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The *True Science of*
Education

Week of Prayer, December 4–13, 2015

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True Education: a Science

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7). This surely describes today’s society—including much of Christendom, does it not? Sophisticated educational institutions and online courses plentifully abound in the information age with its vast technological advancements. Knowledge is certainly increasing. Yet despite the positive developments in various realms, how rare in this generation is the jewel of vital godliness—the priceless gem of a Christlike character!

Here we are at the end of another year. Opportunities have come and gone, the Holy Spirit has continued to strive with each one of us. Have we responded to His wooing by a determined growth of grace in personal knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Now is our chance to carefully examine what kind of education we are daily seeking. What is its emphasis? Learning will continue throughout eternity, so we are called to educate ourselves, our children, and our neighbors in heavenly lines to prepare for the kingdom of God. We need to know Jesus as we never have before—and surrender all to Him, reflecting His lovely character to meet Him in peace at His soon coming.

So, let us prayerfully consider these timely readings with open minds and teachable hearts, sharing them also with others who may be isolated or homebound, and keeping in mind the following dates:

Prayer with fasting
 Sabbath, December 12

Offering for missions
 Sunday, December 13

It is our prayer that the Lord may energize our faith by reforming and refining our concept of genuine Christian education, that we might echo the sentiments of the psalmist, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Psalm 143:10).

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

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The First Educational Institution

The family was the first institution established by the Creator and is one of the most important facets of His perfect design for the human race. At the very beginning of Christ's ministry on earth, He gave high priority to this institution when He performed His first miracle, transforming water into pure grape juice.

Moses gave detailed instructions about the education of children by converted parents:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes” (Deuteronomy 6:4–8).

Actually, God directs parents to carry out the important work of education seven days a week, 24 hours a day. In these inspired words are presented a wholesome education, encompassing even the environment and the method of teaching.

John the Baptist, the second Elijah, was put to death for courageously defending family values before Herod the king, a potential baptismal candidate: “Herod was affected as he listened to the powerful, pointed testimonies of John, and with deep interest he inquired what he must do to become his disciple. John was acquainted with the fact that he was about to marry his brother's wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful. Herod was unwilling to make any sacrifice. He married his brother's



wife, and through her influence, seized John and put him in prison. . . . Soon John was beheaded, through the influence of Herod's wife.”¹

In their epistles also, the apostles Paul and Peter gave specific instructions about preserving the unity and sanctity of the family. They recognized the vital importance of this institution in the education of the believers.

Likewise, in our time, the most important work of the Elijah message today is to preserve and educate the family on how to fulfill God's purpose—to prepare a people to receive the Lord Jesus at His second coming. Through Malachi, God uttered a key prophecy concerning the work of God's people in these last days when He declared: “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5, 6).

In these last moments of our probationary time, Satan is busy at work to cause dissension and separation among the members of the family, triggering internal conflicts between husbands and wives, parents and children—with the sinister aim to spoil God's beautiful plan.

It is high time for our people to rebuild the family altar (morning and evening worship), dedicating special attention to God's word both individually and as families, constructing a shield of protection for our children and youth against the cunning ploys of the old serpent.

During this week of prayer, special messages prepared by God's servants will be considered to help our families to labor effectively to save ourselves and our loved ones from eternal perdition.

“The great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God. As the claims of the law are presented, and men and women are convicted of their duty to render obedience, show them the responsibility of their decision, not only for themselves but for their children. Show that obedience to God's word is our only safeguard against the evils that are sweeping the world to destruction. Parents are giving to their children an example either of obedience or of transgression. By their example and teaching, the eternal destiny of their households will in most cases be decided. In the future life the children will be what their parents have made them.”²

May the Lord help us to seriously take these timely messages to heart!

References

¹ *Early Writings*, p. 154.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 119.

Extracts from the writings of E. G. White



The True Science of Education

True education means more than taking a certain course of study. It is broad. It includes the harmonious development of all the physical powers and the mental faculties. It teaches the love and fear of God and is a preparation for the faithful discharge of life's duties.

There is an education that is essentially worldly. Its aim is success in the world, the gratification of selfish ambition. To secure this education many students spend time and money in crowding their minds with unnecessary knowledge. The world accounts them learned; but God is not in their thoughts. They eat of the tree of worldly knowledge, which nourishes and strengthens pride. In their hearts they become disobedient and estranged from God; and their entrusted gifts are placed on the

enemy's side. Much of the education at the present time is of this character. The world may regard it as highly desirable; but it increases the peril of the student.

There is another kind of education that is very different. Its fundamental principle, as stated by the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Its aim is not selfish; it is to honor God, and to serve Him in the world. Both the studies pursued and the industrial training have this object in view. The word of God is studied; a vital connection with God is maintained, and the better feelings and traits of character are brought into exercise. This kind of education produces results as lasting as eternity. For "the fear of the Lord is the beginning

of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10), and better than all other knowledge is an understanding of His word.¹

Sound physical development

Physical culture is an essential part of all right methods of education. The young need to be taught how to develop their physical powers, how to preserve these powers in the best condition, and how to make them useful in the practical duties of life. Many think that these things are no part of school work; but this is a mistake. The lessons necessary to fit one for practical usefulness should be taught to every child in the home and to every student in the schools.

The place for physical training to begin is in the home, with the little child. Parents should lay the

foundation for a healthy, happy life. One of the first questions to be decided is that of the food on their tables; for this is a matter upon which the development of the little ones and the health of the family very largely depend. Skill in the preparation of food is very important, and it is not less important that the food be of the proper quantity and quality. . . .

