in God’s word, must be overcome. You must individually battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.”⁸

John the Revelator was asked, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? ‘And I said unto him, Sir, thou

knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, **and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb**” (Revelation 7:13, 14).

“Those only who have partaken of the sufferings of the Son of God, and have come up through great tribulation, and have **washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb**, can enjoy the indescribable glory and unsurpassed beauty of heaven.”⁹

E. How do we overcome?

1. Repent and be converted

The True Witness appeals to us: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and

repent” (Revelation 3:19). “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, NKJV).

“Genuine conversion is needed ... ‘casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’ Into this work every individual needs to put all the intensity of his entire being. Personal religious experience is needed in every church. Why?—Because those who are not under the working of the Holy Spirit will not stand amid the perils of the last days.”¹⁰

“Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he



will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hosea 6:1–3).

2. Believe

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5:1, 4).

“Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)

“Be cheerful, and bid adieu to gloom and doubts. In indulging these doubts, you dishonor God. There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy. **Believe, believe! my soul says, believe. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to His trust. He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him who hath loved you.**”¹¹

3. Pray

The apostle Paul admonishes us: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

When Christ was in Gethsemane before His betrayal and crucifixion, He instructed the disciples to be watching and praying: “And said unto them, Why sleep ye? **rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation**” (Luke 22:46).

“Prayer unites us with one another and with God. **Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.** Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.”¹²

4. Look unto Jesus

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and

is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

“When one turns away from human imperfections to behold Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in the character. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image. Then let it be your effort to lift up Jesus. Let the mind’s eye be directed to ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29.”¹³

5. Abide in Christ

The Lord explains, “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:4).

This is how Christ overcame. He said, “I do nothing of myself” (John 8:28), but “My Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John 14:10).

6. Have faith that works by love

What is our key to victory? Let’s open to 1 John 5:4: “And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). What kind of faith? Galatians 5:6 speaks about that “faith which worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6).

“All should have a living faith,—a faith which works by love, and purifies the soul.”¹⁴

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 John 5:3).

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21).

Christ promises, “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

7. Exercise constant, persevering effort

“**Be ye doers of the word,** and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (James 1:22).

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12, 13).

“**It will cost us an effort to secure eternal life. It is only by long and persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall be overcomers.**

But if we patiently and determinedly, in the name of the Conqueror who overcame in our behalf in the wilderness of temptation, overcome as he overcame, we shall have the eternal reward. Our efforts, our self-denial, our perseverance, must be proportionate to the infinitive value of the object of which we are in pursuit.... Wrongs cannot be righted, nor reformations in character made, by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Sanctification is not a work of a day or a year, but of a lifetime. Without continual efforts and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor’s crown.... You have need of constant watchfulness, lest Satan beguile you through his subtlety, corrupt your minds, and lead you into inconsistencies and gross darkness. Your watchfulness should be characterized by a spirit of humble dependence upon God. It should not be carried on with a proud, self-reliant spirit, but with a deep sense of your personal weakness, and a childlike trust in the promises of God.”¹⁵

8. Work for others

“And the lord said unto the servant, **Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in,** that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

“**While hungering and thirsting after salvation yourselves, you will have a longing desire to aid in saving precious souls;** and your humble, pathetic appeals to those out of Christ will move hearts. You should carry the truth to homes. Show those in

error that you love them. Indifference here is sin.”¹⁶

“There are many, many believers who carry too light a burden in behalf of souls unsaved. **There never was a time when the world was in greater need of the light of heavenly truth, than it is at the present time.** On every hand are cities unwarned. Souls are perishing, and what are the light-bearers doing? **There needs to be manifested a burden for souls, such as many have never yet realized.** In self-denial and self-sacrifice, with Bible in hand, God’s chosen messengers are to search out the honest in heart, and reveal to them the way of life everlasting.”¹⁷

“Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come.”¹⁸

II. The results of the latter rain

The servant of the Lord explains, “I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. **I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’**”¹⁹

“I was pointed down to the time when the third angel’s message was closing. **The power of God had**

rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They had received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony had been revived. The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.”²⁰

“I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer’s inkhorn by his side returned from



the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, ‘It is done’. And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still:

and he that is holy, let him be holy still.’”²¹

Conclusion

“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).

