

YOUTH

messenger

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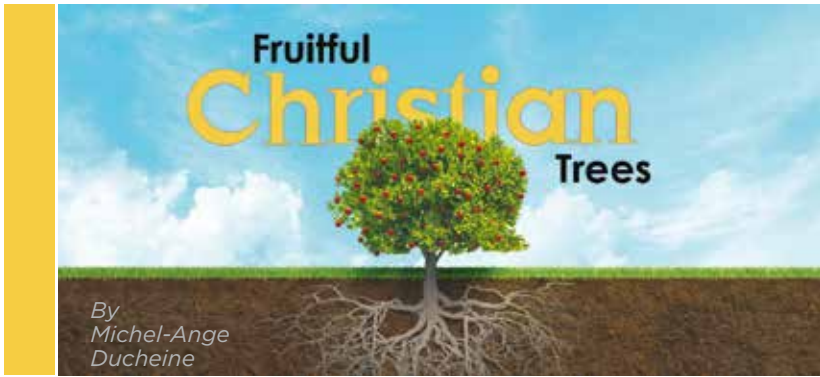
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Trees are almost everywhere, being indispensable in the ecosystem of our planet. They provide food and oxygen (Genesis 1:29); give hospitality and shade to birds and beasts (Daniel 4:14); they are used to prepare furniture (Exodus 25:10) and all kinds of construction work (Haggai 1:8), and are also good for medicine (Ezekiel 47:12).

A beautiful allegory is recorded in the book of Judges (9:8-15) where trees were talking to each other and wanted to appoint a king to reign over them. This metaphor is a representation of the people of Israel. In many other passages the Bible compares human beings with trees (see Psalm 52:8; Isaiah 56:3; Romans 11:17). But why does the Word of God make such a comparison? To understand this parallel, let us consider the germination and the growth of the plant.

THE SEED

Christ told His disciples, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground

and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). “The seed dies to spring forth into new life, and in this we are taught the lesson of the resurrection” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 87). As the seed dies before its germination, so we must die to the world and to sin before our spiritual resurrection takes place (see Galatians 6:14).

To the Roman converts Paul wrote: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:4, 5, 11).

THE SOIL

For healthy growth, the seed must be planted in good soil, a soil rich in minerals, for the plant

receives its nutrients from the ground. In the parable of Matthew 13, the field represents “the church of Christ in the world” (Ibid., p. 70).

The church is the only true ground, being referred to as the “ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

The church is also called the Lord’s garden in which we are planted (Psalm 92:13). The Lord does not want us to be in the wilderness of the world, but He wants us to be planted in His beautiful garden where we can receive proper nutrients for our growth. For “it is in the church that we are to grow and ripen for the garner of God” (Ibid.).

THE GROWTH

“So is the kingdom of God,” said Christ, “as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how” (Mark 4:26, 27).

“The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth

is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement” (Ibid., p. 65).

The growth of the plant is not haphazard; it is a well regulated process. To grow properly, every plant needs three vital elements: water, sunshine, and air. Let us briefly examine these elements and see how are they related to our spiritual wants.

ELEMENT 1 - WATER

Water is life—without it no plant or human being can live. The life of the plant is greatly dependent upon the supply of water. A good supply of water means life and health and strength for the plant. This is why the Bible teaches that the righteous are like trees “planted by the rivers of water” (Psalm 1:3; Jeremiah 17:8).

In the Old Testament God gave this wonderful promise to His children: “I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree” (Hosea 14:5, 6).



In the New Testament Christ offers to the woman of Samaria living water (John 4:10-14). But what does the living and spiritual water represent? It represents the Holy Spirit and God's Word (John 7:37-39; Ephesians 5:26). "The roots of the plant strike down deep into the soil, and hidden from sight nourish the life of the plant. So with the Christian; it is by the invisible union of the soul with Christ, through faith, that the spiritual life is nourished" (Ibid., p. 47).

ELEMENT 2 - AIR

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air is also essential for the life of the plant. We as humans have a wonderful relationship with the plant kingdom: plants recycle the carbon dioxide that we exhale, transforming it into the pure oxygen that we inhale. They need the carbon dioxide to live as much as we need oxygen.

The air symbolizes the graces of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). "In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the

globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 68).

The exchange of air between the plants and us is also a symbol of prayer. We should pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) as we breathe without ceasing. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that "prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor" (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 254, 255).

ELEMENT 3 - SUNSHINE

Many experiments have been conducted, the results of which show that plants cannot live without light. Through a process known as photosynthesis, the leaves of the plant capture the light energy from the sun to convert the minerals received from water and carbon dioxide into organic molecules known as carbohydrates. Thus the plant is fed and will consequently grow up beautifully and symmetrically.





The Bible tells us that the Lord is our Sun of Righteousness, the light of the world (see Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2; John 8:12; 9:5), and “as the flower turns to the sun, that the bright beams may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that heaven’s light may shine upon us, that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 68).

THE FRUIT

After receiving these vital elements, the plant will certainly mature and produce an abundance of fruit (Luke 8:8). So shall it likewise be for us! It is not enough to be trees in God’s garden receiving from Him all the blessings for our spiritual growth; but we must bear fruit. If we truly abide in Christ, we will inevitably bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23).