Every mother should see that her children understand their own bodies, and how to care for them. She should explain the construction and use of the muscles given us by our kind heavenly Father. We are God's workmanship, and His word declares that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). He has prepared this living habitation for the mind; it is "curiously wrought" (verse 15), a temple which the Lord Himself has fitted up for the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. . . .

Exercise is an important aid to physical development. It quickens the circulation of the blood and gives tone to the system. If the muscles are allowed to remain unused, it will soon be apparent that the blood does not sufficiently nourish them. Instead of increasing in size and strength, they will lose their firmness and elasticity, and become soft and weak. Inactivity is not the law the Lord has established in the human body. The harmonious action of all the parts—brain, bone, and muscle—is necessary to the full and healthful development of the entire human organism. . . .

Every student should understand how to take such care of himself as to preserve the best possible condition of health, resisting febleness and disease; and if from any cause disease does come, or accidents occur, he should know how to meet ordinary emergencies without calling upon a physician and taking his poisonous drugs.

The Lord Himself has spoken upon this subject of the care of the body. He says in His word, "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:17, RV). This

scripture enjoins a conscientious care of the body, and condemns all ignorant or careless neglect.²

Character training in early childhood

Parents should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, educating them to love to do the will of God. It is impossible for us to overestimate the advantages of youthful piety. The impressions received in youth are to many as enduring as eternity. It is in youth that the statutes and commandments of God are most easily inscribed on the tablets of the soul. The instruction of children has been greatly neglected; the righteousness of Christ has not been presented to them as it should have been.

The time of probation is given us that we may perfect a character fit for eternity. How solemn is the thought, parents, that your children are in your hands to educate and train that they may develop characters which God will approve, or characters which Satan and his angels can play upon as they choose! Jesus spoke from the pillar of cloud and of fire, and bade His people instruct their children diligently concerning the commandments of God. Who are obeying this instruction? Who are seeking to make their children such as God will approve? Who keep the thought in mind that all the talents and gifts of their children belong to God, and should be wholly consecrated to His service?

Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, and God revealed Himself to him in his childhood and youth. We must labor far more for our children and for the youth; for God will accept them to do great things in His name in teaching the truth to those in foreign lands, to those who are in the darkness of error and superstition. If you indulge your children, gratifying their selfish wishes; if you encourage in them the love of dress, and develop vanity and pride, you will

do a work that will disappoint Jesus, who has paid an infinite price for their redemption. He desires that the children shall serve Him with undivided affection.³

Those children are most attractive who are natural, unaffected. It is not wise to give them special notice and repeat their clever sayings before them. Vanity should not be encouraged by praising their looks, their words, or their actions. Nor should they be dressed in an expensive or showy manner. This encourages pride in them and awakens envy in the hearts of their companions.

The little ones should be educated in childlike simplicity. They should be trained to be content with the small, helpful duties and the pleasures and experiences natural to their years. Childhood answers to the blade in the parable, and the blade has a beauty peculiarly its own. The children should not be forced into a precocious maturity but should retain as long as possible the freshness and grace of their early years.⁴

The first lessons are of great importance. It is customary to send very young children to school. They are required to study from books things that tax their young minds, and often they are taught music. Frequently the parents have but limited means, and an expense is incurred which they can ill afford; but everything must be made to blend to this artificial line of education. This course is not wise. A nervous child should not be overtaxed in any direction, and should not learn music until he is physically well developed.

The mother should be the teacher, and home the school where every child receives his first lessons; and these lessons should include habits of industry. Mothers, let the little ones play in the open air; let them listen to the songs of the birds, and learn the love of God as expressed in His beautiful works. Teach them simple lessons from the book of nature and the things about them; and as their minds expand, lessons from books

may be added, and firmly fixed in the memory. But let them also learn, even in their earliest years, to be useful. Train them to think that, as members of the household, they are to act an interested, helpful part in sharing the domestic burdens, and to seek healthful exercise in the performance of necessary home duties.

It is essential for parents to find useful employment for their children, which will involve the bearing of responsibilities as their age and strength will permit. The children should be given something to do that will not only keep them busy, but interest them. The active hands and brains must be employed from the earliest years. If parents neglect to turn their children's energies into useful channels, they do them great injury; for Satan is ready to find them something to do. Shall not the doing be chosen for them, the parents being the instructors?

Learning useful service

When the child is old enough to be sent to school, the teacher should cooperate with the parents, and manual training should be continued as a part of his school duties. There are many students who object to this kind of work in the schools. They think useful employments, like learning a trade, degrading; but such persons have an incorrect idea of what constitutes true dignity. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is one with the Father, the Commander in the heavenly courts, was the personal instructor and guide of the children of Israel; and among them it was required that every youth should learn how to work. All were to be educated in some business line, that they might possess a knowledge of practical life, and be not only self-sustaining, but useful. This was the instruction which God gave to His people.

In His earth-life, Christ was an example to all the human family, and He was obedient and helpful in the home. He learned the carpenter's trade and worked with His own hands in the little shop at Nazareth. He had lived amid the glories of heaven;

but He clothed His divinity with humanity, that He might associate with humanity, and reach hearts through the common avenue of sympathy. When found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and worked for the recovery of the human soul by adapting Himself to the situation in which He found humanity. . . .

The time spent in physical exercise is not lost. The student who is continually poring over his books, while he takes but little exercise in the open air, does himself an injury. A proportionate exercise of all the organs and faculties of the body is essential to the best work of each. When the brain is constantly taxed while the other organs of the living machinery are inactive, there is a loss of strength, physical and mental. The physical system is robbed of its healthful tone, the mind loses its freshness and vigor, and a morbid excitability is the result.