Considering that we are living in solemn times and that now is our opportunity to get ready to receive the seal of God in our foreheads, that now is the time when we can be perfecting Christlike characters fit for a place in the kingdom of Heaven. Now is our only chance to become overcomers and thus prepare ourselves for a part in the exciting latter rain soon to fall on God’s faithful remnant.

It is my wish and prayer that we appreciate the wonderful offer He has made to become colaborers together with Him and that by accepting Christ Jesus as our personal Saviour and allowing His Holy Spirit to dwell with us and work through us, we may with God’s help reflect the image of Jesus fully—in thought, in word, and in action! Amen. *R*

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- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896.
- ⁶ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507.
- ⁷ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 189.
- ⁸ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 116.
- ⁹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 155.
- ¹⁰ *The Review and Herald*, December 5, 1899.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 319.
- ¹² *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 250.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
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- ¹⁵ *Gospel Workers*, p. 205. [1892 edition.]
- ¹⁶ *Pacific Union Recorder*, July 20, 1905.
- ¹⁷ *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, March 16, 1910.
- ¹⁸ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 21.
- ¹⁹ *Early Writings*, p. 271.
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FIN D

Often we hear people say, “There is no time!” Yes, in our modern century with high-speed trains and planes—even then, there is no time. There is simply not enough time. Why? Perhaps we want too much, or we have poor planning. Or maybe our plans go contrary to the will of God. Whom do we consult when we make our plans? Notice what apostle James says: “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:13-15).

Maybe we ask God too little or too seldom. Or maybe we don’t ask at all.

A common Christian family’s morning starts off with everyone in a rush, everyone hastening. Someone is taking a shower, someone is getting ready for work, someone is getting some breakfast, and so on. Morning worship is done with a rush, and some don’t even do it! Why? There is no time to pray. . . . Stop!!! Let us stop for

a moment and reassess our priorities. What do we have time for, what don’t we have time for?

At first let us think about why we need to pray, and who needs prayer the most, God or us?

It is also necessary for each of us to open our heart to God. “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. . . . Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him... And yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.”¹

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ‘The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy’ (James 5:11). His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too

small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. ‘He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds’ (Psalm 147:3). The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.”²

It is plain and clear that prayer is necessary to us, instead of to God!

You may ask, “How much and when is it necessary to pray?” The answer is simple. “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2). “There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah

TIME



when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul.”³

Remembering my childhood when my parents taught me how to pray, I can say that their example was sincere. Each morning, waking up we enjoyed the calm singing of Father and the pleasant smell coming from kitchen. My father usually woke us up (Mother was already in the kitchen). He reminded us that after we took care of personal things, we needed to devote time for our personal prayer. When all the children (five of us) were gathered and ready, Mother joined us and we all had family morning worship. Usually Father read some verses from the Bible. After he explained the texts, each child had to recite a verse. We all sang

a hymn after which we knelt down in a circle and would pray. Father usually prayed and thanked God for safekeeping through the night, for divine blessings, gifts, and for the blood that was shed on the cross for our sins. Then he asked for blessings and safekeeping for each and every one of us throughout the day. At the end we all said “Amen,” and went to the kitchen where we were then served breakfast. After breakfast we each went to do our chores, and in the evening again we were gathered for evening worship, which was spent in the same way as morning worship. Only our personal prayers were offered before we went to sleep. As far as I can remember, we never left the house or went to sleep without prayer. If Father was not home, Mother conducted worship. Yes, our parents taught us from the time of our birth, because they had read “Train up a child in the way he should go:

and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Since we were trained this way from childhood, we have implemented the same ways and have taught our children the same way.

You may ask, “If we have family worship, why do we need to have our own personal devotions?”

Family Worship

“The daily service [in the ancient Hebrew sanctuary] consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. And there were also offerings for sabbaths, new moons, and special feasts.”⁴

In carrying on the daily routine, as parents we should care not only for the material welfare of our children, and for the spiritual education as well. Personal morning and evening devotions will not only teach the children to trust in the Lord and to rely on His saving power, but also to understand that we all need to depend on it.

