

Youth messenger

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Introspection

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Introspection

Dear friends, please, take a moment to meditate on 2 Corinthians 13:5 where Paul says: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

In both letters to the Corinthians, Paul is very direct in encouraging the believers to take time for introspection or self-examination because, I assume, there was a lot of criticism, intolerance and despising within the body of Christ, as it is evident in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. In that chapter, the apostle urges everybody to not consider themselves self-sufficient while belittling others just because they have different abilities or functions. He goes as far as saying that a sense of self-sufficiency on one hand and an inferiority complex on the other could produce damaging schism in the body of Christ.

In Matthew 7:5, Jesus taught His disciples and the public in general that they should take care of the beam in their own eyes before they try to pull out the mote from a brother’s eye. As a final lesson on humility and incentive to unity, our Lord went as far as washing the disciples’ feet, hoping that they would reach the needed unity in preparation for the great work awaiting them after Christ’s ascension.

Today, we are called to do that same important work—and unity is as important as ever. Through the articles in this magazine, the authors are hoping to encourage Christ’s followers to take more time for self-examination and less time to examine others, while praying together with the psalmist in Psalm 139:23, 24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

—Adrian Finaru



LIGHT IN THE DARK WORLD OF SOCIAL MEDIA

BY EBENEZER BULAYA
AND ROSARIA BWALYA

We are living in a world where everything is accelerating. Centuries ago, some cultures communicated with cave paintings, smoke signals, symbols, and carrier pigeons. Written language has long existed through letters, newspapers, and books—and eventually the postal service, telegraphs, photographs, and telephones were invented.

Recent methods of communication are even more convenient and efficient by means of television, cell phones, internet, e-mails, social media, and text messaging. Communication today is instantaneous with the help of these inventions. We can send a message and receive a response in seconds. Digital communication also allows us to share photos, videos and stories instantly.

The importance of social media in communication is a constant topic of discussion. Online communication has brought information to people and audiences that previously could not be reached. It has increased awareness among people about what is happening in other parts of the world. Social networking services can provide a powerful, readily accessible toolkit for

highlighting issues and topics that affect and interest young people. These can be used for organizing activities, events, or groups to showcase issues and opinions, as well as to make a wider audience aware of them.

However, social media use can also negatively affect the youth by distracting them, disrupting their sleep, and exposing them to bullying, rumor spreading, unrealistic views of other people's lives and peer pressure. These risks may be related to how much social media young people use. The more time spent on social media can lead to cyberbullying, social anxiety, depression, and exposure to content that is not age-appropriate.

THE DOWNSIDE

As alluded, social media has both positive and negative effects on Christian youth. We can use it to connect with friends, family, and important networks. And we can use it as a platform to glorify God and spread the gospel around the world. Yet what we allow into our minds through social media and how often we stay there can also have a negative impact on our spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being. So let's see what

Inspiration says about the overall principle involved in this. That way, you don't just end up with self-determination to do better, but rather have God's Word as your foundation.

EXPECTATIONS . . .

Most people on social media (unless they're begging for financial help) usually post only the best part of their lives. The latest fashion, the new car, the new house, the promotion at work, relationship status updates, wedding photos, travel adventures, etc. And if they have nothing going for them, they fake it with heavily edited photos and filters. Even though the average user knows this, many people still compare their own offline lives with what they see online. The result? They get discouraged with their own experience or fake it to conform. But the Bible tells us it is unwise to compare yourself with other people. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12). When tempted to compare your life with what you see online, take a step back and find your contentment in God.

AGGRESSION

Perhaps this is the most disturbing negative impact of social media on Christians. A look

at comments by Christians under Christian posts is enough to turn your stomach. The amount of vitriol can be alarming. They say things to people online that they would never say to them face to face.

Instead, we are told: "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth [includes what you text or comment on social media], but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:29, 30, NKJV).

SELF-CENTEREDNESS

A dear friend of mine once observed that social media is a cesspool for self. I agree! It takes determination to stay focused on the right goals on social media. If you're not intentional in maintaining your testimony and identity as a Christian, you will be swept away by the current of immorality, carnality, and self-exaltation that runs rife on social media. As a Christian user of social media, know what you copy or imitate! Not everything is beneficial for your soul. Imitate people or influencers just to the degree that their influence aligns with God's Word and His principles. The apostle Paul modestly recognized his accountability before God with regard to his influence with the words, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

A TIME WASTER

Social media is a time and productivity killer. You can spend hours there watching useless stuff even when you have important work to do. For the Christian, this translates into prayerlessness, not reading or studying God's Word, or even not fellowshiping with other believers. To fail to make proper use of your time is sin, because your time is important to God. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15, 16). "Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342.

AN ADDICTION

The fear of missing out (FOMO) is what makes most social media apps very addictive. The desire to get the latest updates leads to poor time management, poor decisions about daily schedules, and no time for spiritual disciplines. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be

brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Refuse to be a slave of social media and learn to use it the right way!