The greatest benefit is not gained from exercise that is taken as play or exercise merely. There is some benefit derived from being in the fresh air, and also from the exercise of the muscles; but let the same amount of energy be given to the performance of helpful duties, and the benefit will be greater, and a feeling of satisfaction will be realized; for such exercise carries with it the sense of helpfulness and the approval of conscience for duty well done.

In the children and youth an ambition should be awakened to take their exercise in doing something that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others. The exercise that develops mind and character, that teaches the hands to be useful, and trains the young to bear their share of life's burdens, is that which gives physical strength, and quickens every faculty. And there is a reward in virtuous industry, in the cultivation of the habit of living to do good.

The children of the wealthy should not be deprived of the great blessing of having something to do to increase the strength of brain and muscle.

Work is not a curse, but a blessing. . . .

The approval of God rests with loving assurance upon the children who cheerfully take their part in the duties of domestic life, sharing the burdens of father and mother. They will be rewarded with health of body and peace of mind; and they will enjoy the pleasure of seeing their parents take their share of social enjoyment and healthful recreation, thus prolonging their lives. Children trained to the practical duties of life will go out from the home to be useful members of society. Their education is far superior to that gained by close confinement in the schoolroom at an early age, when neither the mind nor the body is strong enough to endure the strain.

The children and youth should have the lesson continually before them, at home and in the school, by precept and example, to be truthful, unselfish, and industrious.

The educational environment

In the selection of a home, parents should not be governed by temporal considerations merely. It is not altogether a question of the place where they can make the most money, or where they will have the most pleasant surroundings, or the greatest social advantages. The influences that will surround their children, and sway them for good or evil, are of more consequence than any of these considerations. A most solemn responsibility rests upon parents in choosing a place of residence. As far as possible they are to place their families in the channel of light, where their affections will be kept pure, and their love to God and to one another active. The same principle applies to the location of our schools, where the youth will be gathered, and families will be attracted for the sake of the educational advantages.

No pains should be spared to select places for our schools where the moral atmosphere will be as healthful as possible; for the influences that prevail will leave a deep impress on young and forming characters.

For this reason a retired locality is best. The great cities, the centers of business and learning, may seem to present some advantages; but these advantages are outweighed by other considerations. . . .

The youth educated in large cities are surrounded by influences similar to those that prevailed before the Flood. The same principles of disregard for God and His law; the same love of pleasure of selfish gratification, and of pride and vanity are at work at the present time. The world is given up to pleasure; immorality prevails; the rights of the weak and helpless are disregarded; and, the world over, the large cities are fast becoming hotbeds of iniquity. . . .

The continual craving for pleasurable amusements reveals the deep longings of the soul. But those who drink at this fountain of worldly pleasure will find their soul-thirst still unsatisfied. They are deceived; they mistake mirth for happiness; and when the excitement ceases, many sink down into the depths of despondency and despair. O what madness, what folly to forsake the "Fountain of living waters" for the "broken cisterns" of worldly pleasure! We feel to the depth of the soul the peril that surrounds the youth in these last days; and shall not those who come to us for an education, and the families that are attracted to our schools, be withdrawn, as far as possible, from these seductive and demoralizing influences? . . .

There is a refining, subduing influence in nature that should be taken into account in selecting the locality for a school. God has regarded this principle in training men for His work. Moses spent forty years in the wilds of Midian. John the Baptist was not fitted for his high calling as the forerunner of Christ by association with the great men of the nation in the schools at Jerusalem. He went out into the wilderness, where the customs and doctrines of men could not mold his mind, and where he could hold unobstructed communion with God.

When the persecutors of John, the beloved disciple, sought to still his voice and destroy his influence among the people, they exiled him to the Isle of Patmos. But they could not separate him from the divine Teacher. . . .

God would have us appreciate His blessings in His created works. How many children there are in the crowded cities that have not even a spot of green grass to set their feet upon. If they could be educated in the country, amid the beauty, peace, and purity of nature, it would seem to them the spot nearest heaven. In retired places, where we are farthest from the corrupting maxims, customs, and excitements of the world, and nearest to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us and speaks to our souls of His peace and love.⁵

Aiming high for unselfish ministry

God is the source of intellectual as well as spiritual power. The greatest men, who have reached what the world regards as wonderful heights in science, are not to be compared with the beloved John or the great apostle Paul. It is when intellectual and moral power are combined that the greatest standard of manhood is reached.⁶

"Daniel sat in the gate of the king" (Daniel 2:49)—a place where judgment was dispensed, and his three companions were made counselors, judges, and rulers in the midst of the land. These men were not puffed up with vanity, but they saw and rejoiced that God was recognized above all earthly potentates, and that His kingdom was extolled above all earthly kingdoms.⁷

Each should aim just as high as the union of human with divine power makes it possible for him to reach.

Many do not become what they might, because they do not put forth the power that is in them. They do not, as they might, lay hold on divine strength. Many are diverted from the line in which they might reach the truest success. Seeking greater honor or a more pleasing task, they

How solemn is the thought, parents, that your children are in your hands to educate and train that they may develop characters which God will approve!

attempt something for which they are not fitted. Many a man whose talents are adapted for some other calling is ambitious to enter a profession; and he who might have been successful as a farmer, an artisan, or a nurse, fills inadequately the position of a minister, a lawyer, or a physician. There are others, again, who might have filled a responsible calling, but who, for want of energy, application, or perseverance, content themselves with an easier place.