“All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice. The wife and children should be encouraged to unite in this offering and also to engage in the song of praise. Morning and evening the father, as priest of the household, should confess to God the sins committed by himself and his children through the day. Those sins which have come to his knowledge and also those which are secret, of which God’s eye alone has taken cognizance, should be confessed. This rule of action, zealously carried out by the father when he is present or by the mother when he is absent, will result in blessings to the family. . . .

“The father must not betray his sacred trust. He must not, on any point, yield up his parental authority.

“The father . . . will bind his children to the throne of God by living faith. Distrusting his own strength, he hangs his helpless soul on Jesus and takes hold of the strength of the Most High. Brethren, pray at home, in your family, night and morning; pray earnestly in your closet; and while engaged in your daily labor, lift up the soul to God in prayer. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. The silent, fervent prayer of the soul will rise like holy incense to the throne of grace and will be as acceptable to God as if offered in the sanctuary.”⁵

Secret prayer

Certainly, younger children do not understand the necessity of personal prayer. From the very beginning we must teach them the Lord’s Prayer. In due time, as they learn from those who give them the example, they too will pray to God and bring forth their petitions and requests. “We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect our own personal prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not

sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength. . . .

“It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God.”⁶

Dear friends, how much time do we spend in prayer and study of the Word of God?

How much time do we spend in nature, contemplating and communicating with God?

How much time do we spend studying our own heart and, through the eyes of Jesus, see all the filth thereof and, with His power, overcome it?

How much time do we spend teaching our children to make time for God and to commune with Him? Are you silent? Let everyone answer for himself or herself. One day, all will give account for themselves and their children, for whom we almost do not have time.

An all too typical scene

Oh! At last it is Friday evening just before the opening of the Sabbath. Now we can rest and read a little, since we’ve been so busy all week and have had no time due to cares, turmoil, and so forth. You take a book and start reading with great interest, but not even 15 minutes have gone by and you are already asleep, and the book goes back on a shelf until a better opportunity when we’ll have more free time. Now comes Sabbath morning. All of us go to church, sometimes forgetting our Sabbath



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school lessons and Bibles at home. We begin with a hymn, “Lord, I Love You” and we sing—not thinking about the words. Stop! What love towards God? About what love do we sing? How many times have we thought about Christ during the past week? Do we only have to love Jesus on Sabbath during Divine Service?

We know the verses, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. . . . Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Ephesians 5:28, 33). If the husband or wife does something wrong, we quote these verses to each other. Yes, we really love each other. We consult, we converse, and we try to spend more time together. If the husband loves his wife, she tries to show mutual love and to make him happy. It is great!

But how do we understand the verse, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25)? The husband is called to love his wife **“even as Christ also loved”** (not only loved in mere human power), “and gave himself for it.” If a husband would actually give his life for his wife, we all would speak of the great deed he had done. Everyone would say, “What a great act of love!”

But the love of God is greater than that! Unfortunately, very few exalt and praise it—most of the time we forget it. . . . There is just not enough time to kneel down and thank God for His love, for the cross of Calvary, and for His gift of salvation.

“Christ’s love for His children is as tender as it is strong. And it is stronger than death. . . . Although sin has existed for ages, trying to counteract this love and obstruct its flowing earthward, it still flows in rich currents to those for whom Christ died.”⁷

What do we do with this love? Do we respond to it? What do we render to it, and how much time do we give? How much time do we spend talking with the Lord? . . . Not enough? Why?

The sad answer: “Because my people hath forgotten me” (Jeremiah 18:15).

Imagine: the husband or the wife repeats: “I love you” but does not sleep in or contribute to the sustenance of the home. He or she is gone every night. His or her salary never makes it home. He or she shows up once a week for a few hours and beautifully declares, “I love you” and again disappears for a week. In such a case I am sure there would be no limit to your indignation, and at some point you would firmly declare that you can’t do this anymore. And if it should continue this way your patience will come to an end, and you will file for divorce. A sad story; another family crash.

