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Swift to Hear, Slow to Speak,
Slow to Wrath

A person with long hair, seen from behind, stands in a field of tall grass with arms raised towards a bright sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The background shows a line of trees under a sky with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, purple, and orange.

THE *Joy* THAT IS SET BEFORE *Us*

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

God asks the youth to serve Him with consecrated minds. The call that He gave to the humble fishermen on the shores of Galilee He gives to each soul. "Follow me," He says, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

The men of the world are ambitious for fame. They desire houses and lands and plenty of money that they may be great according to the measure of the world. It is the height of their ambition to reach a place where they can look down with a sense of superiority upon those who are poor. These souls are building on the sand, and their house will fall suddenly. Superiority of position is not true greatness. That which

does not increase the value of the soul is of no real value in itself.

The qualities which shine the brightest in the world have no place in the kingdom of God. Birth, position, wealth, and high-sounding titles find no special favor with Him. Today, as when he walked among men, Christ passes these by and accepts the men and women in the humble walks of life, who have His glory in view. The words He uttered on the mount are truth for all time. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom

of heaven” (Matthew 5:19). Whatever his learning, his wealth and position, heaven estimates the transgressor as the least of all God’s creatures; and the humble and obedient are regarded as of more value than the most exalted and wealthy and honored of earth.

Christ invites the youth to wear His yoke and lift His burdens. “Come unto me,” He says “take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:29, 30). The reason we do so little in winning souls to Christ is that we have so little of Christ in us. The usefulness of the Christians will depend upon the measure of the grace he has received; and the measure of grace he receives will be proportionate to the use he makes of the blessings that God gives him.

You will have some estimate of your own worth when you become a laborer together with Christ, to fill the world with His righteousness. The Lord expects you to proclaim the message, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:7). You are to work to bless those who have no sense of their need of a new heart, a new life and purpose. Someone must tell sinners of their great need; and those whom God has accepted as His sons and daughters must work as Christ worked. “If any man will come after me,” the Saviour said, “let him deny himself, and take up

**The world needs
spiritual workers,
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his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Those who heed this call will study the meekness and lowliness of Christ and will join with Him in His efforts to make the world better.

The commission Christ gave to the disciples He gives to all connected with Him. We are to make any and every sacrifice for the joy of seeing souls saved. Whatever work is done in the name of Jesus to bless and elevate and restore human beings to the image of God, is as acceptable to the Lord as was the work of Moses or Joseph or Daniel. You who are the elect and chosen ones are to receive the divine commission to yoke up with Christ. You must never grow weary in well doing. The highest honor that can be conferred upon human beings, be they young or old, rich or poor, is to be permitted to lift up the oppressed, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak. The world is full of suffering; go, heal the sick, pray for the hopeless, preach the gospel to the poor.

The message of mercy that Christ brought from the Father

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to man was meant for the ears of the world: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Everlasting life has been purchased for man at an infinite cost. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Through this matchless gift, Christ encircles the world with an atmosphere of grace. All who choose to inhale this life-giving air will have eternal life.

That Christ should take human nature, and by a life of humiliation elevate man in the scale of moral worth with God; that He should carry His adopted nature to the throne of God, and there present His children to the Father, to have conferred upon them an honor exceeding that bestowed upon the angels—this is love that melts the sinner's heart. It is too much for the human mind to grasp, that God, having gathered together all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of His power, should place them in the hand of His Son, saying, All these I give to you for man. These are my gifts to him. Confer them upon him, that he may know that there is no love like mine, and that his eternal happiness consists in

giving Me his love in return. As the sinner contemplates this love, it broadens and deepens into infinitude, passing beyond his comprehension.

Colaborers with God are to fill the space they occupy in the world with the love of Jesus. The world needs spiritual workers who will plant the seeds of truth in every heart. Christ calls upon us to be "instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12). By this He means that the heart is constantly to go out after God, while we watch for opportunities to do good to the souls that are ready to die.


"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). God has chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. Therefore stand fast. Your hardest conflict will be in keeping the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life. In order to do this, you must die daily. If you serve God faithfully, you will meet with prejudice and opposition; but do not become provoked when you suffer wrongfully. Do not retaliate. Hold fast your integrity in Jesus Christ. Set your face as a flint



heavenward. Let others speak their own words, and pursue their own course of action; it is for you to press on in the meekness and lowliness of Christ. Do your work with steadfast purpose, with purity of heart, with all your might and strength, leaning on the arm of God. The true and exalted nature of your work you may never know. The value of your being you can measure only by the life given to save you.

The apostle gives us his experience and the experience of his fellow laborers in their work. "We are troubled on every side," he says; "yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10). If we work the works of Christ, the mind will gather strength and firmness to resist the adversary of souls. The apostle says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Peter 4:12). "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold

that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6, 7). "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19). "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:6-9).

For every soul who is growing up into Christ there will be times of earnest and long-continued struggle; for the powers of darkness are determined to oppose the way of advance. But when we look to the cross of Christ for grace, we cannot fail. The promise of the Redeemer is, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).—*The Youth's Instructor*, November 2 and 9, 1899. 