We need to follow more closely God's plan of life. To do our best in the work that lies nearest, to commit our ways to God, and to watch for the indications of His providence—these are rules that ensure safe guidance in the choice of an occupation.

He who came from heaven to be our example spent nearly thirty years of His life in common, mechanical labor; but during this time He was studying the word and the works of God, and helping, teaching, all whom His influence could reach. When His public ministry began, He went about healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and preaching the gospel to the poor. This is the work of all His followers.

"He that is greatest among you," He said, "let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For . . . I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:26, 27).⁸ *R*

References

- ¹ *Special Testimonies on Education*, pp. 47, 48.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 32–34.
- ³ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 318, 319.
- ⁴ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 83, 84.
- ⁵ *Special Testimonies on Education*, pp. 37–47.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- ⁸ *Education*, pp. 267, 268.

A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with commentary by D. P. Silva



The Christian Home

On the sixth day of creation, God formed the first family. Since Christ is the Creator, He is the originator of the family, and He knows what is the best for each of its members. At the beginning of His ministry on earth, the first miracle Jesus performed was at a wedding feast when He transformed water into wine, thus bringing happiness to the new couple. The presence of Christ in the family is the number one factor of happiness.

A Christian is someone who follows Christ. Then, in order to have a Christian home, we need to know Jesus and how His life was at home in Nazareth, a small town in Galilee.

As a matter of fact, Christ is the perfect example for both parents and children. Speaking of Him as a child, Luke informs us that Jesus “grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40).

At the age of twelve, Christ accompanied His earthly parents to Jerusalem to attend one of

the greatest feasts in the Jewish calendar—the Passover. After the feast was over, He was forgotten in the temple of Jerusalem, where He met with the doctors of the law “both hearing them, and asking them questions” about the Scriptures (verse 46).

Luke records that after this incident, Jesus returned to Nazareth with His parents, “and was subject unto them” (verse 51). In spite of His previous position in heaven, the Lord submitted Himself to Joseph and Mary, giving us a perfect example of filial obedience.

“As He grew in wisdom and stature, Jesus increased in favor with God and man. He drew the sympathy of all hearts by showing Himself capable of sympathizing with all. The atmosphere of hope and courage that surrounded Him made Him a blessing in every home. And often in the synagogue on the Sabbath day He was called upon to read the lesson from the prophets, and the hearts of the

hearers thrilled as a new light shone out from the familiar words of the sacred text.

“Yet Jesus shunned display. During all the years of His stay in Nazareth, He made no exhibition of His miraculous power. He sought no high position and assumed no titles. His quiet and simple life, and even the silence of the Scriptures concerning His early years, teach an important lesson. The more quiet and simple the life of the child—the more free from artificial excitement, and the more in harmony with nature—the more favorable is it to physical and mental vigor and to spiritual strength.

“Jesus is our example. There are many who dwell with interest upon the period of His public ministry, while they pass unnoticed the teaching of His early years. But it is in His home life that He is the pattern for all children and youth. The Saviour condescended to poverty, that He might teach how closely we in a humble lot may walk with

God. He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ's example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, 'Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth' (Isaiah 42:1)."¹

From His birth until the age of 30 years old, Jesus worked hard at the carpentry shop of Joseph, taking part in the family duties, and cooperating with the maintenance of His earthly home. Then He left His home to be baptized by John the Baptist and be anointed by the Holy Ghost, thus being prepared for His mission.

From the life of Jesus and others who came before Him—men of God such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his children, Elijah, Elisha, David, and many others—we learn that a simple life in the midst of nature is most conducive to practical industry and spiritual development. The less the family is surrounded by the noise and agitation of the cities, the better will be the preparation for a life of usefulness in this world and fitness for the heavenly home.

Daily communion with God and nature

Nazareth was a very small town in Galilee, and Jesus enjoyed the natural environment that surrounded His earthly home. Early in the morning He left home to be in communion with His heavenly Father in the midst of nature. His mother, Mary, was His first human teacher, and He learned the Scriptures from her.

Even though Jesus was God in the flesh, He manifested high respect and care for His mother till His last moment hanging on the cross. He is the perfect example of filial love.

Bethel

Christian homes need to be a Bethel—a house of God. Praise, prayer, and study of the Bible must be a permanent religious activity if we want to count on the presence of Christ and His holy angels in our home. Individual as well as family devotion will be a strong defense in behalf of all the members of the family. "The family that prays together stays together" is a famous saying known for its validity.

In the morning, our first duty is to gather around the family altar to thank God for His care and protection during the night. Melodious, inspiring hymns, short prayers, and the study of the Bible should be conducted in such a way that the time of worship will not be a tiresome duty. Then, when the members of the family leave home for their responsibilities outside, they will take with them a heavenly influence wherever they go. This will be a strong defense against the attacks of the evil one.

After returning home, the family should gather around the family altar once again to thank God for His blessings during the day. When we go to our evening rest meditating on Jesus, the next morning we will awaken with our thoughts on Him.

The Christian relationship

The apostles Paul and Peter give wonderful instruction about the Christian family relationship.

In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul describes the Christian family environment, "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be

to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (verses 5:19–33).

Let us imagine a home where the members are always "speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord." In such a home, the devil has no access at all. Moreover, the members of the family will be "giving thanks always . . . unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 20).

Following these instructions, Paul goes on to say that we need to "submit" ourselves "one to another in the fear of God." Being first submitted to Christ, it will not be so difficult to submit "one to another in the fear of God" (verse 21).