Dear friends! This is actually the kind of relationship most of us have with Jesus. We come on Sabbath for 2 or 3 hours, in the morning sing a few hymns, “Lord, I Love You” or “I Wish to Glorify the Saviour,” and so forth. We stay for the lesson and sermon, and then leave for home without remorse that we have played the hypocrite before the Lord. While

at home, we enjoy a good meal and, of course, rest. This rest continues till the closing of the Sabbath. And we forget that there is an afternoon study. But for this part we don’t have time since we decided to rest. When dismissed from the Sabbath hours, again we dive into a busy schedule doing that which attracts us most. We find time to wash the car, watch some video shows, browse the web, chat with friends, play tennis, table pool, and/or other occupations that Satan has laid in our path.

You may say: I need to work. After all, I have a family to look after. Correct. We should work: “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Yes, but if we pay attention only to work, forgetting about God and our duties to Him, we will work for a bag with holes, and we will never have enough. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep” (Psalm 127:1, 2). “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after,

they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:6-10). If a person wishes to give that which is God’s to God, and that which is Caesar’s to Caesar, he or she would find the time.

The majority of modern Christians seek churches which don’t require a lot of time, change of character, effort, or contribution. Yet God calls for a change of character, and people leave God’s church and go to find one with less requirements. But the Lord does not leave us. He does not file a divorce for such a disgraceful relationship toward Him. Instead, He is longsuffering and bids us: “Return, My children!” “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Ezekiel 18:32). “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

Dear Reader! If you value earthly, temporary things above the heavenly, and if you haven’t found enough time for God, then you have lived your life in vain. Let us trust more in God and in His sure promises. Then we will see the blessing: “Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

Food for thought and encouragement

My grandmother [from the former Soviet bloc] who used to tell us about their past history and about the great struggles in her life as she had lived during a time of famine, said that she did not remember any of the believers dying of starvation at that time. They helped each other; even nonbelievers brought food; everyone had something

to eat, and they experienced God’s hand over them. True, they did not live in prosperity, but nobody died of hunger. The same history was shared by our brethren and sisters from Romania. They testified that they did not suffer so much during the economic crisis. God helped them in answer to their humble prayers.

Many examples show that God blessed His people miraculously.

Ask and it shall be given - but ask in faith, and if it is according to His will, surely ye shall receive.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6, 7).

I am sure that some may contradict these concepts and say: Unbelievers never pray and ask; they live a carefree life of ease, and they never devote time for God. Yet they have everything in abundance! A very interesting remark. Again, let us turn to the Holy Scripture—what does it tell us? “Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered” (Malachi 3:14, 15).

God’s people have been tried in all ages. But - there is one “BUT”. “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name” (verse 16).

What did Asaph, King David’s chief musician say about the supposed “prosperity” of unbelievers: “As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they

plagued like other men. . . . Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end” (Psalm 73:2-5, 12, 16, 17).

When did Asaph discover that he was wrong for envying the unrighteous? It was not until he entered into the tabernacle of the Lord that he understood their end. Only then did He acknowledge God’s power, greatness and justice. Then he laid his hold upon God.

The Lord appeals to each one of us: “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand” (Psalm 46:10; 95:6, 7). Today if you hear His voice, find time—that is, MAKE time—for prayer and devotion to God, then everything else shall be added unto you.

We all are familiar with the story of Paul when he stood before Felix and preached the truth. He spoke about abstinence and a future judgment. “Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). That was the most important moment in Felix’s life, but he missed the opportunity. He never found the time. And the door was shut forever.

Dear Reader: Find time for God and for your children so that later you may not regret reaping the fruits of your carelessness. **Find time!** *R*

References

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² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 352.

⁵ *The Adventist Home*, pp. 212, 213.

⁶ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 98, 99.

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WOMEN

A good all-round education

The idea that women do not need a good education if they choose motherhood as their career is a misconception. I believe that mothers require a better education than most trade and professional people. For instance, if you don't have a good grip on the concept of aerodynamics, who is going to answer your 4-year-old when he asks, "Mama, how do planes stay in the air?" (and many other technical questions like it).