“Just as a good tree will bear good fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord’s garden produce good fruit unto eternal life. Besetting sins are overcome; evil thoughts are not allowed in the mind; evil habits are purged from the soul temple. The

tendencies which have been biased in a wrong direction are turned in a right direction. Wrong dispositions and feelings are changed, new principles of action supplied, and there is a new standard of character. Holy tempers and sanctified emotions are now the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. An entire transformation has taken place. This is the work to be wrought” (*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1080).

CONCLUSION

“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age” (Psalm 92:12-14).

Dear youth, as we commence this New Year let us examine ourselves. “Let every one inquire, What is my condition before God? Is Jesus disappointed in me from year to year? Am I a fruitless tree in the Lord’s garden? . . . Consider, oh! consider how many years you have occupied a place in the garden of the Lord, and how little fruit you have borne” (*The Review and Herald*, January 12, 1886).

It is my wish and prayer that as we benefit from the vital spiritual elements covered here, we may bear much fruit to God’s glory. And when the Lord Jesus will look upon us, He shall not find fruitless trees (Jeremiah 2:21; Matthew 3:10; 15:13; 21:18, 19) but fruitful Christian trees. 🌳

Adapted from
the book
Sanctification,
or Living
Holiness, pp.
41-44

By D. T.
Bourdeaux



Genuine faith is operative and is made perfect by works (James 2:22; Galatians 5:6). It is a Bible declaration “that faith without works is dead” (James 2:20). And a dead faith will not sanctify anyone.

To the Romans Paul writes, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Here is an exhortation for the brethren at Rome to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, etc. A living sacrifice will show signs of life.

To the Corinthians Paul writes, “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Corinthians 9:26, 27). In this text we see the necessity of keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection, i.e., into obedience to God and His truth. If Paul failed to do this he would run as uncertainly, fight as one that beateth the air, and be a castaway.



THE
SENSES

But to come more directly to the subject, we will consider the principal parts and faculties of the body, beginning with . . .

The senses are five in number, and which are commonly designated as follows: hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and feeling. It is through the senses that ideas are conveyed to the mind. The senses are, as it were, roads through which ideas travel to reach the mind. The sanctification of the senses consists in closing them against sinful impressions and ideas and in opening them to useful and holy impressions and thoughts. Close your senses against unholy impressions and thoughts, and they will not be so apt to invade your mind, and you will better resist the temptations of the enemy. Shut your windows and thieves will not so easily enter your dwelling. Job made a covenant with his eyes that he might not sin, Job 31:1-3, and David prayed, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way" (Psalm 119:37). He also said, "Mine eyes fail for thy word." "Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness." "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (verses 82, 123; 101:3).

"The ear of the wise," says Solomon, "seeketh knowledge" (Proverbs 18:15). It is attentive to the word of God. But those whose hearts are opposed to

God's ways do not love to listen to the truth. They love to hear smooth things and will not hear the law of the Lord (Isaiah 30:8-11). Paul speaks of some who "shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:4). But the wise man says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9).

Christians should set a guard on all their senses. By doing this it will be easier to fix the attention on holy thoughts, and keep the mind from wandering. The mind is often in danger of being diverted from proper thoughts by the senses; and Christians cannot keep the Sabbath aright while they carelessly open their senses to those secular objects and impressions which have interested them during the six laboring days.

Especially should inexperienced children and youth be taught with





- regard to the right use of the senses, and see
- the necessity of receiving right impressions.
- It often becomes necessary for children as
- well as older persons to shut their eyes and
- stop their ears against sin. The ears were not
- made to feast on error and the foolish and
- simple conversation of the wicked; neither
- were the eyes designed to behold and feast
- on vanity. Christ often said to his hearers, "He
- that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Again
- He said, "Blessed are your eyes; for they see:
- and your ears, for they hear" (Matthew 13:16).

It was indeed blessed to see Christ and the works that He performed, and to hear His rich instructions. But is it not also blessed to see the glorious work that is now going on under the last message of mercy? and to hear the messengers of truth speak in reference to our whereabouts and the necessary preparation to stand amid the perils of the last days, and to meet the Son of Man at His coming? God grant that we may duly appreciate our privileges and realize the blessedness resulting from a proper use of all the senses!



THE APPETITES

The all-wise Creator has implanted in our natures certain appetites, and it is evident that they were designed to help in perpetuating our existence, in promoting our well-being, and in carrying out the great object for which we were made.

As the appetites are peculiar to the body, it is clear that they were made to be governed by

reason. Their very nature forbids the idea of their leading the individual, and shows that they should be in subjection to the higher faculties of our beings. But in consequence of the Fall and the inroads that sin has made in the children of humans, the appetites are naturally inclined to go beyond the limits assigned unto them, and usurp the authority of the higher

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”

(1 Corinthians 10:31).

faculties. Sanctification brings the appetites within their proper limits—under the direction and control of enlightened reason.

Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. Now to do this we must, as far as possible, eat and drink that which is sanitary, and avoid intemperance. We should consult the stomach and the state of the health more than the appetites; for it is not always what suits the appetites the best, that is most conducive to the health of the body. We should select for the appetites, and cultivate and cherish a taste for healthy food.

We should eat and drink more for need than for pleasure. If


pleasure is the great end we have in view, then we do not eat and drink to the glory of God but to the glory of our appetites. Then eating and drinking becomes an

inordinate action, because it is not in the way to the end for which it was designed.

CONCLUSION

How can we have power to carry out all this wise counsel? Just remember, “there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). When temptation comes, flee to the tower of your strength! “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10). 🍷





Have You Learned Your ABC's?

By Pam Stemmler

If you are reading this article, you learned your ABC's.