Paul then explains the submission of the Christian wife to a Christian husband, "as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (verse 24). On the other hand, the husband must love his wife "as Christ . . . loved the church, and gave himself for it" (verse 25). It is not difficult for a wife to submit to a husband who loves her as Christ loves the church.

The apostle Peter also has very important instructions to husbands and wives:

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. . . . Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:1, 7–9).

In this Scripture we find that:

Christian wives should submit themselves to their Christian husbands.

A Christian husband should give honor unto his wife, as unto the weaker vessel, since both of them are heirs together of the grace of life.

If these conditions are fulfilled, their prayers will not be hindered.

The two should have one mind, having compassion one of another, being pitiful, courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.

Conducting themselves in Christ’s way, they will inherit a blessing.

Parents and children

After instructing the parents regarding their relationship, Paul directs his words to the relationship between parents and children:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1–4).

In Colossians 3:18–21, Paul summarizes the Christian behavior of the whole family:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the

Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.

“This, says the apostle, ‘is the first commandment with promise’ (Ephesians 6:2). To Israel, expecting soon to enter Canaan, it was a pledge to the obedient, of long life in that good land; but it has a wider meaning, including all the Israel of God, and promising eternal life upon the earth when it shall be freed from the curse of sin.”²

Christ, the center of the family and the church

“What is it that causes dissension and discord? It is the result of walking apart from Christ. At a distance from Him, we lose our love for Him, and grow cold toward His followers. The farther the beams of light recede from their center, the wider separated they become. Each believer is as a beam of light from Christ the Sun of righteousness. The more closely we walk with Christ, the center of all love and light, the greater will be our affection for His light-bearers. When the saints are drawn close to Christ, they must of necessity be drawn close to each other, for the sanctifying grace of Christ will bind their hearts

together. You cannot love God and yet fail to love your brethren.”³

“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ.

“Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running toward the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another.

“Thus it is in the Christian life. The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action.”⁴

“My brethren, preach Christ. . . . The pen of inspiration has traced the words which Christ spoke in order that those who believe in Him may give to others the words which He has given to them. Ministers should set before the people the lessons which are to be brought into the home life.”⁵

Lighthouses to the world

“The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life. Such an illustration will be a power for good in the world. Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives. As the youth go out from such a home, the lessons they have learned are imparted. Nobler principles of life are introduced into other households, and an uplifting influence works in the community.

“There are many others to whom we might make our homes a blessing. Our social entertainments should not be governed by the dictates of worldly custom, but by the Spirit of Christ and the teaching of His word. . . . How much such a welcome might do to

cheer and encourage the missionary nurse or the teacher, the care-burdened, hard-working mother, or the feeble and aged, so often without a home, and struggling with poverty and many discouragements.

“When thou makest a dinner or a supper,” Christ says, “call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12–14).

“These are guests whom it will lay on you no great burden to receive. You will not need to provide for them elaborate or expensive entertainment. You will need to make no effort at display. The warmth of a genial welcome, a place at your fireside, a seat at your home table, the privilege of sharing the blessing of the hour of prayer, would to many of these be like a glimpse of heaven.

“Our sympathies are to overflow the boundaries of self and the enclosure of family walls. There are precious opportunities for those who will make their homes a blessing to others. Social influence is a wonderful power. We can use it if we will as a means of helping those about us.

“Our homes should be a place of refuge for the tempted youth. Many there are who stand at the parting of the ways. Every influence, every impression, is determining the choice that shapes their destiny both here and hereafter. Evil invites them. Its resorts are made bright and attractive. They have a welcome for every comer. All about us are youth who have no home, and many whose homes have no helpful, uplifting power, and the youth drift into evil. They are going down to ruin within the very shadow of our own doors.

“These youth need a hand stretched out to them in sympathy. Kind words simply spoken, little attentions simply bestowed, will

“Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running toward the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another. Thus it is in the Christian life. The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another.”

sweep away the clouds of temptation which gather over the soul. The true expression of heaven-born sympathy has power to open the door of hearts that need the fragrance of Christlike words, and the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ’s love. If we would show an interest in the youth, invite them to our homes, and surround them with cheering, helpful influences, there are many who would gladly turn their steps into the upward path.

“Our time here is short. We can pass through this world but once; as we pass along, let us make the most of life. The work to which we are called does not require wealth or social position or great ability. It requires a kindly, self-sacrificing spirit and a steadfast purpose. A lamp, however small, if kept steadily burning, may be the means of lighting many other lamps. Our sphere of influence may seem narrow, our ability small, our opportunities few, our acquirements limited; yet wonderful possibilities are ours through a faithful use of the opportunities of our own homes. If we will open our hearts and homes to