DO I NEED CHRIST?

BY SHELLEY NEWMAN



At the present time in this earth's history, it is possible to live as a Christian, in a lot of areas, without physical persecution for our beliefs.

Do we really understand what a privilege this is to be able to go through each day without worrying for our life? Or any time we are inside our houses we never have to worry about getting a knock on the door, and when we open it to be immediately arrested and taken to prison, abused, tortured, and the like?

Do you think we really need Christ in our comfortable life today?

How many of us are in the routine of getting up every morning and going to work, coming home in the evening, eating, spending time with our families/friends, doing our own thing, having a short reading for worship, then going to sleep and repeating this day after day, year after year? May I ask those who don't have families to provide for:

**DO YOU KNOW
WHY YOU ARE
DOING THIS?**

**WHAT IS THE
REASON YOU GO
TO WORK?**

**ON WHOM ARE
YOU SPENDING
THE MONEY?**

**WHY DO YOU
WANT TO EARN
MONEY?**

**FOR WHAT ARE
YOU USING THIS
MONEY?**

I used to wonder, when reading the story of the Israelites and the history of their nation, how they could forget God and not feel the need to follow His leading and plans for their lives. I always thought that if I lived back then, I would have lived my life exactly as He said and done everything He required without any question!

The reality is, sad to say, I would have done exactly what the Israelites did. The fact is they became too comfortable with their life. They started forgetting about Christ and lost their need of Him. Satan gradually tipped the scales until finally they slid all the way to the bottom without even realizing it.

I believe Satan has finally mastered his evil plan of getting people to put God out of their lives. He used the "gradual" method for years with the

Israelites, then after Christ came to earth and stirred people up and reminded

them of what true Christianity was, for hundreds of years Satan lost his temper and vented his anger with no disguise on everyone who believed in God. Finally he came to his evil senses and realized it wasn't actually working in his favor, so he stopped being so outwardly violent. He went to work on an architecture design, instead of a contractor design, and his rate of success has flown to the top of his chart.

We are being a part of Satan's figures on his chart by being so wrapped up in our lives that our Christian experience is becoming simply a routine. It is just something that is a part of our lives but isn't really the main focus. We thank God for all His blessings when we come to prayer

meeting and on Sabbath. We pray to God and ask for help with this and that. Do we really mean it, though? Are the prayer requests mentioned at prayer meeting on our mind constantly and do we really care about the outcome of them all?

How can we make our Christian experience the main focus of our life? How can we make Christ our best Friend and get to know Him the way Enoch and Moses did? How can we get off Satan's chart and get on Christ's chart?

Here are a few simple steps, that I find help me understand that Christ is very real and that He is right beside you at all times:


STEP 1

Talk to God in your mind (or out loud if you are by yourself) all day long, every day. Just try it and put reminders on your phone if you find yourself forgetting. This simple step helps Christ to become real to you instead of just a Being way up past the clouds and sky.

STEP 2

When big decisions come up and you are not sure which way to go, just pray to God and ask Him to shut or open whichever door He chooses for you.

- This is something that does take a lot of faith, but from experience always remember that God loves tests. And His favorite test is the Patience Test, which He performs by waiting till the last minute before showing you which path He wants you to take.
- If you think you have received no answers, then just tell God that you are going to take a certain path, and if He doesn't want you going that way, then to stop you somehow. If nothing comes up to stop you, then just keep right on and trust that it is the way He wants you to go.
- Never think that there are choices or circumstances that are too hard for God, or that God wouldn't be interested, or that you are bothering God too much with so many



little things. If God can be bothered to know how many hairs are on your head and how many stars and solar systems are in the sky, then I am sure He can be bothered in listening to all that you have to tell Him all day long, every day, all night if you want to and every night!! I confess I underestimate His abilities at times and need constant reminding of what He is capable of.

STEP 3

Read the Bible every day. You can download Bible reading plans on your mobile phones, or you can find a Bible that has a plan in the back of it and make it your habit to read it every day.

- Friends, this is God talking back to you. Listen to Him and to what He is saying. It is a letter God has written to you. What you can do in some verses you might be reading is to replace the person He is talking to with your name. This helps to make it even more real to you.

These are just a couple of steps that really helped me to realize that Christ is very real and that He truly is a “Friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24)!

If you have other ways or ideas, put them to use. Experiment. Know and understand why you want a friendship with Christ.



A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Here is a story about the first time I prayed for something and God answered my prayer. It happened a few years ago when one of my close friends had to move away.

A couple of months passed and my friend invited me to come and visit. I had never driven that far by myself before, and it was a big thing

for me to go. I really wanted to go but I had high doubts that my parents would let me. I was only 17 and had not had my driver's license for very long.

So I thought to myself that I would go past my parents and pray to God and see if He thought it was okay for me to go. If He didn't want me to go, then He would stop me. But I told God that Him stopping me was not to be my parents saying "No." It had to be something or some circumstance that I couldn't wheedle my way around or get past in any way. (My parents were actually okay with me going after all that.)