Have you considered how the alphabet is used in one day? I was thinking of this today. For talking, receipting, sewing, recipes, taking phone messages, ordering products, designing labels, following road signs . . . reading my Bible and even prayer and singing I used my a,b,c's. They were not the completion of my "education," but the basic necessary steps upon which to build. So it is in God's method of educating. He gives us spiritual a,b,c's to enable us to perfect Christian character. Would you like to know what they are? This article is not long enough to cover all the aspects of this most important subject, but it is a preview of something not thought of as it should be.

First, I would like us to review a most important statement from the pen of inspiration. As you read it, remember that all of us fit into

the category of those who want to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

"Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). If this is the price of heaven, shall not our education be conducted on these lines?"—*Christian Educator*, Aug. 1897 (emphasis added).

Since we want to enter Heaven, and we want eternal life, and we want to know Jesus Christ, then we should also want the true science of education. Where does it begin in our life? At the basic a, b, and c.

"Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 179.

Until recently, I considered the importance of agricultural

endeavours to be connected with educating youth and as a means of supporting ourselves while living in the country. Yes, I knew that it was important to grow our own food, and to be out amongst God's beautiful creation, but I now realize there is much more to the importance of the subject.

Let us examine the thought of God from the beginning of the Biblical record. Where did He place the first of His creation? In Genesis we read that "the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:8).

Why the garden? Wasn't everything perfect? Didn't that mean they didn't need to work? No! God placed Adam and Eve in the best circumstances for their ultimate happiness and

healthiness. As we consider God's plan for our life, we should be seeking the same, that restoration in our own heart and life of God's ideals.

Perfection didn't and doesn't mean "no work." Instead it means a place and circumstances designed by our Creator Himself to develop His characteristics to their fullest in His creation. The plan hasn't changed.

"The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the

human family were the students. . . .



“The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden’ (Genesis 2:8, 9). Here, amidst the beautiful scenes of nature untouched by sin, our first parents were to receive their education.”—*Education*, pp. 20, 21 (emphasis added).

Even after sin, we find that God’s plan for educating remained the same.

“The education centering in the family was that which prevailed in the days of the patriarchs. For the schools thus established, God provided the conditions most favorable for the development of character. The people who were under His direction still

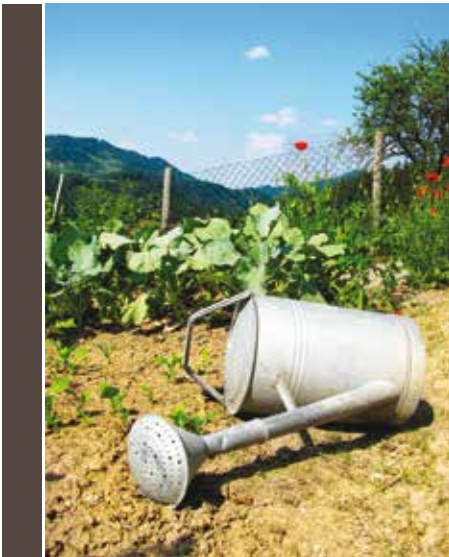
pursued the plan of life that He had appointed in the beginning. Those who departed from God built for themselves cities, and, congregating in them, gloried in the splendor, the luxury, and the vice that make the cities of today the world’s pride and its curse. But the men who held fast God’s principles of life dwelt among the fields and hills. They were tillers of the soil and keepers of flocks and herds, and in this free, independent life, with its opportunities for labor and study and meditation, they learned of God and taught their children of His works and ways.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34 (emphasis added).

“At the creation, labor was appointed as a blessing. It meant development, power, happiness. The changed condition of the earth through the curse of sin has brought a change in the conditions

of labor; yet though now attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, it is still a source of happiness and development. And it is a safeguard against temptation. Its discipline places a check on self-indulgence, and promotes industry, purity, and firmness. Thus it becomes a part of God’s great plan for our recovery from the Fall.”—*Ibid.*, p. 214.

WHY GARDENING?

“To Adam and Eve was committed the care of the garden, ‘to dress it and to



keep it' (Genesis 2:15). Though rich in all that the Owner of the universe could supply, they were not to be idle. Useful occupation was appointed them as a blessing, to strengthen the body, to expand the mind, and to develop the character."

"The book of nature, which spread its living lessons before them, afforded an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. On every leaf of the forest and stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and sea and sky, God's name was written. With both the animate and the inanimate creation—with leaf and flower and tree, and with every living creature, from the leviathan of the waters to the mote in the sunbeam—the dwellers in Eden held converse, gathering from each the secrets of its life. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, 'the balancings of the clouds' (Job 37:16), the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were objects of study by the pupils of earth's first school."—*Ibid.*, p. 21 (emphasis supplied).

When God created humanity, He made Adam in His image, with characteristics akin to his Creator. He designed that we should have a part in the work upon Earth. He designed for us to be laborers together with Him, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 3:9.

"In our labor we are to be workers together with God. He gives us the earth and its treasures; but we must adapt them



to our use and comfort. He causes the trees to grow; but we prepare the timber and build the house. He has hidden in the earth the gold and silver, the iron and coal; but it is only through toil that we can obtain them. . . .

"To us has been given a degree of control over the forces of nature. As God called forth the earth in its beauty out of chaos, so we can bring order and beauty out of confusion. And though all things are now marred with evil, yet in our completed work we feel a joy akin to His, when, looking on the fair earth, He pronounced it 'very good.'"—*Ibid.*, pp. 214, 215.