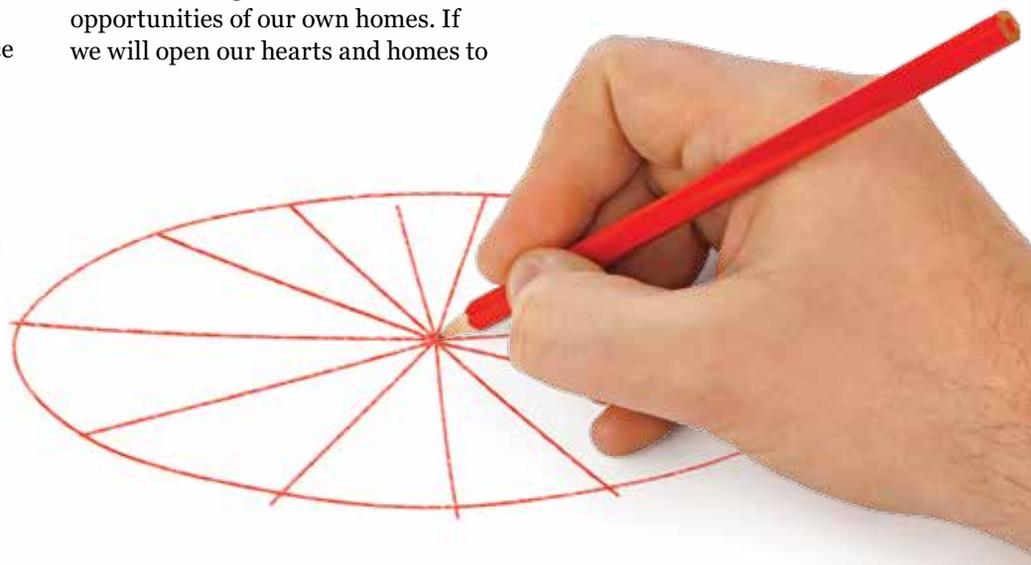
the divine principles of life we shall become channels for currents of life-giving power. From our homes will flow streams of healing, bringing life and beauty and fruitfulness where now are barrenness and dearth.”⁶

If, by God’s grace, we as His children, take into serious consideration these inspired instructions, then our families will be the most powerful sermon to outsiders, and for sure we will receive the inheritance promised to the faithful ones.

May the Lord grant this experience to all of us who are taking part in this week of prayer! *R*

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*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation
with comments by N. Tyler*



A Complete Education: *Physical, Mental, and Spiritual*

Some years ago a young man became a Sabbathkeeper through a health outreach program. Very enthusiastic about the message, he had a desire to excel but was hindered by a serious defect—scholastically he performed very poorly. After struggling through missionary training, he managed to enter the Bible work for a while. However, what he really wanted to do was to study medicine. When he mentioned this to a doctor friend, the physician felt sorry for him but did not want to discourage him. Instead he reminded the young man about the difficulty of undertaking the study of medicine, then suggested to him that he first prepare by spending one year putting into practice the lifestyle advice given

in the Spirit of Prophecy—including good diet, daily exercise, adequate sleep, temperance, and trust in God. Amazingly, after carefully following his friend's advice, the young man was able to pass pre-medicine and enter medical school, managing his studies quite well.

This story illustrates the importance of considering the whole person in the work of education. Education which is complete must address more than just mental training and the mere learning of information.

God's plan

The Creator's plan for humanity encompasses the entire being. When

God at creation breathed into the first human being the breath of life, a complete person instantly came into existence, made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). "When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker."¹

Sin caused us to lose to a great extent that likeness to God which we had in the beginning. But the promise of redemption involves restoration. The apostle prayed that "your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Christian education seeks this whole-person development, toward the high ideals which God has for

His creatures. He says to us, “as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:9). “Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education . . . is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.”²

Since God’s design involves educating the whole person in body, mind, and spirit, our first priority must be to maintain faithfulness in following His instructions. “Real success in education depends upon the fidelity with which men carry out the Creator’s plan.”³

Physical strength

A recent study compared the academic achievements of students with the amount of physical activity in which they engaged. Researchers concluded that students who engaged in vigorous physical activity had significantly higher grades than students who performed no vigorous activity.⁴

There is a powerful connection between the health of the body and the health of the mind. Therefore, a complete education must begin with the education of the physical nature.

In the very beginning, when creating an environment for the first people, “God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Genesis 2:15). The Garden of Eden was not only a place, but a system—a way of life. “The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.”⁵

This system is itself so important, that we are counselled regarding establishing institutions: “Study in

agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon.”⁶

Bible examples

The Bible describes many outstanding examples of great leaders and educators whose practical training was a significant part of their work and their preparation to lead and teach others.

Elisha stepped away from a farmer’s plow, continued in faithful service to Elijah in humble tasks, before being endowed with a double portion of Elijah’s spirit, and ushering in an important period in the educational work of Israel, by leading out in the schools of the prophets.

The apostle Paul rose to prominence among the Jewish nation, a promising young man of brilliant intellect and indomitable courage and energy. He gave evidence of a well-rounded education, in that he could readily take up his tent-making trade, by manual labor supporting himself whenever necessary. All of these capabilities were brought into his work as the greatest missionary worker of Christian history.

Jesus, the greatest Educator, spent His youth and early manhood in practical work, combined with mental training. Even during His few years of active ministry, His healing hands were more often felt restoring the sick and disabled to health, than was His voice in preaching to the crowds.

Practical work

Studies have shown that working with your hands promotes intellectual development, leading to a more general capacity to work across other disciplines. One paper concluded that

“working with one’s own hands in a ‘real-world’ 3-D learning environment is imperative for full cognitive and intellectual development.”⁷

There is something inherent in manual labor that develops important neural pathways in the brain, and which benefits the person in many more areas than we might have realized. Therefore, an education cannot be considered complete which does not give to the student the gift of skill in practical, hands-on labor.