You are responsible for the foundation of your child's education, and answering those "how" and "why" questions is more important than most people realize. You do need to know your Math, English, Science, and Social Studies as well as at least the basics of Biology, Physics, and Chemistry. It would be good to mention, however, that this education should be in both physical and mental areas.

"Students should be encouraged to combine mental and physical labor. The physical powers should be developed in proportion to the mental faculties. This is essential to form an all-round education."¹

A good education, especially for a woman, is never wasted. The key to

well-educated, intelligent children is a well-educated, intelligent mother (and, of course, a father who is the same helps a lot too).

"It is the duty of mothers to cultivate their minds and keep their hearts pure. They should improve every means within their reach for their intellectual and moral improvement that they may be qualified to improve the minds of their children."²

Career training

I believe that every mother or future mother should have career training of some sort to her credit. Even if you never expect to use your qualification, it is still worthwhile to obtain it. For one thing, you never know when you might need it, and for another thing, it will improve your mind, self-discipline, outlook on life, and sense of accomplishment. "Woman should be trained to some business whereby she can gain a livelihood if necessary."³

One thing worth mentioning is that it is best to stay inside your talents and interests when you choose career training. If you have always been good at math or if you spent your childhood longing to be an astronomer, then go ahead and make that your career. Don't choose something else on the pretext that it

is more respectable or will earn you more money, or even that the training will be shorter. Wages and reputation are not the most important factors in career choice; job satisfaction is worth much more than monetary reward or esteem. I say that in hindsight, as I feel that I made the wrong choice in my career training. I knew that my talents lay in art and writing, but I chose Electronic Engineering instead. I thought that art and writing would not earn me enough money to live on. I really enjoyed studying electronics, but it wasn't my first interest. Later on, I took the opportunity to study art and writing, while carrying on my job as a full-time mother. It would have been so much better if I had taken that career direction in the first place instead of having to juggle studies and homemaking years later.

Keep up your education

Your education does not stop when you graduate from high school or college/university. All adults, and especially women, should constantly learn new things and acquire new skills.

"Instead of sinking into a mere household drudge, let the wife and mother take time to read, to keep herself well informed, to be a companion to her husband, and to keep in touch with the developing minds of her children."⁴

REHOMED

The concept of lifelong education is one that should also be passed on to children by precept and example. If your children realize the importance of constant learning, they will be better equipped to make their way when they are adults. They will not be contented to only improve their knowledge in their chosen field, but will educate themselves in a wide range of areas. If they want to change their career at some later date, they will not be hampered by insecurities or hesitation over whether or not they can do it. Education is a lifelong process, and should be viewed as such.

One important outcome of this learning attitude is that individuals who recognize the value of education tend to be the ones who devote daily time to study the Word of God and to research the foundations of our faith.

Homemaking skills

Homemaking is a very complicated job that takes the utmost talent and expertise, and it is never too early to start learning. Homemaking involves much more than just knowing how to cook and clean and care for children. Homemaking is not about *how* to clean, but how to *keep* the house clean. Not how to shop smart, but how to track household provisions and keep them replenished (economically).

Not how to cook, but how to plan nutritious, tasty, regular meals.

Not all women are proficient in all this before they become wives and mothers, but a prior training does make it much easier. An accomplished homemaker friend is a treasure, but if you don't have one to learn from, there are books on the market that teach homemaking. A lot of the books and articles by Ellen White also have many wonderful hints in them. If you are currently a mother and homemaker, take the time to educate yourself in areas in which you feel you need to make progress. It will transform your home into a more organized, peaceful place, and it will give you extra time as an added advantage. "The Lord has need of mothers who in every line of the home life will improve their God-given talents and fit their children for the family of heaven."⁵

Passing it all to your children

Teaching skills are essential for a mother. We must learn to be educators so that we can bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of God. Love for God, manners, character virtues, work ethic; the foundations of all these are learned by small children from

their mothers. How you teach is just as important as what you teach, so it takes a lot of research and practice.