We can find, as we study the childhood and youth of Jesus the basics that we also need in our heavenly education.


"As Jesus worked in childhood and youth, mind and body were developed. He did not use His physical powers recklessly, but in such a way as to keep them in health, that He might do the best work in every line. He was not willing to be defective, even in the handling of tools. He was perfect as a workman, as He was perfect in character. By His own

example He taught that it is our duty to be industrious, that our work should be performed with exactness and thoroughness, and that such labor is honorable. The exercise that teaches the hands to be useful and trains the young to bear their share of life's burdens gives physical strength, and develops every faculty. All should find something to do that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others. God appointed work as a blessing, and only the diligent worker finds the true glory and joy of life. The approval of God rests with loving assurance upon children and youth who cheerfully take their part in the duties of the household, sharing the burdens of father and mother. Such children will go out from the home to be useful members of society."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 72.

"The childhood and youth of Christ were spent in humble circumstances, under conditions that were favorable to the development of a sound constitution. His life was passed mostly in the open air. He drank of the pure streams of water and ate the fruit of the gardens. He passed up and down the steep mountain paths, and through the streets of Nazareth, as He went to and from His place of toil to His home. He enjoyed the varied notes of the birds as they caroled forth their praise to their Creator. He took delight in the beauty of the flowers that decked the fields. He noted with joy the glory of the heavens, the splendor of sun,

moon, and stars, and looked upon the rising and setting sun with admiration. The book of nature was open before Him, and He enjoyed its tender lessons. The everlasting hills, the olive groves, were favorite places of resort where He went to commune with His Father. He was filled with divine wisdom, and through the study of nature, and by meditation upon the communion with God, His spiritual powers were strengthened."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 135.

As you study the Scriptures thinking of the subject of agriculture and its principles, we find an abundance of counsel, examples, and illustrations, especially given by Christ.

"Christ has linked His teaching, not only with the day of rest, but with the week of toil. . . . In the plowing and sowing, the tilling and reaping, He teaches us to see an illustration of His work of grace in the heart. So in every line of useful labor and every association of life, He desires us to find a lesson of divine truth. Then our daily toil will no longer absorb our attention and lead us to forget God; it will continually remind us of our Creator and Redeemer. The thought of God will run like a thread of gold through all our homely cares and occupations. For us the glory of His face will again rest upon the face of nature. We shall ever be learning new lessons of heavenly truth and growing into the image of His purity."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 144. 



GMOs

Genetically Modified Organisms

Are they safe to eat?

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine doesn't think so.

According to the findings of the AAEM, several studies on animals indicate serious health risks associated with GM food, including infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation, and changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system. The AAEM asked physicians to advise patients to avoid GM foods.

Scientists from the U. S. Food and Drug Administration have repeatedly warned that GM foods can trigger unpredictable, hard-to-detect side effects, including allergies, toxins, new diseases, and nutritional problems.





What's the
Difference?

By E. J.
Waggoner



FOOD vs.

In response to the claim that tea and coffee (and other caffeinated drinks, for that matter) are not foods but poisonous stimulants, the strong protest from some will likely be: "I positively know that tea is nourishing and strengthening. Why, I couldn't get through my morning's work without my tea. I must have a cup of tea before I can do anything in the morning, and then in the middle of the forenoon my strength is gone, and I am so faint that I should give out entirely if it were not for the tea; but directly I have had my tea I am fresh and strong for work again."

Exactly, and that statement is in itself the best of evidence that tea does not give strength, but rather deprives one of it. It simply satisfies a craving which it has created for itself, and not any natural desire of the body. In reality it does not satisfy anything, since the more one uses it, the more the desire for it increases.

The difference between food and stimulants may be briefly stated thus: Food supplies a real want of the system. The body is continually using up substances which must be replaced by food, or else the strength will be utterly lost. When this substance is replaced with food, the longing of the system is satisfied. But the point to be specially noted is that any kind of good food will satisfy this desire. It is true that a hungry person may at a particular time have a preference for a certain kind of food, yet if that is not at hand, any other wholesome food will do as well. When the waste has been repaired, the system does not bother itself about what particular food it was that did the work. But it is not so with the unnatural appetite that exists for a stimulant. Nothing but the stimulant will answer the demand. If it were a real desire for food, a piece of bread would fully satisfy the desire, but nothing but tea will



do. That shows that the tea does not satisfy a legitimate desire of the body, but a fictitious desire which it has created for itself. It is the supply that has created the demand.

Suppose that there were a big strong ruffian [bully] who should make a regular practice of picking up a small boy and throwing him into the water, and then plunging in and pulling the lad out just as he was drowning; would you praise that fellow's bravery and humanity? Would you recommend him for a medal on account of his activity in saving life? Of course you would not. You would on the contrary report him to the police, that he might be punished for his brutality.

Now tea is just such a conscienceless ruffian as that. It throws its victim into the ditch, and then pulls him out, and the poor, deluded victim embraces it, and says, "Noble fellow! you have saved my life." And the more the

thing is done, the more the victim falls in love with his tormentor. The trouble is, he does not know that the one who lifts him up temporarily is the one who has pushed him down. Do you not think that we can get along better without such a "benefactor"?