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Especially for Christian youth, social media provides the means to meet people of the opposite sex, which can easily lead to opportunities for immoral chats (sexting). It has paved the way for exposure to illicit sexual content online and misuse of social sites, which has been linked to risky sexual behavior among students."But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. . . . Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:3, 6).

A THIEF

Social media is a thief of time as well as the killer of the influence and productivity of a person. Nevertheless, we can use this same social media to the glory of God. Knowing that we have only a short time of probation, we must know how to use social media in the most beneficial way with regard to our talents



of **speech, influence** and **time**.

“The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ’s service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.”—Ibid., p. 328.

ABUSE OF SPEECH

Quite often, the talent of speech is misused on social media. People say a lot of things in their videos which are not even profitable or edifying, jokes and jestings are entertained, and frivolous words are spoken. But the question still remains: Is this the right way to use this God-given talent? “The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer’s love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.”—Ibid., p. 335.

This means that our speech must be a savor of life unto life. “Not one word is to be spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestion, will escape the lips of him who is following

Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth’ (Ephesians 4:29). A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin.”—Ibid., p. 337.

INFLUENCE

We are advised as Christians not to do anything that cripples our influence. Whatever we post on social media casts either a positive or negative influence. “Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.”—Ibid., p. 339.

This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, and even the expression of the countenance, all have an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Let us heed the timely advice:

“Never should it be forgotten that influence is no less a power for evil. To lose one’s own soul is a terrible thing; but to cause the loss of other souls is still more terrible. That our influence should be a savor of death unto death is a fearful thought; yet this is possible. Many who profess to gather with Christ are scattering from Him. . . . It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of this endowment. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. If we realize our helplessness and our need of divine power, we shall not trust to ourselves. We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father.”—Ibid., p. 341.

TIME


Much time is spent on social media, especially if a person has that fear of missing out. But mostly, the time spent on social media is on things that are not worthwhile or productive. “[Christ’s] youth was not wasted in indolence, neither was it wasted in sensual pleasure, self-indulgence, or frittered away in things of no profit. Not one of His hours from childhood to manhood was misspent, none were misappropriated.” (*Our Father Cares*, p. 157).

What we must understand is that time is precious and must be spent on things that are of vital importance. “The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment

as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment.”—Ibid.

CONCLUSION

My fellow youth, we have but a short time of probation—and our time, speech and influence should be utilized to the glory of God. Much time has been wasted. We must remember that “we are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being coworkers with God in His great plan of redemption.”—Ibid., p. 342.

In our use of social media, let us ensure that it is all to the glory of God—that whatever we post may be a savor of life unto life and not bring attention and admiration to ourselves. Whenever man accomplishes anything, whether in spiritual or in temporal lines, he should bear in mind that he does it through cooperation with his Maker. There is a great need for us to realize our dependence on God. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Amen! 



Your Faults **vs.** the Faults of Others

BY ANDRE DEVAI FILHO

THE VOICE IN EDEN

It was a beautiful garden. A place of peace, calmness and order. All was perfect, in complete innocence. There was no fear of rejection or retaliation for inadvertently doing something wrong, no shame that comes with the loss of innocence. Adam was completely vulnerable: naked but unashamed because of the robe of light that enshrouded him and his wife.

Suddenly, a different melody is heard: Sounds of derision. A voice brings a new language, contempt and accusation. Perfection is broken; now there's an enemy in the picture. Shockingly, God is the One thought to be the enemy. He's not viewed as innocent anymore. He is falsely accused of stealing Adam's power and knowledge.

The accusation once received and believed leads to action: God's words—as supposedly not trustworthy anymore—are broken, and Adam eats the fruit. Judgment, once embraced,

pervades. The light is now gone and nakedness now is shame. Adam covers himself and hides. Man accuses the woman, the woman accuses the serpent; in essence, all accuse God.

Actions bring results. God is sadly compelled to distribute consequences to all parties involved. However, He doesn't play the blame game. Although accused, He follows a different path, the path of love, of grace. Adam is ashamed and scared, waiting for the moment God will bring retaliation for his failure at the tree. Instead of that, the Creator prepares garments and covers the shame. God strips His Son so that Adam's shame could be covered.

IN OUR LIVES

We often read the Eden story, knowing it is factual history: That's how sin entered into the world. It's true, however, that history in general—and especially the book of Genesis—is not only

factual history, it also narrates our personal story. It tells us not only the dynamics of the past entrance of sin in the world but also shows us how that same dynamic is replayed in the life of every human being, including us.

There's innocence and the forbidden, unnoticed fruit. A voice appears with accusation, trivializing our innocence and planting seeds of dissension and injustice in our hearts. The fruit becomes alluring to the eyes. The idea is fostered that simplicity is not enough, and that our liberation is exactly based on what's forbidden—and so, the fruit is abruptly eaten. Innocence is lost, shame dominates, and we embrace the path of accusation. Accusation against others, accusation charged against us and ultimately accusations against God. As that which was broken is irreparable, the consequences and guilt are too weighty to endure. It is better to find a scapegoat. **Once we give entrance to the accuser's voice, we ourselves become accusers.**

So, we need to deal with two questions: Where and what is the

accuser's voice? The accuser's voice is that which skews God's creation and words. It's the voice that comes and plants contempt toward us or others. It's the voice that accuses God of not providing enough for happiness and invites us to seek for it outside of His will. It's the voice that bring distrust to God's actions and His will.