“Practical work encourages close observation and independent thought. Rightly performed, it tends to develop that practical wisdom which we call common sense. It develops ability to plan and execute, strengthens courage and perseverance, and calls for the exercise of tact and skill.”⁸

From the model which God gave us, agriculture is a very important aspect of physical training. “Students should be given a practical education in agriculture. This will be of inestimable value to many in their future work. . . . Agriculture will open resources for self-support. . . . We should so train the youth that they will love to engage in the cultivation of the soil.”⁹

Proper provision for practical work, including agriculture, is so important in education that the Lord says, “Some do not appreciate the value of agricultural work. These should not plan for our schools, for they will hold everything from advancing in right lines.”¹⁰

Trades

“To secure a strong, well-balanced character, both the mental and the physical powers must be exercised and developed. . . . Each should acquire a knowledge of some branch

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of manual labor by which, if need be, he may obtain a livelihood.”¹¹

Sometimes we may be tempted to view manual labor as a thing to be avoided if possible. However, we are told that even “if it were certain that one would never need to resort to manual labor for his support, still he should be taught to work.”¹² “If schools had been established upon the plan we have mentioned, there would not now be so many unbalanced minds.”¹³

Sadly, physical training is often neglected in the education of our young people. “The constant application to study, as the schools are now conducted, is unfitting youth for practical life. The human mind will have action. If it is not active in the right direction, it will be active in the wrong.”¹⁴

“In order to preserve the balance of the mind, labor and study should be united in the schools. . . . And a portion of the time each day should have been devoted to labor, that the physical and mental powers might be equally exercised.”¹⁵ Institutions which followed this advice generally devoted a full half day to physical labor.

Certainly the benefits were seen in giving time for physical work. “In following this plan the students will realize elasticity of spirit and vigor of thought, and in a given time can accomplish more mental labor than they could by study alone.”¹⁶

Mental acuteness

The advent of the Internet search engine has introduced a problem into modern society. People are now getting used to the idea that any time they need to know something, they just have to go enter some words into a search form, and they will have instant answers. However, this is negatively affecting our minds. Because we know we have the information available virtually instantly, we can become less likely to remember, and less likely to dedicate thorough research to a given subject.

One team of researchers put it like this: “The advent of the ‘information age’ seems to have created a generation of people who feel they know more than ever before—when their reliance on the Internet means that they may know ever less about the world around them.”¹⁷

On the other hand, spiritual things require diligence and a commitment to study earnestly. As we study we must build knowledge step by step, by careful, prayerful research. “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33). “Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. . . . We cannot expect to gain spiritual knowledge without earnest toil. . . . It is essential for old and young, not only to read God’s word, but to study it with wholehearted earnestness, praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure.”¹⁸

Bible study is not just about finding information. “The mind will enlarge, if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual.”¹⁹ As you search for answers, you are rewiring your brain—making new connections and strengthening mental power.

One young person to whom I had the privilege of giving Bible studies had an outstanding experience illustrating this. She had not completed high school and needed to study for an equivalency exam, which she had failed once already. In the meantime we started to take her through Bible studies, and she began to study God’s word for herself. A few months after this began, she received an unexpected opportunity to sit the high school equivalency exam. Without any chance to prepare, she went and took that exam. When she

received her results she came to me very excited, to tell me that she had passed with a high score. She firmly believed that it was the benefits of Bible study that had strengthened her mental power.

Complete education will include learning diligence, perseverance, and mental discipline. These qualities are necessary for success in life, and Bible study helps in developing them. “The study of the Bible is superior to all other study in strengthening the intellect. What fields of thought the youth may find to explore in the word of God! The mind may go deeper and still deeper in its research, gathering strength with every effort to comprehend truth; and yet there is an infinity beyond.”²⁰

Spiritual vigor

Study of the Scriptures brings deeper benefits, too. An investment in filling the mind with God’s word brings moral stamina to the soul. The psalmist said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). As we hide God’s word in our heart, it changes our nature, so that we are less and less susceptible to temptation. “A familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures sharpens the discerning powers, and fortifies the soul against the attacks of Satan.”²¹ Therefore, a deep and intimate knowledge of the Bible is an essential part of a complete education, for both its mental and moral benefits.

Often we consider education to be about planting information in the mind. But it is essential to go deeper than this. “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6). “The [moral] law is an expression of the thought of God; when received in Christ, it becomes our thought. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin.”²² “The word [of God] destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. . . . By the transforming agency of His



grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature.”²³

“In giving us the privilege of studying His word, the Lord has set before us a rich banquet. . . . By partaking of this word our spiritual strength is increased; we grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth.”²⁴ This work is intimately connected with the last-day message, when God’s people are being sealed, “settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved.”²⁵

As we understand the love of Christ, “we love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). When we come to “know the love of Christ,” we can be “filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:19). “Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. . . . Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty.”²⁶

The spiritual focus of education has higher goals than we can fully understand right now. “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached.”²⁷

As a spiritual work, education will continue beyond the present world. “The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward throughout eternity, ever progressing, never completed.”²⁸

Coming into line

Today we are desperately in need of energetic youth who “will not be bought or sold,” who “in their inmost souls are true and honest,” who “do not fear to call sin by its right name,” whose “conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole,” and who “will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”²⁹

But how can this kind of character be developed? It “is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature—the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.”³⁰

We are now living more than one hundred years beyond the events that gave rise to the Reform Movement. As we reflect on this fact, we must ask ourselves, what have we done toward hastening the coming of our Lord? What can be done now to redeem the time? The answer comes to us, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!”³¹

Today’s world begs for a “great work of reform,” “and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual, can be accomplished.”³² Therefore at this time, “as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God. ‘This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent’ (John 17:3). If this is the price of heaven, shall not

our education be conducted on these lines?”³³

The work before us is to seek a complete education—physical, mental, and spiritual—for ourselves and for our children and youth. “Before we can carry the message of present truth in all its fulness to other countries we must first break every yoke. We must come into the line of true education, walking in the wisdom of God, and not in the wisdom of the world. God calls for messengers who will be true reformers. We must educate, educate, to prepare a people who will understand the message, and then give the message to the world.”³⁴ *R*

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*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation
with comments by D. Sureshkumar*



Turning the Heart of the Fathers to the Children

A picture of domestic tranquility

The psalmist declares: “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate” (Psalm 127:3–5).