I made my plans and got ready for the trip.

A week or two before the trip, I was at work and one of the girls reminded me of a seminar that I had to attend that work had booked me into, along with another couple of girls from work. I checked the dates and it fell on that very weekend I had planned to go on this trip, which meant I wouldn't be able to go. I was VERY furious and I argued with the girl and tried to see if there was anyone I could swap with or any way to get out of this, but to no avail. I stormed out of the room very upset.

Later on, as I was sitting at my desk I suddenly thought I should pray to God to see if He could fix this problem so that I could go. In

that instance my original prayer flashed into my mind, that this was exactly what I had asked God for if it wasn't His will for me to go. And he had answered it exactly how I asked. It wasn't my parents saying no. And it wasn't something I could get around and still go.

My anger swiftly subsided and I felt so ashamed of my behavior. I apologized to God and the girl for my bad mood and I told my friend it wasn't God's will that I come this time.

This made me realize that so many times when we pray to God, we think we get no response. The truth is, we do get a response. We either forgot our request or we just never realized the answer when He gave it to us.

So the question I now ask myself and you is: Do we need Christ as our personal Friend/Saviour? Do we want Christ as our Friend/Saviour?

Let us ask God right now to come into our hearts. He is waiting right outside the door to come in. See Revelation 3:20. Believe it. Dare to bring Him right in and see what wonders He will make of your life. From now on and throughout the rest of your lives till Christ comes in glory, dare to ask, "What Would Jesus Do?" in every transaction of your life, and dare to do what Jesus would do in every transaction of your life!

May God bless you richly! 



AN OBJECT LESSON IN WEEDS

While visiting a friend on his farm, as we were looking around his place, we saw a solid clump of vegetation, perhaps 5 or 6 feet square, enclosed in a wire netting. All around it were sod and short grass, but within the netting the vegetation shot forth fresh and green.

My friend said it was an object lesson, and sure enough it was. It had been a chicken pen and he had simply left it alone. The soil was fertile, but no good seed was sown in it. Then from this untended and unseeded spot had sprung up every miserable, worthless weed that you could think of; and they had grown tall and dense, until they were thick as a hedge, so that

a chicken could not have found its way through them.

This was simply the result of neglect. No seed had been sown, no evil weeds had been killed, and the enclosure was a mass of useless, pestiferous vegetation. Wormwood, pigweed, sinkwood, ragweed, and every kind of useless trash, which had simply grown of itself, without anybody's help or hindrance, were growing there in profusion; and the owner of the place had left this spot as an object lesson to show his men what would become of any neglected, unseeded, untended piece of ground. He did not propose to leave the weeds there long, for they would ripen seed enough to



ruin a farm; but while they were there, they served as a lesson.

The human heart is just as full of evil things as any foul, weedy soil. Let us see what kind of crop it will produce if left to itself. The Saviour explains that those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they pollute a person, “for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:19, 20).

If we would save our gardens, we must kill the weeds; if we would have a good crop, we must sow good seed; and if we would save our souls from death, we must kill out the weeds of sin, and must have our hearts sown with the good seed, the word of God.

The heart cannot be empty. If it is kept filled with error, folly and falsehood, its fruits will be evil and only evil; but if the good seed is sown, and the weeds are pulled up, then we may expect a harvest of precious fruits and flowers, bright, beautiful, and useful. But if the seed-sowing is neglected, if

the weeds are not kept down, then our lives will be a tangled mass of wickedness, sin, and sorrow, and we shall be like those fields filled with worthless plants, which scatter evil seeds on every hand. One field filled with thorns and thistles may spread its cursed seeds over a whole country; and one person full of sin and vileness may poison a whole generation. To avoid such evils we commit the evil plants to the flames, and “that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned” (Hebrews 6:8). And so if we do not receive good seed and bear good fruit, let us remember that when God gathers His wheat into the heavenly garner, He will burn the tares in a furnace of fire.

Let us learn an object lesson from the weeds, and let us see to it that our hearts are well sown with the Word of God, and kept clear of thorns and briers and evil seeds. So with God’s blessing the good seed sown within us shall bring forth fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.—*Adapted from an unknown author.* 🌱

Bible • Light

The Bible itself is a light. The words of God are light. The Scriptures are not so hard to understand as many people suppose. It is an insult to the Lord to teach that He is not able to make His revelation to the human race so plain that they could understand it. He has said just what He wanted to, and in just the way to convey the exact meaning that He wanted conveyed. The words themselves contain the meaning, and he or she who will consider them humbly and prayerfully will understand them.