We are part of God's creation. We are His beloved children. He looks to us with love. Even when we fail and hurt Him, He still looks to us with love and tenderness. There's no retaliation, no contempt from God towards us. There's abundance of acceptance.

THE ACCUSER'S VOICE

The voice of the accuser is that who comes and calls us unworthy, hinders our value and is immeasurably harsh on our mistakes. This is the voice brings shame, rejection, unneeded retaliation, unnecessary and unkind criticism. All of this is part of that voice.

Where's that voice? It can be everywhere. The devil allured the beautiful serpent and used it as the means to speak so he could allure people, even good





and well-intentioned people. Wasn't that voice present in the God-fearing Peter when he reprimanded Jesus? That voice can speak to us through friends at school that judge our actions, making us feel weird and ashamed for who we are. That voice can speak through brethren in church when they, many times with good intentions, see each and every one of our faults and may criticize us in an overzealous expectation to correct us, to make us better. That voice can speak also through our parents, who are not perfect and sometimes demand too much from us or are too critical, too hard to please. . . . That voice can be everywhere. And surely we must beware lest—woe to us—that voice spring from within us, too!

WHEN IS IT HEARD?

Once the voice is heard and believed, it makes room in the heart, making itself the measuring rod for oneself and others. But Jesus tells us not to judge others, lest we likewise be judged. He doesn't mention here God as the judge. He only mentions judgment. My guess is that He's referring not to God, but instead to that accuser's voice which pervades when accepted.

It's interesting how often revolutions, such as the French and Bolshevik Revolutions, raised up with violence against violence and injustice, end up perpetrating even more violence and injustice. It's interesting how when you enter in

contact with marginalized, bullied groups, you often find a repetition of the same pattern towards others and themselves. Hurt people hurt people. Judgment leads to judgment.

Maybe someone in church, family or school was the instrument for that voice speaking to you. Maybe harsh words, judgments or intolerant behavior hurt you, stole your pleasure in sharing at the church or enjoying friendship or even in religion itself. Maybe this resulted in shyness, fear of rejection and retaliation, apathy or some other things. Maybe you listened to the voice and that seed brought bitter fruit to you.

"Can't they see the beam in their eyes?" You may have asked yourself, remembering Luke 6:41, 42. "They speak this way to me, but they also do their own thing. They're hypocrites. Hey—take first the beam out of your own eye and then come to talk with me." I can say that one of the things that most angers me is hypocrisy, when people come and try to demand from me or others things that they themselves don't follow; when they come to "biblically" attack the faults of others but they do it with a harshness that's opposed

to all that's truly biblical. As a result, I tend to judge them. And, it doesn't take long before I'm replaying the same pattern and using their "beam" to deviate from the beam in my own eye!

THE VOICE OF GRACE

Worthy


The accuser's voice is not the only voice in the Garden. God is also speaking. It's a voice of honesty but full of grace. The consequences are there—what's wrong is wrong—but there's also an abundance of grace. Having a beam in the eye is extremely painful, seeing the speck in others' eyes is a way to divert from the pain and guilt oneself faces. When attacked, instead of retaliating, God looks beyond what's on the exterior and sees the despair, guilt and abandonment on the interior. When He sees that, He can't but respond with an abundance of love, even in correction.

Did you ever stop to see the pain behind those who hurt you? Maybe, behind all the critiques and harshness, there's a cry for help, for grace. The same cry that's inside you. The voice of grace is

calling. Once the other voice is heard and believed, it pervades everything. When you decide to love and forgive your accusers, you also forgive the second harsh accuser of your soul, yourself.

Let us look to God and hear His voice. Instead of making us pay the price, He pays the price. When He sees our shame, instead of ridiculing us He dresses us with His Son's clothes. He justifies us. **Justification by faith is not only accepting that we are pardoned but is also hearing God's pronouncing us worthy in the Beloved voice.** That's the only voice that matters.

To accept and live what the other voice says is to deny God's voice. When we allow others' critiques to diminish us from being what God made us to be, ourselves, we are denying God's voice, coming back to the fig leaves, changing justification by faith to justification by works and failing on it.

My invitation for you today is to stop judging others and yourself and accept God's embrace. Stop listening to what the other voice says of you and others and listen only to what God's graceful voice speaks. Only when you do that will you be able to help others and yourself! 



DON'T JUST CHANGE THE CONTENT— BUT THE SOURCE!



BY MUSEMWA MELODY

Are you being drawn to God?

“As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, of its power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. You feel that sin has separated you from God, that you are in bondage to the power of evil. The more you struggle to escape, the more you realize your helplessness. Your motives are impure; your heart is unclean. You see that your life has been filled with selfishness and sin. You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain it? It is peace that you need—Heaven’s forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, ‘without

money and without price’ (Isaiah 55:1). It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 49.

“Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.

“The Saviour said, ‘Except a man be born from above,’ unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, ‘he cannot see the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3, margin).”—*Ibid.*, p. 18.