"I am thoroughly convinced that to realize a permanent change for the better in the morals of society, the education of the masses must begin with their early lives. The mother must be the first teacher through that stage of life in which the foundation of character is laid. The guidance of the child, in its first years, is almost wholly committed to her."⁶

One of the most important accomplishments for boys, as well as for girls, is in the area of homemaking skills. Modern trends have established a very important fact that homemaking is done by the whole family. The mother is not the person who does everything. She should be the director and coordinator, not the slave.

"God desires both parents and teachers to train children in the practical duties of everyday life. Encourage industry. Girls—and even boys who do not have outdoor work—should learn how to help the mother. From childhood, boys and girls should be taught to bear heavier and still heavier burdens, intelligently helping in the work of the family firm. Mothers, patiently show your children how to use their hands. Let them understand that their hands are to be used as skilfully as are yours in the household work."⁷

“The mother has a power in her hands which she should use to the glory of God. She can build up a noble, virtuous steadfast character in her children.”

Soul-saving skills

The most important skill for a mother is that of soul saving. Missionary school should not be reserved for prospective Bible workers or ministers but should be especially promoted to future parents. Perhaps if every parent were taught to be a soul saver, ministers would have time to enter new fields of labor. Parents have the privilege of a captive, pliant audience, who believe everything we say. We get to mold the character, morals, attitudes, and life outlook of our children, not to mention establishing in them a knowledge of God and the Bible. What minister would not envy our advantages! Ministers and Bible workers have in their care people who have characters and values practically set in stone. A lot of adults struggle against the result of a faulty upbringing for the rest of their life. Mothers, don't give away the opportunity to give to your children the gift of a happy childhood and firm, godly characters. We can make or break the life of our children. If we are not faithful, we could ruin our children.

“The mother has a power in her hands which she should use to the glory of God. She can build up a noble, virtuous, steadfast character in her children; or she can, by indulgence or by manifesting impatience and passion herself, encourage in them those traits which will prove their ruin. The sphere of the mother may be humble; but her influence, united with the father's, is as abiding as eternity.

Next to God, the mother's power for good is the strongest known on earth.”⁸

Never give up

Child-rearing can be compared in a way to marriage. Happy newlyweds are convinced that their marriage is going to be the best in the world. They enter into their life together with high ideals and a heart full of affection for each other. As time goes by, however, the couple may discover annoying habits in each other, and their idealism gets a little jaded. Marriage starts to become a matter of hard work and can only be a success if each partner makes a constant decision to love and cherish the other, despite their differences.

Parenting kind of fits the same progression. The newborn baby is so precious, and nothing is too hard or too time-consuming to do for that little piece of humanity wrapped up in a blanket. Both mother and father are determined to be the best parents in the world and to raise their child perfectly. However, after a few years, the responsibilities don't get any easier, and the precious baby turns into an obstinate toddler. As much as the parents love their baby, child-rearing can only be made a success by hard work and dedication. There must be a constant decision by parents to invest the best years of their life in raising this treasure given them by God. This is the crucial point that decides the destiny of both parent and child, in which we either put our best

efforts into our work, or just drift with the current. What will your choice be?

Mothers, our work is of great consequence, and we are promised wonderful rewards for a job well done. Let us resolve to devote our best efforts to our child-rearing careers, instead of taking the modern way out and allowing others to do the job that we were given. The immediate reward is the wonderful happiness and satisfaction to be found in homemaking. But the greatest joy will be when, standing in the presence of God, we are each able to say, “Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Hebrews 2:13).

“There is a wide field of labor opened before every mother. If her work is wrought faithfully, in the fear of God, it will bring forth fruit unto eternal life. The mother's work should begin at home. This is the fountain-head from which her influence and usefulness should flow. If her duties here are discharged with fidelity, she will see all around her fields where she may work with the best results. And by-and-by those words from her Master will fall as sweetest music upon her ear - ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’”⁹ *R*

References

- ¹ *The Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 54.
- ² *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 167.
- ³ *The Health Reformer*, December 1, 1877.
- ⁴ *Child Guidance*, p. 73.
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, December 5, 1899.
- ⁶ *The Health Reformer*, November 1, 1877.
- ⁷ *The Review and Herald*, September 8, 1904.
- ⁸ *The Health Reformer*, March 1, 1880.
- ⁹ *The Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1881.