When the apostle Paul wrote the words of God to Timothy, he said, "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Timothy 2:7). How can this be? Here is the answer: "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6). That is, the understanding of

the words of the Bible is in those words. He who reads the words without any bias or prejudice or any selfish ends to serve, who asks for the aid of the Holy Spirit, and who is careful to find out exactly what they do say, and does not put into them something which they do not say, will understand just what God wants him or her to understand by them. But the trouble with too many is, that they come to study the Bible with certain ideas already fixed, which they of course think that the Bible teaches, and then because they cannot harmonize the Bible with those ideas, they think that the Bible is a very difficult book. One of the most common things in the world is for a person to read a text, and then almost unconsciously to assume that it means a certain thing, which is not stated in the text at all. 🔥

—Author unknown.





Echoes Echoes from Paradise

BY KLARA FINARU



I remember going out for a walk on the beautiful countryside property surrounded by mountains. We had just finished the afternoon practice, and I had gone outside to catch my breath before the next practice. I took in a deep breath of fresh mountain air. While admiring the scenery, I tried to imagine what heaven would be like. To me, this place was like a mini replica of paradise. I'd like to think heaven would look a little bit like this. As I continued my walk around the campus, I wondered what paradise will sound like. Will it be quiet and peaceful? Or will there be sounds

of children laughing and playing? Or maybe the sky will be filled with songs of birds chirping?

My thoughts were suddenly interrupted when I heard the tuba play a funny-sounding note off-key. I quickly checked the time on my phone. Five minutes and practice would begin. I skipped across the lawn, hopped up the steps, and rushed into the building. Dodging people this and that way, I finally made my way to my room. I scrambled to grab my flute and sheet music and back out the door I dashed. Breathing a sigh of relief I entered the room just in time. Brother Isaac Terceros,



our teacher and conductor who is also a member of the Music Department of the GC, greeted the students cheerfully. As always he was excited for this afternoon's lesson. His happiness and positive energy were contagious and made us forget about how tired we were. I couldn't wait to see which new songs we would learn this time. I quickly found my seat and began to warm up my flute. "Let's tune the instruments," Isaac announced, "Today we will play the Hallelujah Chorus!" Everyone turned to look at each other with sparkling eyes. It was finally time to practice everyone's favorite piece.

We were at a summer music school called Echoes from Paradise in Porumbacu, Romania.

This was one of the many summer music schools the SDARM GC Music Department has had around the world. For example, in Brazil they have already had more than one of these special events. Praise the Lord that we had the opportunity to have one in Europe for the very first time.

The purpose of this summer music school was to discover and help the youth improve their precious musical talents. The Music Department of the GC organized music history, theory, and orchestral conducting classes. The fact that the 150-talented participants were good musicians with a love for music and lots of energy helped make a wonderful orchestra and choir.



It was a very busy schedule we had from August 15–21. During the week, we prepared a special repertoire for the choir and orchestra. Every day we practiced and studied in the various classes. Daily, after morning worship and breakfast, we listened to Sister Barbara Montrose, who had presentations about the history of music from a Christian perspective. We learned about how music affects our brains, and how to tell the difference between good and bad music. Following the presentation, the choir and orchestra had practice separately. At the end of the day, the choir and orchestra would unite to practice together. We would usually finish practicing around

10 p.m. Exhausted but happy with what we had accomplished that day, we would be dismissed to go to sleep. However, after all that practice, some of us found it hard to leave the room. Brother Isaac, the conductor, would bring his flute and we all played and sang together. Music brought us together, and through music we brought glory and praise to our Creator.

From Friday to Sunday, we attended the weekend public conference. The choir and the orchestra formed in Porumbacu had the opportunity to present a concert in Stupini, close to Brasov. People from all over Romania and other countries in Europe attended the meetings.

On Saturday night we had the close of the conference. Brother Marcos Pedrazas, leader of the Music Department of the GC, who also taught at the school and conducted the choir and orchestra, announced the last song. What followed was dead silence as the choir and orchestra watched for the signal from the conductor to begin the last song. I took a moment to scan the room: the congregation, the orchestra, the choir—so many people gathered in the house of God, all eager to sing praises to our loving Creator. I could only imagine how we will all gather in heaven to praise God.

I turned my attention back to the conductor who just then lifted his arms in signal to the orchestra. We all lifted our instruments in

position to play. The next moment a most glorious sound filled the auditorium. The audience stood up in unison for the Hallelujah Chorus, as tradition has been for years. I cannot put into words how awe-inspiring it was being surrounded by instruments of every kind and a choir of angelic voices. I played flute—which meant the trumpets were right behind me. The sound was overwhelming, echoing throughout the concert hall.

Suddenly, it clicked in my head. Echoes—Echoes from Paradise! This beautiful music is just an echo of what Paradise sounds like! I decided right then and there that I wouldn't want to miss singing the Song of the Lamb when we all get to heaven one day. I would like to hear more than just an echo. Wouldn't you? 🎵





THE Sabbath

BY JULIA LOOMIS

The sweetest thought that comes to me with each returning Sabbath is that God the Father, and God the Son, by whom all things were created (John 1:1-3), rested on that first day after creation was finished, and sometimes I try to picture in my mind the character of that first Sabbath; but sin has so long darkened our minds, dimmed our spiritual vision, and weakened our powers, that we cannot catch a clear idea of what that day must have been.