A food is a servant, while stimulants are tyrants. Let the woman who now thinks herself wholly dependent on tea for strength, make a desperate struggle and free herself from its clutches, and it will not be long before she will find that when she depends solely on food she can dispatch her morning's work without that terrible feeling of faintness that she before experienced. Then she will see for herself that her tea was not a food, serving the needs of the body, but a tyrant stimulant, producing a feeling of weakness in order that it might get credit for seeming to undo its own mischief. Tea and coffee are thieves and robbers, and lying ones at that. ☯

ETERNAL PRAISE

By Bethany Montrose

Life, so short, yet great and grand,
Waiting for a noble stand
From us all unselfish give;
Do the right, and joyous live!

See the truth, and that the pure:
Thus your future be made sure.
“Lord, You even see my heart;
Take it, guide it by Your chart!

“Help me now to do Your will,
Give the strength; with Spirit fill
This poor vessel of Thine own,
For with You, I'm not alone!”

We are bound for Canaan's land!
As a part of Vict'ry's band,
We will sing, and praise His name,
Never more t'will be the same.

Though the battle may grow hard,
Never let thy faith be marred!





Suff'ring is the human fate;
Eternity is plenty great.

While we're here, much praise we might,
Pride must not stand o'er the right!
Aiming high brings no one hurt,
Keeping principles inert.

Follow on the narrow way
'Till God's Heav'n you find some day,
Find yourself from mort'l attire
Singing with the angel choir

Orchestral tones around the throne
Praising our Chief Cornerstone.
Glorify the King of Kings!
(We will fly with angel's wings!)

Nevermore t'will be at bay
"Hallelujah!" we will say.
On the road with Christ let's start
Glorifying God through art!

Intruments of living wood
Singing forth, "With God we could!"
Heav'nly music, reverence-bound
Harmony! Immortal sound!

Learning CONTENTMENT from the Porcupine

What does it mean to be content? Contentment is a feeling of calm satisfaction. If I am truly content, I will feel somewhat at peace—almost indestructible in God’s care, until He sees that my life work is done.

The psalmist declares, “I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me” (Psalm 31:14, 15).

John the Baptist taught: “Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:14).

Soon after a baby porcupine is born, he arches his back and swings

his tail in confidence. Why can he be so content? His loose skin and cushioning quills are usually able to protect him from attacks from bears, coyotes, and other predators. Once his enemies encounter those quills, they back off.

And so it is with God’s children. There are many examples in the Bible of men and women who were indestructible until their work on earth was done: Men who walked in the fiery furnace unscathed. Men who built walls of a city under adverse conditions.

Women who put their own life on the line to save their people.

How many of them can you name? 🦔



.....
By Les Gibson

From *Gaining Favor With God and Man*, pp. 110, 111

By William M. Thayer



Successful men and women never waste time. They have not enough of it for present, urgent use. The days are too short for them; dinner comes too soon; they could use more time than they have to good advantage. They believe, with [Benjamin] Franklin, "If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality."

Yet much time is wasted by both old and young. Hundreds who complain that they have no time to devote to reading and study, waste enough of it in worthless musing, building air castles, games, and pleasures to class them with literary people, if such time were improved in that direction.

Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, observed this tendency among young ladies in this institution to waste much valuable time. Long before that she had observed the tendency in herself, and guarded against it by constant watchfulness.

She was a poor girl and kept house for an unmarried brother, at sixteen years of age, for one dollar a week. This was extra large

pay for those times, but the loving brother wanted to assist her to acquire an education for which she thirsted. Every moment was precious to her, both night and day. She improved them in reading and studying. She would have wasted dollars as soon as she would have wasted moments. It was this care-taking against wasting time that she carried with her into the Mount Holyoke Seminary. The students were blessed thereby, for they learned that wasting time was the worst wastefulness known to men and women.

After her death a paper was found among her effects, containing seven ways of wasting time, against which she guarded, as follows:

1. Indefinite musings
2. Anticipating needlessly
3. Needless speculations
4. Indulgence in reluctance to begin a duty
5. In doubtful cases, not deciding at once
6. Musing needlessly on what has been said or done, or what may be
7. Spending time in reveries which should be spent in prayer.

Gaining Grandeur
from **THE LIFE OF GIDEON**

Part 1 of 4:
The Call

As published
in *The Signs of
the Times*, June
23, 1881.

.....
By Ellen
G. White



Alas, that in the history of God's chosen people the sorrowful story of apostasy and its punishment must be so oft repeated! Forty years of peace elapsed after the destruction of Sisera and his host, and again "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years" (Judges 6:1). . . . The Midianites and Amalekites, who dwelt on the eastern borders of the land and in the deserts beyond, were still the bitter and unrelenting enemies of Israel. These nations had been well-nigh destroyed by the Israelites in the days of Moses, but they had since increased greatly, and had now become a numerous and powerful people. They had thirsted for revenge, and now the opportunity had come.

Because of their sins, the protecting hand of God was withdrawn from Israel, and

they were left to the mercies of their enemies. The wild, fierce inhabitants of the desert, "as grasshoppers for multitude" (verse 5), came swarming into the land, with their flocks and herds, and pitched their tents in plain and valley. They came as soon as the harvests began to ripen and remained until the last fruits of the earth had been gathered. They stripped the fields of their increase, and robbed and maltreated the inhabitants, and then returned to the deserts. Thus the Israelites had been forced to abandon the open country, and to congregate in the walled towns; and many had even found shelter in caves among the mountains.

For seven years this oppression continued, and then in their distress the people remembered Him who had so often delivered them; and they cried unto the Lord for help. But while they were very desirous to be relieved from their

oppressors, they did not exercise true repentance for their sins.