DEAR TO GOD

All the good qualities people may possess are the gift of God. Their good deeds are performed by the grace of God through Christ. It is a perilous thing to praise or exalt people, for that person comes to lose sight of their entire dependence on God and is sure to fall. We are contending with foes who are stronger than ourselves, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain this conflict—and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self exaltation or self dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow.

We have an example of true repentance in Psalm 51 when the prophet’s rebuke touched the heart of David. His conscience was aroused, his guilt appeared in all its enormity. His soul was bowed in penitence before God.

“David’s repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgments threatened, inspired his prayer. But he saw the enormity of his transgression against God; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 725.

God forgave David and once again could call him a man after His own heart. This reveals the result of true repentance.

A similar case is that of Zacchaeus. When he heard about Jesus, he had a deep longing to meet with Him—and we see a new heart in him as he vows to repay all whom he had robbed and that he would give to the poor.

FACING OUR SINS

It is only due to God’s mercy that we still even exist. The four angels are still holding the four winds at the four corners of earth so that God’s people can be sealed. It is you and I that have caused the return of Christ to be delayed. As soon as God’s people are sealed, Jesus will come and take His people home.

Our hearts are evil and we cannot change them by ourselves. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). It is only by the power of Christ.

REASONING TOGETHER

“Beware of procrastination. Do not put off the work of forsaking your sins and seeking purity of heart through Jesus. Here is where thousands upon thousands have erred to their eternal loss. I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God’s Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really

is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 32.

An example of victory is found in the case of Simon of Bethany. By the power that Christ gave, Simon was touched by Christ’s kindness in not openly rebuking him before his guests. Patient admonition convinced him of his error. He saw how great was the debt he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.

“When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 35.

There is a precious assurance which the Lord promises: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

POWER TO CHANGE

“Let us not regard sin as a trivial thing.

“Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God’s Holy Spirit.”—*Ibid.*, p. 33.

“When, after his sin in deceiving Esau, Jacob fled from his father’s home, he was weighed down with a sense of guilt. Lonely and outcast as he was, separated from all that had made life dear, the one thought that above all others pressed upon his soul, was the fear that his sin had cut him off from God, that he was forsaken of Heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 19.

Today, if we hear the voice of God speaking to our heart, let us not harden our hearts!



What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction.

“As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save.”—*Ibid.*, p. 35. We must fully yield our hearts to God for the change to be wrought in us.

ACCEPTANCE

“From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’ The sick man might have said, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.’ But, no, he believed Christ’s word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he *willed* to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole.

“In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You *will* to

serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It *is* so if you believe it.

“Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, ‘I believe it; it *is* so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.’ ”—*Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51. [Author’s emphasis.]

“Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 52.

Christ is waiting to strip us of our garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon us the white robes of righteousness. The Spirit invites you today, come with your whole heart to Jesus and you may claim His blessing!

CONCLUSION

God is interested in my salvation, in your salvation—and there’s more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than of ninety and nine that need no repentance. Today while the voice of the Holy Spirit is still calling, let us give our hearts to the Lord, fully surrendering ourselves unto Him. God is able to make us into good trees that are going to bear good fruits. Amen. 🌱

Escaping the "DIVIDE AND CONQUER" Scheme

BY ZIMBA PETER M.

In defending Himself against one of the many false claims of the Pharisees, Jesus made some interesting points: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. . . . **How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house**" (Matthew 12:25, 29).

YOUTHFUL STRENGTH


Young people have been vital to society throughout history, because they form the next generation of every passing age. Their actions determine the continuation—or deterioration—of morals and values.

This is also true within the church. The future of the church lies in the spiritual vigor of the youth. They will either continue preserving the pure doctrine of the church or dilute it with worldly practices. So the youth are vulnerable as a key target of the deceiver, who knows they

will be the ones who maintain the foundation of the church. To make the young people lazy about searching the scriptures would bring many misunderstandings, and thus easily cause the fall of the church and the truths for which it stands.

We as youth need to be aware that we are actually being targeted by the enemy now as never before. Satan's fiendish aim is to dismantle the church and dilute her doctrine. To achieve this plan, Satan uses the "divide and conquer" strategy. "Divide and Conquer" is a tactical maneuver to make a group of people disagree and work against one another so they will **not** stay together as one. The arch foe knows how a united youth community can stand against his deceptions. He knows that with their intellectual vigor and capabilities to understand, assimilate, and uphold the pure doctrine of the church, he is as a dry leaf in comparison. Throughout history, Satan has always wanted to cause the great heavenly light among God's





people to flicker, grow dim, and eventually just fade out. Yet God has always had—and certainly continues to have—a peculiar people to preserve this precious light. The Lord’s greatest desire is to have a community of youth to dwell in this light and preserve it from one generation to another.

“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:25). This resonates even more clearly now than when it proceeded first from the Saviour’s lips. Only unity and oneness can make a wall of defence against the deceiver always striving to corrupt the precious light that should shine to the world.