We know by faith that everything came pure from the hands of God; and as the eve of the Sabbath “drew on,” not a discordant note could be heard. Every living thing was at peace with itself, at peace with its fellow, and at peace with its Creator.

What a day of joy and gladness must it have been to Adam! He had been created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26); and with all the powers of his being in a state of perfection, he could look abroad upon nature, and up to the starry firmament, beholding everywhere the wisdom and love of God; but when the night was past, and the first rays of the rising sun began to tinge the eastern sky, and the orb of day rode forth in all its effulgent splendor, all the powers of his being must have united in praise to Him who made the heavens and the earth.

There the first man was in his purity. Untainted by sin, he could see the hand of God in every flower, in each spear of grass, in the tiniest insect, as well as in the majestic eagle that soared aloft.



From everything animate and inanimate he could learn lessons of love and obedience.

But Adam was a scholar in the school of Christ. Why God, who is never weary, should rest all through the hours of that first seventh-day was doubtless a mystery to him; but when after the rest was passed, God “blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work” (Genesis 2:3) and told Adam that the Sabbath was made for man, that he might pause at the close of each week, and worship Him who made all these things, Adam’s gratitude must have burst forth in a higher and sweeter song of praise.

Here we will leave Adam at the close of his first Sabbath and, before proceeding further, will inquire the meaning of this act of sanctifying the seventh day. The day was already holy, made so by the presence of the Father and the Son; but some act was necessary by which humanity could know for a certainty which day of the seven was the “Lord’s day.” We read in Exodus 19:13, 23, that when the

Lord was about to come down upon Mt. Sinai, He told Moses to “set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it,” so that nothing unclean should touch it while His presence was there. Thus also in sanctifying the seventh day, the Lord set it apart from the other six working days as holy time, because of His presence which was in it, so that nothing unclean, or unholy, should come into that day.

Presumably not long after this first Sabbath, sin entered into the world, and humanity could no longer enjoy the presence of God; therefore the human race could not keep the day made holy by the divine presence; but in the process of time God called out a people from the nations of the earth to prepare them for Himself. He wanted them to be a “holy nation,” because through them Christ was to appear upon the earth as God-man—the promised Saviour (Genesis 3:15). On them He again enjoined His Sabbath; holding the manna upon each Sabbath, He came down upon Mt. Sinai and commanded them to “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”

(Exodus 20:8), thus referring them directly to that first seventh day after creation and giving the same reason He then gave why it was set apart for a holy purpose.


Afterward God said to that people, “My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Exodus 31:13). By this we understand that a sanctified heart and God’s sanctified day are inseparable; that is, without Christ in the heart we cannot keep His holy day.

Thus it was with the Jews. As long as they had faith in Christ, who was their leader, they kept His Sabbath; but when they lost faith in Him, the spirit and intent of the day were lost to them, and became a burdensome form; and when Christ appeared upon the earth, Sabbathkeeping had become idolatry—they worshipped the **day**, instead of **Christ in the day**.

This is a sad picture. We may look back upon the failures of that people and exclaim, How could they do so? But let us examine our hearts and motives. Is the Sabbath a burden to us, or a delight? We have seen why the Israelites failed; if Christ is not in our hearts, we cannot keep the day that is made holy by His presence. We are placed in varied circumstances. There are but few families, comparatively, whose members are all united upon the Sabbath question; and, like the

But let us examine our hearts and motives. Is the Sabbath a burden to us, or a delight?

Jews in their captivity, some of us may be tempted to hang "our harps upon the willows" (Psalm 137:2) and to say, How can we keep the Lord's day in a strange land? But this will not do for us. Jesus is our Helper, and He will lead us on to victory if we only follow Him faithfully.

Many of our young people are, for necessity, called to work in families that are Sunday-keepers, or that keep no day. To these I would say, Do not start out with any feeling like this: "Well, I do not know how it will be about the Sabbath. I am afraid they will ask me to do something I wouldn't like to do on that day;" but go on with a heart full of the love of Jesus. Show them by your unselfish acts that you are interested in their welfare, and you will be surprised to see how the way will be cleared before you; and when the Sabbath comes, the One who has been with you all the week will go with you through its sacred hours, and at its close you will say, This is the best Sabbath I ever spent. Why so?—Because you left it all with Jesus. 

MISSIONARY WORK == IN == ROMANIA

PART 4 OF 4
BY GABRIEL SERBAN

A young missionary agreed to share with our readers his journal of experiences. This is the final in a series of 4 journal entries. Enjoy!

CHILDREN'S CAMPS

Households can often be reached for Christ through the children. If we build a good foundation in the hearts of the little ones, when they grow up, they will continue following the instructions they were taught.