God could not help them in their state of impiety. But through His prophet He addressed them in words of warning and reproof, and the message was publicly proclaimed from city to city throughout the land. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. But ye have not obeyed my voice" (verses 8-10).

We might expect the Israelites to harden their hearts against the reproofs of the prophet. We listen to hear them respond, "We do not wish to be continually reminded of our sins. Speak to us words of peace, encouragement, and hope, but do not keep ever before us the dismal relation of our backslidings." How often do the professed people of God at the present day turn away from instruction, and neglect oft-repeated warnings. They dislike to be reminded of their defects of character. They are unwilling to be reproved for their pride and idolatry in turning from the requirements of God to seek the gains, friendship, or pleasures of the world.

Such was the manner in which some of the Israelites received the message of reproof. Had the people been enjoying prosperity, this feeling of rebellion would, no doubt, have been general; but in their distress from the oppression of their enemies, with want and even starvation staring them in the face, they felt their need of help from God. They knew that unless He whom they had so dishonored should manifest His power for their deliverance, they must perish. In deep humility they accepted the message of reproof, confessed their sins, and implored the mercy of the Most High.

Their prayers were heard, and again the Lord sent forth the man of his choice to act as deliverer for Israel. The one thus selected was Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh. The Midianites had swept like a devouring plague over the land. It was only with the greatest difficulty that the Hebrews could secrete sufficient food to save them from actual starvation. Gideon had, however, retained possession of a small quantity of wheat, and fearing to beat it out in the threshing floor, he had taken it to the vineyard, near the wine-press. The time of ripe grapes being far off, the attention of the Midianites would not be directed to that place.

As he thus labored in secrecy and silence, he sadly meditated upon the condition of Israel. He thought of her glorious triumphs in the past, of her present abject

condition, and of the still darker prospect for the future, and his spirit was stirred within him. With deep earnestness he considered how the oppressor's yoke might be broken from off his people. To all appearance this was impossible. The Israelites were disheartened and discouraged. They had dishonored God by their idolatry, and they felt little confidence that he would work for them.

Gideon almost despaired of inspiring the people with faith or courage, but he knew that the Lord would work mightily for Israel as he had done in the past. His whole soul cried out after God. He felt that although he might stand alone, yet if he had the assurance that God was with him, he would not fear to strike a blow against the oppressors.

While Gideon's mind was absorbed in meditations like these, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him and addressed him with the words, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (verse 12).

The melancholy nature of Gideon's thoughts is revealed by his answer, "O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites" (verse 13).

The messenger of Heaven replied, "Go in this thy might, and

thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?" (verse 14).

With a sense of his own unfitness for so important a work, Gideon exclaimed, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (verse 15).

Then the angel gave him the gracious assurance, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (verse 16). . . .

The very same Jesus who walked in humiliation as a man among the children of men, came to His ancient people, to council and direct, to command, to encourage, and reprove them.

The family to which Gideon belonged was grievously infected with idolatry. His father erected at Ophrah, where he dwelt, a large altar to Baal, at which the people of the towns worshiped. Gideon was commanded to destroy this altar, to cut down the groves that surrounded it, and in its stead to erect an altar to Jehovah, over the rock on which the offering had been consumed, and then to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord. Gideon faithfully carried out these directions, performing the work by night, lest he should be compelled to desist if he attempted it by day.

The deliverer of Israel must declare war upon idolatry before he went to battle with the enemies of his people. He must esteem the honor of God above the credit of

his father, and regard the divine commands as more obligatory than parental authority. . . .

It was of great importance that the deliverance of Israel should be preceded by a solemn protest against the worship of Baal, and an acknowledgment of Jehovah as the only true and living God.

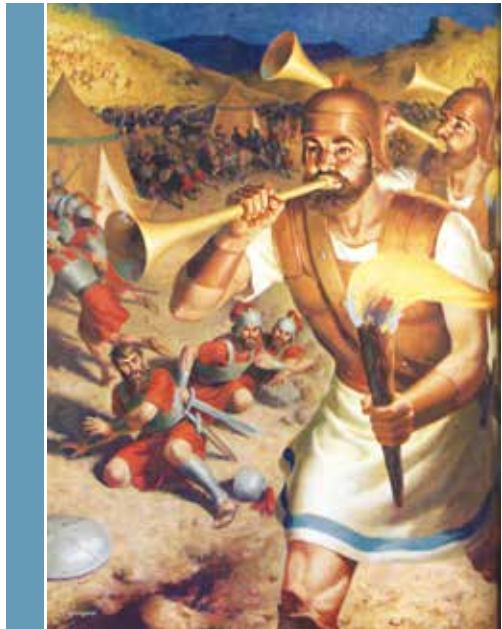
When the men of the city, early in the morning, came to pay their devotions to Baal, they were greatly surprised and enraged at what had taken place. Soon it was known that Gideon had done this, and then nothing but his blood could satisfy those deluded idolaters. They at once began to put forth efforts to take his life.

Gideon had told his father, Joash, of the Angel's visit, and the promise that Israel should be delivered. He also related to him the divine command to destroy the altar of Baal. The Spirit of God moved upon the heart of Joash. He saw that the gods whom he had worshiped had no power even to save themselves from utter destruction and hence they could not protect their worshipers. When the idolatrous multitude clamored for the death of Gideon, Joash fearlessly stood in his defense, and endeavored to show the people how powerless and unworthy of trust or adoration

were their gods: "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning; if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar" (verse 31).