AROUND THE WORLD

It is God’s original plan that His fold should be scattered around the world, “having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”(Revelation 14:6). Diversity in traditions, color, language, and culture are tools in fulfilling this great commission, but does not endorse any practices contrary to the will of God. We are a global family that does not reject anyone on the basis of their culture. This family is fathered by God and we are His little children for as long as we do His will...”For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother”

(Matthew 12:50). O yes! We are even considered the brothers and sisters of Christ Himself.

Although scattered across the world, the youth gather on the basis of having faith in Christ Jesus and doing the will of God. It is only when we open our hearts to the study and assimilation of the word of God and make it our life principle that we can all gather at His feet. The Holy Spirit will guide our ways so as to make all of us of one character and culture.

Meanwhile, Satan takes advantage of the spirit of sluggardliness or lethargy. Often, the youth are too lax about studying the word of God and this can trigger division among us, for misunderstandings cause divisions to arise. We can only be united if we all appreciate our church’s doctrine and her mission. This enables the church to stand on solid ground. Let us all live by God’s word and it will make us join hands with all others of like precious faith and practice.

As one with Christ, we must completely wipe out our former bad habits that can arouse conflict among us. In the early church, “the hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles, were softened and united by Christian love. Despite former prejudices, all were in harmony with one another. Satan knew that so long as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth; and he sought to take advantage of former habits of

thought, in the hope that thereby he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion.

“Thus it came to pass that as disciples were multiplied, the enemy succeeded in arousing the suspicions of some who had formerly been in the habit of looking with jealousy on their brethren in the faith and of finding fault with their spiritual leaders, and so ‘there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.’ The cause of complaint was an alleged neglect of the Greek widows in the daily distribution of assistance. Any inequality would have been contrary to the spirit of the gospel, yet Satan had succeeded in arousing suspicion. Prompt measures must now be taken to remove all occasion for dissatisfaction, lest the enemy triumph in his effort to bring about a division among the believers.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 87, 88.


UNITED BY TRUTH

When I was still a Sunday worshiper, I always found it difficult to understand how the church can be considered a family when her members are all scattered across the earth with different colors, traditions and societal values. This question troubled me for years and the answer was found when I was introduced to the Advent faith. I began to realize that people can also be united through the truth that God gave us. We use the same Bible around the world, regardless of our color, traditions

and societal values. This truth unites people into a family—God’s family, born of Him. We can only be part of this family if we make this truth our chief guide of life.

“God’s people are not to be in confusion, lacking order and harmony, consistency and beauty. The Lord is greatly dishonored when disunion exists among His people. Truth is a unit. The unity that God requires must be cultivated day by day if we would answer the prayer of Christ. The disunion that is striving for existence among those who profess to believe the last message of mercy to be given to the world, must find no place; for it would be a fearful hindrance to the advancement of God’s work. His servants are to be one, as Christ is one with the Father; their powers, illuminated, inspired, and sanctified, must be united to make a complete whole. Those who love God and keep His commandments are not to draw apart; they are to press together.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 174.





However, in observing the youth of the church, I have sensed a danger. Why? So many youth are taken up by social media and fashion. By spending a lot of time and money on things that eventually lead to spiritual destruction, we both lose our ticket to heaven and leave the church in desolation because we cannot be bonded together if we don't cherish and appreciate the same values. It's time for us to live by the principles of present truth and be knit together by it.


"The reason why the youth, and even those of mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin is that they do not study the word of God and meditate upon it as they should. The lack of firm, decided will power, which is manifest in life and character, results from their neglect of the sacred instruction of God's word. They do not by earnest effort direct the mind to that which would inspire pure, holy thought and divert it from that which is impure and untrue. There are few who choose the better part, who sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn of the divine Teacher. Few treasure His words in the heart and practice them in the life. The truths of the Bible, received, will uplift the mind from its earthliness and debasement. If the word of God were appreciated as it should be, both young and old would possess an inward rectitude, a strength of principle, that would enable them to resist temptation."—*Ibid.*, p. 319.

Let us all, as youth, cultivate this spirit of studying the word of God, even making it our chief study. It is only through this practice that we can be united, thus keeping the church with her mission on solid ground.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

We are a global family with light to carry to all the world—and more importantly—to maintain a solid base to the church. But don't forget that we are a diverse community. Some of us are weaned from the milk, maturing in faith and the word of God, while others are still nursing babes, having trouble keeping up with God's standards. Our duty is not to coldly cast such away, but rather to bring them closer and mold each other for the service above. There are those who have left our company because of how we, at some point, treated them. The Lord's messenger explains:

"It is not yet too late to redeem the neglects of the past. Let there be a revival of the first love, the first ardor. Search out the ones you have driven away, bind up by confession the wounds you have made. Come close to the great Heart of pitying love, and let the current of that divine compassion flow into your heart and from you to the hearts of others. Let the tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in His own precious life be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow beings, especially those who are our brethren in Christ."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 612.