When I was first invited to serve as an instructor at a children's camp, I was a bit amazed and, at the same time, scared. I felt that I would have to be held responsible for every word I said, realizing that my influence could have lasting results, either for good or for bad. At the same time I wondered whether the children would like the camp—and pondered how I could make the

presentations more attractive to their young minds. While I was thinking about how to plan everything, my mind flew back to the time when I myself was a child and the times my parents had sent me to a children's camp. I remembered the first time I had gotten such an opportunity. I was 10. That children's camp was the first one ever organized in Romania and was being held at our headquarters in Fagaras. Here were gathered more than 30 children and teenagers. Everybody was excited; we were living a new experience. When I glanced at the schedule, however, I remember thinking that that meeting would be boring. There

were a lot of classes and not much time for play—and even if we had wanted to play, the camp was located in the middle of the town so we wouldn't have enough space to romp and play to our hearts' content.

But in time, I started to like the camp. I was building new friendships—and found all of the classes to be quite interesting, after all. When the time came to leave, I cried because I knew we were not going to see each other for a long time. Upon returning home, I told my parents just how much I liked it there at the camp. I told them all about the different activities I had participated in and, of course, they were happy to know that I had indeed enjoyed my time.

SIDETRACKED BY A LITTLE MISCHIEF

For the next camp and those that followed, I also brought my younger brother and 2 cousins with me. Now, together with my new companions, I had my own team. We influenced one another and soon this led to some mischief. Consequently, we received some punishments—but because these were generally rather light punishments, we continued playing our games. But one time, we were faced with a decision.



There were two options to the punishment, and we had to choose which one we preferred: Not to eat the whole day and just wash the dishes, or miss the mountain trip on the following day.

We really got scared and began thinking for a long time about which punishment we should pick: no food or no trip. Finally, we decided to fast and do the dishes. We didn't eat all day. The next day, we didn't have strength to climb the mountain!

After that experience we promised ourselves that we were not going to make these mistakes any more and determined not to cause any more trouble for the instructors. From then on, we took everything about the camp seriously and tried our best to be faithful in all the classes.

Looking back, I can definitely say that I sure enjoyed all the camps I attended and was always looking forward to the next one.

NOW AS A LEADER

As time passed and we grew up, the brethren began to trust us and started to ask for our help. Soon, I became a guide and whenever my help was needed, I was ready and willing to lead the mountain trips. Step by step, I was given more responsibility. Now, I had been asked to be an instructor. I understood what it meant, for I knew what an impact the camps had made on my own life

The camps I attended as a child made a lasting imprint on my personality that still follows me. Even those things that did not seem so enjoyable or useful at the time have served their purpose in my life. Afterwards, I learned to appreciate all the experiences I received at these events. In fact, I still like doing many of these same things I did there. It was there that I learned how to be friendly, and why it's so important to be friendly. I also learned a wide variety of skills such as: how to preach, how to work with wood, how to take pictures, how to write articles, how to be a more responsible person, how to cook, how to tie knots, and many other things.

Everything the children learn at these camps they will use for the rest of their lives. The influences received in the youth are very important. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). It is at a young age that the

foundation is built. If you use a wrong material, you cannot expect good results.

Now that I was a leader I had to be praying to God all the time, that He would bless us with sufficient wisdom to carry out the task before us, to be careful with our words and example, and to know what type of material to use and how best to use it.

DEALING WITH HOMESICKNESS

Once during our camp, in the middle of the night somebody came to knock on my door, asking me to go to the boys' room. Here I found a little boy crying. I tried to calm him and asked what had happened. He explained that he was missing his mom. I tried to tell him that there would be only a few days left before he would be going home, but still he continued to cry. Since his roommates weren't able to sleep because of him, I brought him to my room and continued talking with him. I tried bringing up a lot of subjects, and he would only answer a bit and then continue to cry. After a few minutes, he asked, "Tell me a story." Then I started telling him about the coming events, that Jesus would be coming to take us home. After we got to talking about what we would do in heaven, the little boy was so amazed about how beautiful it will be there, that he told me that when he would get to heaven he would want to have a lion as his pet. Soon after, he fell asleep. In the morning he

told everyone else about what a beautiful story he had heard the night before, and, of course, now all of them wanted to hear the same story. So, in the evening, all of them gathered around me and I started to tell them about heaven. I talked for more than an hour and started to get sleepy, but still they wanted to hear more.

Most people think that children cannot understand that much, but I can tell that they understand more than we think. Sometimes, when we had a free hour, I would ask them what they wanted to learn. They would write their preferences on a piece of paper, and then we'd take a vote. One this occasion, everyone voted for the most difficult title there was: "Why are there so many churches?" So, because they wanted it, I started presenting to them why there are so many churches. Everyone started asking questions. Although this is a hard subject for many of us, involving a lot of history—it wasn't so for them. They actually were quite interested and didn't find it hard to understand. When we gave them the final test, all of the students knew that God's church at the end of the time is only a remnant.



The moral of this story is that if the children in your life ask you something, give them the time they need and answer their question right then and there or find the answer for them. If you fail to be there for them when they need it, they will look elsewhere.

THE PROGRAMS

We invite the children to bring their friends along to these biannual camps and try to provide diverse material so that nobody gets bored.