He reminded them that the penalty of death would justly rest upon themselves instead of Gideon, for they had broken the law of God against idolatry. . . .

Gideon deeply felt his own insufficiency for the great work before him. He dared not place himself at the head of the army without positive evidence that God had called him to this work, and that He would be with him. He prayed, "If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool



in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou has said” (verses 36, 37).

The Lord granted the prayer of His servant. In the morning the fleece was wet, while the ground was dry. But now unbelief suggested that wool naturally absorbs moisture when there is any in the air, and that the test was not decisive. Hence, he asked a renewal of the sign, humbly pleading that unbelief might not move the Lord to anger. His request was granted.


The Lord does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. Individuals who might do good service for God, may for a time be left in obscurity, apparently unnoticed and unemployed by their Master. But if they faithfully perform the duties of their humble position, cherishing a willingness to labor and to sacrifice for Him, He will in His own time entrust them with greater responsibilities.

Before honor is humility. The Lord can use most effectually those who are most sensible of their own unworthiness and inefficiency. He will teach them to exercise the courage of faith. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom.

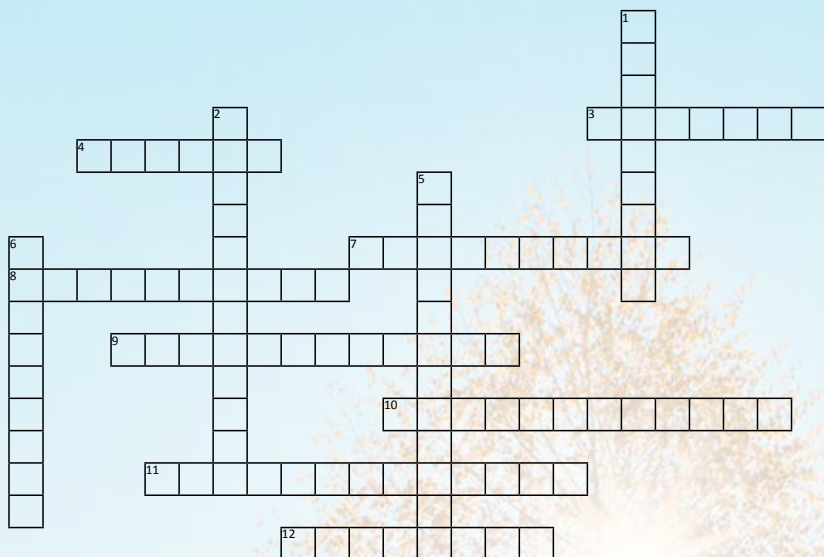
God will accept the services of all who will work in obedience

to His will, who will not for any consideration bring a stain upon the conscience, who will not permit any influence to lead them from the path of duty. . . .

The teachable and trusting ones, having a right purpose and a pure heart, need not wait for great occasions or for extraordinary abilities before they employ their powers. They should not stand irresolute, questioning, and fearing what the world will say or think of them. We are not to weary ourselves with anxious care, but to go on, quietly performing with faithfulness the work which God assigns us, and leaving the result wholly with Him.

If they but preserve their sincerity, their meekness, and humility, the poorest, weakest, and humblest of Christ’s followers, working in love, may start waves of blessing that shall go on widening and deepening, to refresh and bless the world. In order that they may do this, Christ must shine forth in their character. Let the daily life be a reflection of the life of Christ, and the testimony thus borne to the world will have a powerful influence. Heaven alone will reveal the fruits of an unselfish, holy life. The great contest of truth against error must be carried forward by men who kindle their taper at the divine altar. Evil may seem for a time to prevail, but in the end righteousness will gain the victory. Every righteous act will be recorded in the book of life, and will be remembered and rewarded of God. 

Crossword Review



1. The germination of the seed represents the beginning of _____ life.
2. Holy tempers and _____ emotions are fruit borne on the Christian tree.
3. Job made a _____ with his eyes that he might not sin.
4. The eyes were not made to feast on error and foolish _____.
5. Study in _____ lines is the A, B, and C of education.
6. God provided the conditions most favorable for the development of _____.
7. The quills and loose skin of the porcupine _____ him from attacks by predators.
8. Wasting time is seen as the worst _____ known to people.
9. Because of Israel's sins, the _____ hand of God was withdrawn.
10. Gideon felt his own _____ for the great work before him.
11. The Lord can use most effectually those who sense their own _____.
12. Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a _____.

Crossword answers

SPRITUAL, SANCTIFIED, COVENANT, CONVERSATION, AGRICULTURAL, CHARACTER, LEGITIMATE, PROTECT, WASTEFULNESS, PROTECTING, INSUFFICIENCY, UNWORTHINESS, FRIEND

OPENING THE HEART

BY J. E. GREEN



Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend—a Friend in high places. In our desire to have Him lift us up to higher ground, we actually need first to humble ourselves. Unfortunately, the tendencies of our human nature seem to block us from fully understanding how this operates. Please notice the following example that provide food for thought to help us better see the real beauty that comes when we humble ourselves—for the promise is sure: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:10).

CONFESSION

Bertie had quarreled with his little cousin and was very sorry for it but did not have the courage to confess it; so he said that when

she comes again, he will act so she would know he is sorry.

How much like us all was Bertie; it is so hard to come right out and say, “I have done wrong and am sorry for it,” that we put it off from time to time, and at last never say it. We resolve that we will act better, and others will see by that that we are sorry. I have found this to be a poor way to get along; for, although we may do better for a time, the old impulses are strong, and we gradually get careless, and forget to watch; and before we are aware of it, we have fallen into error again.