BY Alicia Gugu

A GOD

who never
gives up

For the largest part of my childhood and teen years, I was homeschooled in a secular home where the slightest bit of spirituality or religion was balked at. We were taught that those who acknowledged a “god” had weak minds and couldn’t make it through life without this mental crutch. I lived the typical atheistic life that most children in America do, but we were not taught the typical atheistic views of how we came to be either (i.e., the big bang theory or evolution), and I can remember as a young child having thoughts such as: “Why am I here?” “How did I get here?” “How did the world come about?” “Do I really just live and die and that’s it?” “What is the purpose of all this?” “Is there something bigger than this world that knows I’m down here?”

Prayers in our behalf

It wasn't until I was 17 years old that I learned my father had been raised in an Adventist home and that his father (my grandfather) was a minister. Through a series of unexpected events, and my father acquiring a broken leg, he began reading through *The Great Controversy*—a book that his father had given him many years ago. After completing the book, he decided to

visit an Adventist church, and as a family we started attending each week.

Oh the prayers of grandparents! Later on I learned that they had faithfully prayed for each one in my family, by name, every single day for 19 years.

Answers—at last!

I was just sort of thrown into the “church scene” without giving it much

thought, but was glad to finally have answers to the things I'd questioned since my early childhood. Since I hadn't had previous experience with any type religion, I didn't have any preconceived ideas. I readily accepted whatever I was taught, and eventually I was baptized into the SDA church in the Fall of 1999.

After my baptism, though, I realized that even though I knew some things about God, I still didn't really know who God was. So I began reading through my Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy on my own to figure it out. It doing so, I became somewhat distraught that much of what I was reading wasn't what was being taught by the leaders in my church. I started noticing many inconsistencies, but didn't really know what to do about them. I brought some of the issues (with regard to Sabbathkeeping, praying, vegetarianism, and mixing the sacred and common) to the leaders who oversaw our church and was simply told that I shouldn't get too excited about things. Although I outwardly accepted this response, my insides were still churning because I knew God couldn't possibly be pleased with complacency in these important matters.

Touched by the love of Christ

One Sabbath, another member in our church gave my family a copy of the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* from the SDA Reform Movement. This member had been receiving a free subscription to these lessons for years. Upon handing it to our family, he gave us the warning that while the SDARM reading material is good, the people in the church are not, so we shouldn't visit any of their churches. After looking over the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* quarterly and seeing it was only Bible and Spirit of Prophecy and really enjoying its contents, one Sabbath our family traveled 2½ hours to the SDARM General Conference church in Roanoke,



Oh, the prayers of grandparents! Later on I learned that they had faithfully prayed for each one in my family, by name, every single day, for 19 years.

Virginia. Something that really left an impression on me as a young person was how the members there seemed to actually want to be around each other and would stay in the afternoon and eat lunch together. As our family would drive away at the end of the day, they would all come out and wave goodbye to us. This was very different from what I had been accustomed to in my church, and naturally we became closer to those of like mind who we were able to spend more time with. I really enjoyed listening to the older brethren tell about their experiences with God during lunch. Someone always had a story for us with a good lesson in it! As I learned more of the truth through these visits, my enthusiasm to study grew even more. It wasn't too long after that I learned of Alcovy Bible Institute (a two-year missionary seminar program of the SDARM) and decided to attend. My parents were reluctant to send my sister and me to the school, because it was during this time that they were finding the truth of the narrow road distasteful to the carnal nature and had stopped following the Lord altogether. God was faithful however, and made the way for my sister and me to attend the classes. I really looked forward to these 10-day seminars that came once a quarter, and remained at the top of my class for the first year.

A time of trial

Home life became very difficult as there was now a division in my family,

but again, God was faithful and gave me the strength day by day to endure whatever difficulties came my way. It was during this trying time that I learned to pray! Eventually, the day came that my father informed me that I couldn't stay in our home any longer because he and my mother feared I would have a Christian influence over my siblings. And so, at 19 years of age I moved away, and a few months later,



in December 2001, I was baptized into the SDARM.