Let us not be like Cain, who denied any responsibility for being his brother's keeper. Just as Christ keeps us close by His own pierced side, let us likewise hold dear to our hearts our brethren struggling with destructive habits. Let us kindly urge upon them the importance of leaving off such practices. God would be pleased to see a united movement of youth in the ardor of their first love. Regardless of the geographical location, we must be open to communicating to one another through the many means the church has adopted. Let us stay united and grow this marvelous family.

"The great work now to be accomplished is to bring up the people of God to engage in the work, and exert a holy influence. They should act the part of laborers. With wisdom, caution, and love, they should labor for the salvation of neighbors and friends. There is too distant a feeling manifested. The cross is not laid right hold of, and borne as it should be. All should feel that they are their brother's keeper, that they are in a great degree responsible for the souls of those around them. The brethren err when they leave this work all to the ministers. The harvest is great, and the laborers are few. Those who are of good repute, whose lives are in accordance with their faith, can be workmen. They can converse with others, and urge upon them the importance of the truth. They must not wait for the ministers, and

neglect a plain duty which God has left for them to perform."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 54. [1892 edition.]

CONCLUSION

Brothers and sisters, we need to cherish the light from our heavenly Father and share it with others.

"The youth who finds his joy in reading the Word of God, and in the hour of prayer, will be constantly refreshed by drafts from the fountain of life. He will attain a height of moral excellence and a breadth of thought of which others cannot conceive. Communion with God encourages good thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, and lofty purposes of action. Those who thus connect themselves with God are acknowledged by Him as His sons and daughters. They are constantly reaching higher and still higher, obtaining clearer views of God and of eternity, until the Lord makes them channels of light and wisdom to the world."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 247.

Let us train our minds in the work of our heavenly Father. The work of finishing the third angel's message through the loud cry lies in us because we are still energetic. Let not the superficiality of culture divide us, but let us unite as one—regardless of our cultural differences. Let us make the word of God our culture and cultivate the spirit of seeking God's guidance. God is one and we can all be one through Him, to His honor and glory. 🍎

At my work place, there's a nearby piece of land which has not been cultivated for quite some time now. Here I had to dispose of some kernels of corn which had been partially chewed by some mouse. I figured that all the seeds were too damaged to plant, but was later surprised to see some of them springing up and growing. Usually, this type of corn tends to produce two cobs on one stalk—but to my amazement, three cobs developed on one stalk instead of two! The land was very fertile indeed, and this brings us to the topic of our lesson:

Are you fertile ground? In Matthew 13:3-8, we find the parable of the sower whose seeds fell on 4 different types of soil. Some fell by the wayside, some on rock, some among thorns, and some on the fertile land. What do we learn from this?

“The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once

overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 56.

BY THE WAYSIDE

In Matthew 13:4, we see that some seeds fell by the edge of the road. These did not germinate nor grow but instead were eaten by birds. Now in verse 19 we find the meaning of the seeds that fell there. We're told that these represent the hearers who hear the word of God but don't understand it.

“The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is 'hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' Hebrews

Are You “Good Ground”?

BY CHINYANTA PAMOFWE

3:13. The spiritual faculties are paralyzed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger. They do not perceive the love of Christ, and they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them.”—Ibid., p. 44.

Luke 8:11 reveals that the seed is the word of God and in verse 12, Jesus continues telling us about the hearers represented by seeds on the wayside. Luke the apostle tells us that these hear the word of God, but as the word enters their hearts, the devil comes and snatches it away lest they should believe and be saved. We will never see the devil coming to take the word out of our heart, but he uses other people to accomplish this. In many

cases this comes from our very own brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter to catch away the seeds of truth from other hearts. Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord to them is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister’s character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God’s messengers, and reverence for their message. And many are taught to regard lightly God’s word itself.”—Ibid., p. 45.





Ministers have been belittled in the eyes of young people in such a way that no matter how powerful may be the message they are called to give, it will be minimized or not even considered at all. Whenever we speak ill of the anointed servants of the most high God, too often we don't even consider who happens to be listening—and the consequences of that. Youth growing up in such an environment have the same disrespect to the ministers, leaders or elders in the church because of how they have been depicted. Adults should not discuss their differences with other church members or families in front of children and younger people. If you overhear this kind of talk, don't listen!

Among our early believers, there was abundant love and affection toward one another. It's not that they never had differences; the key to this love was the parents. In those days, parents used to have differences, of course. But as children, we never knew of those problems until the older ones had already sorted out their issues amicably and continued to grow in the love and grace of Christ. That's the best way.

ON STONY GROUND

In Matthew 13:5, 6, we read that some seeds fell on the stony ground. This seed managed to spring up, even though it was not fully rooted in the earth—and due to the scorching of the sun, it fades away. Verses 20, 21 reveal that this is a class who, when they hear the word of truth, fully embrace and accept it. But after going through a bit of tribulation or persecution because of the word, they easily get offended and eventually give up.

“The seed sown upon stony ground finds little depth of soil. The plant springs up quickly, but the root cannot penetrate the rock to find nutriment to sustain its growth, and it soon perishes. Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued. They have not seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the heart has not been humbled under a sense of its guilt. This class may be easily convinced, and appear to be bright converts, but they have only a superficial religion.”—Ibid., p. 46.