Proverbs 28:13 says, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Confessing our sins will help us to forsake them, and without doing this we cannot hope for pardon. Our words and our deeds

must agree; we must confess our sins, and then act as though we were truly sorry for them. Paul expresses the same thought: “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10).

“Oh,” says one, “it is so hard to confess; I can confess to God, but when it comes to confessing to others—that is too humiliating.”

When we have confessed one error, it is easier to confess the next, and these are stepping-stones to perfection. It is sweet to lie down at night with the recollection that all our sins against God and others are forgiven, because God says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and

just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9); and as we have confessed them, we know God has forgiven them; and if others do not forgive us, it does not alter our relation to God. We are free; and so the record of each day may be completed, perfect, and in the end we shall have nothing to confess, for we have been doing that all along, and we are then ready to have Jesus confess our names before His Father and the holy angels and bid us welcome to His heavenly home.

So, don't forget: “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). 

THE ONWARD WAY

BY CHARLOTTE MURRAY

*Our life is one long journey, and the road
Is sometimes rough and rugged; but our God
Who loveth us, His children, knows the way.
And He will gently lead us, day by day.
We meet with certain milestones on our way,
That help to cheer us onward; for they say,
“Our God hath kept you so far, year by year;
Then will you dread the future? Will you fear?”
How can we, when He holds us by the hand,
And promises to lead us to His land?
Then let us simply trust Him, nor allow
One single shade of doubt to vex us now.*

APPRECIATING OUR *Saviour*

Who is Jesus?

He is the One who created us, together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Many realize that He is the Best Friend and only Saviour available to humanity; they appreciate His great love and mercy in coming to pay the price for our mistakes. To truly appreciate this inspires a change in lifestyle as the believer seeks to follow the outline for behavior given in sacred Scripture.

Some hearts are touched when they see pictures of Jesus uplifted on the cross of Calvary. But sadly, although they may be “stirred with strong emotion as they view the humiliation of Jesus, who shrink from following in His footsteps when they understand that they must be sharers in His humiliation and suffering. When Jesus asks the surrender of self without reserve, when He asks compliance with His government, and that they shall walk in humble obedience and implicit trust, their nature rebels. ‘No,’ says the proud heart; ‘we want to keep our independence.’ But this is the very thing that Jesus wants you to have. It was that you might be freed from the slavery of sin that He died on Calvary’s cross. He

died that through faith in Him, you might be free indeed, and stand fast in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

“Contemplate the sufferings of your Redeemer, and you will find that a check will be put upon sin. Every sin that is committed is a reenacting of Christ’s humiliation, a reopening of His wounds. Those who refuse to look upon Jesus lifted up upon the cross, who will not deny the inclination of their perverse hearts, who will not give up what they term their independence, their freedom to serve the author of sin as they please, will find their hearts filled with bitterness against those who accept Jesus as a personal Saviour. To them Christians will seem their enemies and injurers, and the gospel a sword. . . .

“Christians realize the blessing that comes upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they are filled. The blessing comes upon those who desire entire conformity to the will of God, who desire to know Christ and to reflect His image. Through the merits of Jesus Christ, they realize that nothing is reserved in the heart of God for them but the fountain


of the water of life—tender mercy, loving-kindness, infinite compassion.”—*The Bible Echo*, March 26, 1894. So, when we think of wounding Jesus over and over again, that should really make us want to avoid inflicting such cruelty to the One who is tenderly watching over us at this very moment.

People do not identify a Christian only by what he or she does. It can often be what he or she DOESN'T do! The victorious Christian is not a slave to evil habits, but a master over them. What does that mean? It depends on the temptations you are facing. For one young person it could mean trusting in Christ to help you refuse an ice cream cone or avoid gossip. For another it would mean refraining from indulgence in a physical relationship that would drag you down spiritually. Or it might mean showing kindness to someone who mistreats you.

“The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 301.

“Prayer, earnest, humble prayer, offered in faith amid the hours

of darkness and gloom, brings light from Heaven to the soul. Peace comes to every heart for every prayer offered in faith. The soul is lifted above the clouds of darkness and error, conflicts and passion. Light, precious light, flashes from the throne of God, and is fitting up feeble men to become God's messengers in shedding light to the world. Trials patiently borne, blessings gratefully received, temptations manfully resisted, meekness, kindness, mercy and love exhibited, are the lights which shine forth in the character before the world, revealing the contrast with the darkness which comes of selfishness and unrestrained passion of the natural heart, into which the light of life has never shone.”—*The Signs of Times*, January 15, 1880.

May the powerful God of heaven inspire us to REALLY appreciate Jesus so much that it influences our life in a mighty way—that we may escape the slavery of sin in all of its various forms—and choose to live instead by His power in His way! 

Editor Barbara Montrose, **Layout** Brandon Balbach.

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Dream not too much of what you'll do tomorrow,
How well you'll work perhaps another year;
Tomorrow's chance you do not need to borrow—
Today is here.

Boast not too much of mountains you will master,
The while you linger in the vale below;
To dream is well, but plodding brings us faster
To where we go.

Talk not too much about some new endeavor
You mean to do before the setting of the sun;
Who idles now will idle on forever
Till life is done.

Say not some day to break some habit's fetter
When this old year is dead and passed away;
If you have need of living wiser, better,
Begin today!

—Anonymous