Unfortunately, Satan worked harder than ever after my baptism, and I floundered around for a period of time. I was losing my way because I was forgetting the way God had led me, and in my wrongdoing, I lost the peace that only comes from loving, serving, and obeying God.

However, I never forgot Philippians 1:6, "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."

Falling on the Rock of Ages

I knew that God hadn't ceased to be interested in my soul. I had lots of head knowledge, but the condition of my heart was stony. I needed to be broken.

It was at an International Youth Convention in Romania that I was urged to really consider the condition of my heart in a study taken from Ezekiel 36. God wanted to do so much good with my life, but couldn't as long as I was content to sit in the muck and mire of my own ways. Then the speaker read Psalm 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." I had read this verse before, but for some reason, I heard it that day as if I never had. I became overwhelmed with the realization of how much God loves me. **EVEN ME!**

In 2004 I rededicated my life to the Lord, committing to follow wherever He would lead. After marrying in 2010 and now having a fourth child on the way, I have a deeper and more personal understanding of God as my Father. As I daily relate to my children, I am able to realize how God loves us unconditionally. It doesn't matter how stubborn or wayward we may be, He still wants what is best for us and works untiringly for our souls. He doesn't give up on us and He is worthy of our trust! *R*

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MOVING? Please let us know.

Toys or Time— Which?

By Bethany Montrose

Why does Billy always get the new toys?” mused little Danny as he sat on an old log outside his family’s quaint country cottage, chiseling a piece off the log for his birdhouse project.

Billy had just gotten a drone, something Danny could only dream of owning. . . . His stomach growled as Mother called for dinner. “Not rice again. . . .” moaned Danny.

“I’m sorry,” said Mother in a sad tone. “Now, go wash up before Dad gets home.” As she spoke, the rumble of Dad’s old pick-up truck was heard outside.

“I wonder what Johnny’s dad’s car sounds like when he drives up,” thought Danny as he washed the sawdust off his hands. “I heard that he just got a brand new BMW last week. I bet it sounds a whole lot better than Dad’s old lemon of a truck.”

“Good evening!” called that friendly voice of Dad, who greeted Danny with a big, warm hug.

After dinner, his father asked, “Do you have all the pieces for our birdhouse? All you were missing was just that one little end piece, right?”

“Yes,” replied Danny. “But I don’t feel like working on it tonight.”

“Remember, we decided to glue it tonight in time for tomorrow’s Craft Fair to raise money for missions,” reminded Dad.

Danny thought, “If we don’t get it ready in time, maybe I can keep it and sell it myself to start saving for that kite I want to buy.” But he knew better than to say that. Surely Dad would not be pleased with such thinking.

As they sat down to start on their project, Dad asked, “How was your day?”

“Bad,” Billy blurted out.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” said Dad. “Your birdhouse looks great. What’s wrong?”

“Billy got a new drone today and got to play with it all day. The mailman brought it in a big, fancy box,” answered Danny.

“I’m sorry you feel hurt by that. Do you think that is the right attitude to have about it, though?” his father asked.

“But I never get things like that. . . .” moaned Danny.

“Let’s go ask Billy for a tour.”

“But he’s so cold. He’ll never agree.”

But Danny said a prayer in his mind: “Dear Jesus, forgive me for being jealous and discontent. Help me to do better and be happy for others.”

When Billy opened the door, Danny got the courage and said, “I saw you got a drone. I’ve never seen one close-up. Would you give me a tour?”

Billy smiled and said, “Sure, I’d be glad to! In fact, I’d love to! My dad is always away on business and my mom is always at work. So it gets lonely here by myself. Come over anytime and we take turns flying it!”

The next day, Danny and Dad took the birdhouse to the Craft Fair. An older lady bought it and said, “My grandson moved far away, so I’m getting rid of some of his toys. Would you like a free kite? It’s a really good one that flies very high!”

That night, as Danny went to bed, he thought, “Poor Billy. He has lots of stuff. But it doesn’t make him happy. I’m so glad I have a dad who has time to make things with me and have fun together. And I even got a kite today!”

Just before he fell asleep, he remembered the verse that says, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11). *R*