Often those on stony ground are moved by emotions and not the Spirit. They are often boastful about their conversion, in contrast to those saved by the Spirit, who have nothing of which to boast other than the cross of Christ. So, true repentance and conversion cannot be forced or in our own strength because it is the work of the Holy Spirit (see Zechariah 4:6). Emotion is not true conversion because as soon as that rapturous feeling leaves or someone tampers with the emotions of that person, he/she quickly goes back to the old habits. The seed was not deeply rooted, the sun came up, it was scorched, and soon faded away. So it is with this person. He is not rooted in the word of truth, and when tempted or faced with a bit of suffering because of the word, he reverts back to the old self.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

The rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-22 truly wanted to be saved. That's why he came to Jesus to ask Him how. He bragged about how had been a commandment keeper since childhood. But in his case, when told to sacrifice his wealth to obtain eternal life, he went away sad.

This warns us that when the message is powerfully preached and touches our hearts, we might quickly receive and embrace it, but as soon as we hear that we need to give up something—be it old habits, friends, wealth, etc., we quickly give up and again are back to our old self without any change.

“Many receive the gospel as a way of escape from suffering, rather than as a deliverance from sin. They rejoice for a season, for they think that religion will free them from difficulty and trial. While life moves smoothly with them, they may appear to be consistent Christians. But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation. They cannot bear reproach for Christ's sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifice, they are offended. It would cost them too much effort to make a radical change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and forget the eternal realities.”—Ibid., p. 47.

Jesus gave up all to gain our redemption; therefore He requires us as well to give up all so as to be saved. He explains, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). So, taking up the cross is a daily process. We must die to self daily. With the help of the Spirit, we will be led to give up old habits and live as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

AMONG THORNS

Some seeds fell among thorns. These sprang up but got choked out by the



thorns. Verses 18, 19 reveal that these represent believers who receive and accept the message of truth, but because they are too busy with the riches and cares of this life, they get choked by them and the word of God becomes unfruitful.

“Many become so absorbed in business that they have no time for prayer, no time for the study of the Bible, no time to seek and serve God. At times the longings of the soul go out for holiness and heaven; but there is no time to turn aside from the din of the world to listen to the majestic and authoritative utterances of the Spirit of God. The things of eternity are made subordinate, the things of the world supreme. It is impossible for the seed of the word to bring forth fruit; for the life of the soul is given to nourish the thorns of worldliness.”—*Ibid.*, p. 51.

In this life, we tend to focus more on the things of this life more than our eternal life. We value our businesses and jobs which provide us with only our temporal needs while we forget about our eternal destiny. When it comes to our business, we may even work overnight with no rest so as to ensure its success. But when it comes to things pertaining to our religion, we're casual, as if being forced. We don't seem to consider whether we've fed our mind with spiritual things or are starving ourselves spiritually. We go 24/7 doing our own business—but when it comes

to God's work, just spending a few minutes listening to His word becomes a problem. We count the minutes and start complaining when we think it has taken much of our time. God has given us six days to labor and do all our work and only kept a day for Himself to worship Him and acknowledge Him as the Creator, but often we want to steal even that very day or holy hours He has reserved for a holy convocation. To people in business, the devil has set a trap: sometimes the most sales come on Sabbath, so they miss church and the words God has specifically prepared for them—or they come in person, but not in mind, by letting themselves get distracted at church.

Thus God's word is received with an open heart, but the cares and deceitfulness of riches choke out the word. These claim to love God's word, but they value their businesses more than heavenly things. Such need to remember God's many promises of care for those who put Him first.

GOOD GROUND

Finally we have seeds planted in good ground! These sprang up well, grew, and bore fruits in a bountiful harvest. So just like the kernels of corn that fell on good ground and gave unexpected results, so is the person that feeds on the word of God. No matter how bad this person was, the moment he or she begins to study the Bible, he starts viewing things

with a different perspective. The end result is amazing. The change is often silent and gradual but the results are evident. Just as the seed in the good ground brought forth good fruits, so does this person. The change is seen by all.

“The word of God often comes in collision with man’s hereditary and cultivated traits of character and his habits of life. But the good-ground hearer, in receiving the word, accepts all its conditions and requirements. His habits, customs, and practices are brought into submission to God’s word. In his view the commands of finite, erring man sink into insignificance beside the word of the infinite God. With the whole heart, with undivided purpose, he is seeking the life eternal, and at the cost of loss, persecution, or death itself, he will obey the truth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 60. When true conversion takes place in the heart, we will treasure every word of God as coming directly from His mouth to us personally. Jeremiah says: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16).

CONCLUSION

In the parable of the seed sower, we’ve looked at different types of soil and how each affects us spiritually. We’ve all sinned and come short of the glory of God—and we’re all in one of these

groups. We need to see which group we are in, confess our sins and become the good, fertile ground that God wants us to be.

The sower and the seed are all the same, but the soil is different and “the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such. The Spirit of God is ever seeking to break the spell of infatuation that holds men absorbed in worldly things, and to awaken a desire for the imperishable treasure. It is by resisting the Spirit that men become inattentive to or neglectful of God’s word. They are themselves responsible for the hardness of heart that prevents the good seed from taking root, and for the evil growths that check its development.”—*Ibid.*, p. 56. [Emphasis added.]