In the morning, there is exercise time, morning worship, and breakfast. At the beginning of the day, we have strong Bible-based messages for them. Then, in the afternoon, they get classes in music, English, Spanish, and health. For the Sabbath worship, as well as morning and evening worship, we ask the children to prepare certain subjects and preach. When they saw we trusted



the camp, they find themselves welcomed and by the time they leave, they tell us they can't wait for the next camp.

I remember one boy who came to me at the beginning, and said, "Gabriel, please do not ask me to pray; I don't know how to

them, they really gave their best interest to preparing and presenting the messages.

The goal of these children camps is to keep them united, to give them a vision for life, to guide them spiritually, to help them to trust in God more, and decide what they want to be in the future.

When I work with these children and observe their eagerness to learn, I get attached to them. Each time I see them grow more and more, not only in stature but also in character. I miss them very much between camps.

The last children's camp I attended was one week before the GC meetings in the U.S.A. in 2015. Most of the children were from outside the church. When they came for the first time, they were shy—ashamed because they felt that they had nothing in common with us. They felt that they were different. But, during

pray." The next day I asked him to pray. I told him to say whatever he felt he needed to say. He was quiet for a moment, but then he prayed. After that first prayer, he always wanted to pray.

I asked another young boy to prepare a subject for the worship service. He told me he did not know what to talk about for that long. I told him, "You can speak just 15 minutes. You can do it; I trust you." He was happy that I said I trusted him, so he prepared his message and preached for more than 35 minutes. After the sermon he came to me and told me that he already had two more subjects to talk about. So, he preached all afternoon.

During the week, the children prepared the Sabbath afternoon program. They learned poems, songs, and Bible verses. Despite their differing backgrounds, everyone had a contribution to

make, and all of them were happy to have their minute in the program.


MISSIONARY WORK

When we told the children that if we do missionary work our crowns will be full of stars, they were eager to go out and do missionary work. So, we all took some books and went to a nearby park to share the gospel. That evening, I wanted to listen to their testimonies. All of them were so happy for their experiences that day, and the resounding question was, "When are we going again?"

One boy told us that he had eaten cookies. When we asked him where he had gotten them, he explained that he was eager to have a lot of stars in his crown and wanted more, so he went inside a hotel and started knocking on the doors. Somebody there gave him cookies. I immediately thought of the times when I myself was scared to do missionary work. If somebody would ask me to go inside a hotel and disturb the people there with my tracts, I don't know that I would agree to do that. Maybe I would wait for people at the entrance, but to go inside? No way. Who knows if they might take me to court. But this young boy went fearlessly inside, not thinking whether they might be disturbed or would call the police.

The campground we rent is in a tourist area. One evening, while we were practicing a song for the Sabbath, a young girl from the neighborhood came and joined

us. She learned the song very fast and asked me to go with her to surprise her mom. I was a bit embarrassed to go, but she insisted. I thought it only would be her mom and her but, upon arriving, I found quite a group of people inside. The girl explained to her mom that this was a surprise—and when we started singing the church song, her mother started to cry. I told her mom that she had a very bright girl who had learned both the tune and the words to the song in merely a few minutes. I asked her to leave the child with us at the camp. Although, the camp was almost over, the mother agreed to send the girl, and she stayed with us till the end.

Missionary work is very important; every branch of God's work is important—but to work with children may very well be the most important work. If we want them to help us in sharing the gospel to all the world, we have to invest our resources in them—time, money, everything. They are the future of God's church. By working with children, I saw that when you do not appreciate them, they feel it and you may lose them forever. Conversely, when you nurture them with the spirit of Christ, they will be influenced for good and the results will bear fruit for eternity. Every moment is very important. If you miss just one moment, you have missed everything. May we all cherish and improve each and every moment as a God-given opportunity! 

Bible ABC's

Z

A little man eager for a new life in Christ (Luke 19:1-10).

Leah's sixth son whose tribe produced writers (Genesis 30:20; Judges 5:14).

A prophet martyred under king Joash (2 Chronicles 24:20-22).

A priest who bore the ark for David in his crisis hour (2 Samuel 15:25-29).

The hometown of a widow saved by ministering to Elijah (1 Kings 17:9-16).

A king slain for his disregard of God's prophet (Jeremiah 34:17-22; 52:10, 11).

A priest in the time of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 21:1, 2).

A leader in the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra 3:2; 5:1, 2).

Ashtoreth was a false goddess of these people (1 Kings 11:5, 6).

Place where David obtained a temporary refuge from the wrath of Saul (1 Samuel 27:2-7).

The following quiz will test your knowledge of certain Bible names and places which begin with the letter Z. Some answers are easy, others are more challenging. After you go through them all, pick out the ones you could not answer. Look up the verse prayerfully and read the entire context, asking God to give you greater spiritual understanding from what you find. Try to discover more about that subject and about God's love shining through it by using a Bible concordance or the Spirit of Prophecy index. It may take a bit more time, but this is what turns what might have seemed as only trivia into richer spiritual treasure. Enjoy!

Z (continued)

Leah's maid and mother of two of Jacob's sons
(Genesis 29:24; 30:9-12).

An Israelite slain for his apostasy with a Baal worshipper
(Numbers 25:1-15).

The name representing Christ's kingdom of glory (Psalm 2:1-7).

Moses' wife (Exodus 2:16-21).

Place where Lot asked to remain when the cities of the plain were to be destroyed
(Genesis 19:17-22).

Father of John the Baptist (Luke 3:2).

The Egyptian name assigned to Joseph
(Genesis 41:45).

Father of the apostles James and John (Matthew 4:21).

The name of a certain Christian lawyer known to Paul (Titus 3:13).

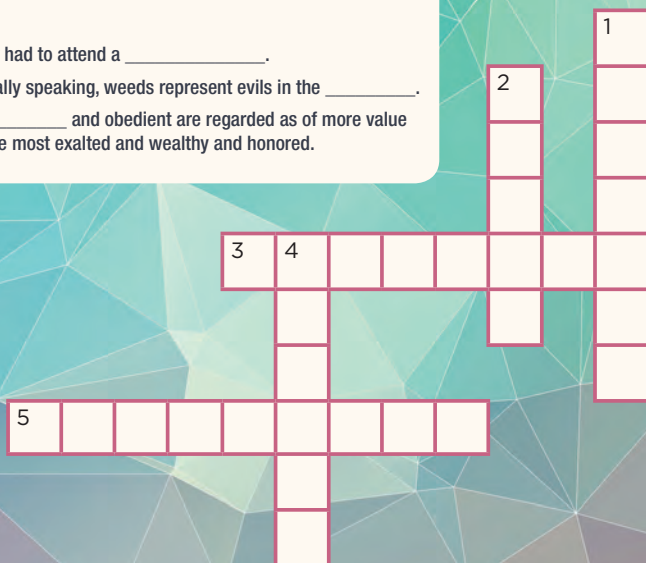
Governor of Judah in the time of Haggai and Zechariah
(Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 4:6).

ACROSS

3. This time, Gabriel did missionary work in Romania for _____.
5. Echoes From Paradise was held in _____.

DOWN

1. Shelley had to attend a _____.
2. Spiritually speaking, weeds represent evils in the _____.
4. The _____ and obedient are regarded as of more value than the most exalted and wealthy and honored.



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Thoughts & Feelings

Since 1904, administrators and employers have sought to measure intelligence through the use of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests. The idea is that such an evaluation can hopefully provide at least some indication of one's mental capacity and aptitude for various tasks.

By 1990, the concept of Emotional Intelligence (one's EQ) was identified—and soon viewed by many as a factor possibly even more important than intelligence. A person's EQ is defined as the ability to identify, assess, and control one's own emotions, the emotions of others, and that of groups.

Have you ever had to deal with someone who seems to be immature for his or her age—who is inappropriately childish? Such a person might get irritated easily or fuss and whine at difficulties and inconveniences. It can get pretty nerve-racking. But a higher level of emotional intelligence helps people control their emotions and handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and with empathy.

Thousands of years ago, the book of Proverbs spoke of the value of emotional intelligence: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

Jesus likewise emphasizes to His followers, “In your patience possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19).

In this issue of the *Youth Messenger*, we read of joy, hope, healing, and the denying of self in surrender to God. The process of sanctification begins with what we think about—and this affects in turn how we feel. We need to control our feelings to dwell in harmony with God's will.

“Your thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God and your feelings under the control of reason and religion. Your imagination was not given you to be allowed to run riot and have its own way without any effort at restraint or discipline. If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 301.

What a powerful combination! So let's determine to govern our feelings by what we know to be right—and not let our feelings rule us or be swayed by the current.

SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH

“Swift to hear” thy gracious voice,
 “Swift to hear” the Shepherd’s bidding,
 When mayhap, the careless feet
 Are transgression’s mazes thridding.
 “Swift to hear” the cry for help,
 Coming from a brother weaker;
 “Swift to hear” the cry for light,
 Coming from the earnest seeker.
 Lord may I, with open ears,
 List attentive to thy calling;
 So may I through coming years,
 By thy word be kept from falling.

“Slow to speak” the angry word,
 Thus the Holy Spirit grieving;
 “Slow to speak” the foolish jest,
 All the words of folly leaving;
 “Slow to speak” the idle tale,
 “Slow to speak” the vile detraction

That may sully someone’s name,
 Right and pure though be his action.
 Lord, help me speak some words of grace,
 Golden words so fitly spoken,
 To the weary, words in time,
 Purest words, of heart the token.

“Slow to wrath” when sorely tried,
 Scorned, insulted, bruised, and beaten—
 Bear and forbear, Christ has died
 All the ills of life to sweeten.
 When reviled, reviled He not;
 Suff’ring long, yet not redressing—
 Leaving an example bright—
 For the curses, giving blessing.
 Lord help me to cherish naught
 Of wrath, or vengeance, or ill feeling;
 “Swift to hear” and “slow to speak,”
 In all acts thy truth revealing.

—M. C. Wilcox