Let us therefore ask God to soften the soil of our hearts, that we may receive and live by His word wholeheartedly! 🌱



Are You WHEAT OR A WEED?

BY ELIJAH JONES TEMBO

WHAT IS WHEAT?

Wheat is the most commonly grown cereal in temperate countries. It is an annual grass usually planted at the end of summer. It overwinters and then starts growing and maturing toward the end of spring and beginning of summer. The grain is then ground up to make flour for bread, pasta, pastry, and so forth.

In identity, wheat is a bunch grass with typical characteristics familiar to farmers.

WHAT ARE TARES?

Tares are the bearded darnel, *Lolium temulentum*, a species of rye-grass, the seeds of which are a strong soporific poison. This plant bears the closest resemblance to wheat throughout its growth until the time when the ear appears—and only then is the difference discovered. It grows plentifully in Syria and Palestine.

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus used these two plants because they grow alike. The difference can be seen only when they mature.

“Another parable put [Jesus] forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened

unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:24-30).

Jesus then gave the meaning of the parable: “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; **the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;** The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the

angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 13:37-43). [Emphasis added.]

“ ‘The field,’ Christ said, ‘is the world’ (Matthew 13:38). But we must understand this as signifying the church of Christ in the world. The parable is a description of that which pertains to the kingdom of God, His work of salvation of men; and this work is accomplished through the church. True, the Holy Spirit has gone out into all the world; everywhere it is moving upon the hearts of men; but it is in the church that we are to grow and ripen for the garner of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 70.

God has planted His good seeds in His church—the noble, true youth—to labor for Him with full zeal and energy to accomplish the His work, filled with the Holy Spirit, gladly serving the Lord and raising the banner of Christ, and clad with the whole armor of God. Yet the devil also plants his own wicked youth, representing the tares to work directly opposite, bringing others to their downfall; those who are easily **influenced and whose faith was not fully rooted in Christ.**

“The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. ‘The enemy that sowed them is the devil.’ Neither God nor His angels ever sowed a seed that would produce a tare. The tares are always sown by Satan, the enemy of God and man.”—*Ibid.*, p. 71.

“While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 305.

As youth in the church, we need to be fully rooted in the doctrine, asking for the Holy Spirit to guide us in all truth. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13). Our only safety is in having the word of God in us to shield ourselves from the influence of the tares in our midst.

The question comes, “**Are you a wheat or a tare?**” Being assured that the enemy is planting evil ones in our midst, as faithful youth we need to stand against every influence of the enemy—not by hastily uprooting souls, but rather by influencing them in a better way.

For example, in church, “when the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God

through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most—the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths. Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralyzed condition of the senses so that cautions, warnings, and reproofs shall not be heard; or if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life. Sometimes a little child may so attract the attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground and bring forth fruit. Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence for the house and worship of God that they keep up a continual communication with each other during the sermon. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves. God wants attentive hearers. It was while men slept that Satan sowed his tares.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 493.

Youth representing the wheat need to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5:8, 9). Thus you can avoid the influence of the tares. The youth are the future

leaders in the church. Therefore people look upon the state of the youth in the church who need to be good examples to the public as the Bible says. “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

“As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 72.

“In His mercy and long-suffering, God bears patiently with the perverse and even the falsehearted. Among Christ’s chosen apostles was Judas the traitor. Should it then be a cause of surprise or discouragement that there are falsehearted ones among His workers today? If He who reads the heart could bear with him who He knew was to be His betrayer, with what patience should we bear with those at fault.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 493.

“Christ’s servants are grieved as they see true and false believers mingled in the church. They long to do something to cleanse the church. Like the servants of the householder, they are ready to uproot the tares. . . .

“Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would

never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 71.

The time of the judgment is a most solemn period, when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares. Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. The angel is to place a mark upon the forehead of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel will follow, to slay utterly both old and young.

“Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting.”—*Ibid.*

There is not a time when all the wicked will suddenly turn to God.

The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest.

“There is to be no probation after the judgment. When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 123.

AN APPEAL

Dear youth, let us remain steadfast to the truth and the light that is in us. Be good examples before the world: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16). “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8). 🍷

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A Call to the Youth

O, youth in life's fair morning!
Jesus is calling thee.
Leave every path of folly,
From all thy sin now flee;
Be cheerful, kind, and tender,
Loving and hopeful, too;
Unentered fields are waiting
For work that you may do.

What though earth's passing pleasures
Tempt you to go astray
Far from the fold of Jesus,
Far from the narrow way?
List to the gentle whisper
Of thy dear Saviour's voice;
With longing hearts the angels
Are waiting for thy choice.

Think of the glorious mansion
That waits in heaven for you—
Think! and then choose the noble,
Beautiful, pure, and true.
Willing to work for Jesus,
Willing the cross to bear,
Then with the faithful and honored
A shining crown you'll wear.

—by Paulina M. Alway-Anderson