In understanding that children are the heritage of the Lord, we are here reminded that our children are not our property. We are ever to remember that they belong to God. Yet like arrows, they need clear direction. What a woe can occur when an arrow does not have proper aim! So it is indeed our solemn

responsibility to direct our children in the way of God.

Another blessing is also pronounced by the psalmist: “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. . . . Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table” (Psalm 128:1, 3). Thankful should be the man whose wife delights to cling to him as a tender vine. Such a sign of love it is that he, in the fear and grace of the Lord, has been able to earn her trust to such an extent! Yet their children are not here depicted as vines; they are gathered together as separate little plants in their own right, with hope and a future distinctly their own. How significant that they are “olive” plants, bearing within them the sap of the olive tree symbolic of the Holy

Spirit (Zechariah 4:11–14), made possible through the prayers and dedicated efforts of these consecrated parents.

Where are we now in history?

The above scene is beautiful indeed, yet unfortunately it is too rarely found nowadays. We have to face squarely the current reality existing in much of modern society today:

“There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth

as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men. The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give” (Proverbs 30:11–15).

Nonetheless, by God’s grace, even in the face of all this turmoil, there is yet a wonderful message of hope to be given:

“The prophet Malachi declares: ‘Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers’ (Malachi 4:5, 6). Here the prophet describes the character of the work. Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ’s first advent. The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred.”¹

Yes, in the book of Malachi we find a well-known prophecy, a noble endeavor. How many today have longed to see noble, obedient children in a generation sadly characterized by an era when “in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1–4)!

It seems impossible. How can this ever come to pass?

Living by the “Golden Rule”

Most of us would agree that household rules are absolutely essential in the effective governing of a happy, peaceful home environment. Yet perhaps the most important “rule” of authority that parents should continually exercise in behalf of the younger ones entrusted to their special care is the famous “Golden Rule.” The Lord gives a timeless injunction, recorded more than once

in Scripture: “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31). “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

There are many wrecks of humanity in this sad world, many frustrated souls who suffer keen obstacles in their adult life, so often due to a lack of diligent training from their youth. Perhaps they were allowed to do as they pleased as children—and inevitably they later have to face a rude awakening in adulthood when they realize that the rest of the world does not bow and cater to their whims.

Why does this happen?

“Some children, as they grow older, think it a matter of course that they must have their own way, and that their parents must submit to their wishes. They expect their parents to wait upon them. They are impatient of restraint, and when old enough to be a help to their parents, they do not bear the burdens they should. They have been released from responsibilities and grow up worthless at home and worthless abroad. They have no power or endurance. The parents have borne the burden and have suffered them to grow up in idleness, without habits of order, industry, or economy. They have not been taught habits of self-denial but have been petted and indulged, their appetites gratified, and they come up with enfeebled health. Their manners and deportment are not agreeable. They are unhappy themselves and make those around them unhappy. And while the children are but children

still, while they need to be disciplined, they are allowed to go out in company and mingle with the society of the young, and one has a corrupting influence over another.

“The curse of God will surely rest upon unfaithful parents. Not only are they planting thorns which will wound them here, but they must meet their own unfaithfulness when the judgment shall sit. Many children will rise up in judgment and condemn their parents for not restraining them, and charge upon them their destruction. The false sympathy and blind love of parents causes them to excuse the faults of their children and pass them by without correction, and their children are lost in consequence, and the blood of their souls will rest upon the unfaithful parents.

“Children who are thus brought up undisciplined have everything to learn when they profess to be Christ’s followers. Their whole religious experience is affected by their bringing up in childhood. The same self-will often appears; there is the same lack of self-denial, the same impatience under reproof, the same love of self and unwillingness to seek counsel of others, or to be influenced by others’ judgment, the same indolence, shunning of burdens, lack of bearing responsibilities. All this is seen in their relation to the church. It is possible for such to overcome; but how hard the battle! how severe the conflict! How hard to pass through the course of thorough discipline which is necessary for them to reach the elevation of Christian character! Yet if they overcome at last, they will be permitted to see, before they are translated, how near the precipice of eternal destruction they came,

In understanding that children are the heritage of the Lord, we are here reminded that our children are not our property.

because of the lack of right training in youth, the failure to learn submission in childhood.”²

So, we see here the bitter consequences of failing to learn submission in the childhood years. Yet we as parents should ask ourselves: Is the necessary training of our children to be carried out by harsh, abrupt measures? The answer is found in the Golden Rule: If you were the little child being trained, what would you prefer? You would probably long for a perfectly blended balance of justice and mercy:

Solemn, reasonable justice to prepare you to stand accountable, cultivating mature self-control to be able to exercise righteous virtue in all aspects of life.

You would also want this training to be coupled with tender, reasonable mercy so that you could delightfully blossom and flourish as a product of love—an unselfish individual responding to the vibrant, caretaking love of devoted parents. Such a beautiful relationship aptly reflects those radiant beams emanating from our own heavenly Father: “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

The secret of success

My father once explained to me a vital 3-step process in child training. It consists of a simple, yet profound recipe:

- Kind words.
- Loving looks.
- Gentle touch.

The words are always kind because they are carefully chosen and seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6) to minister grace unto the hearers. The looks and facial expressions convey love because our own gratitude to God for our children is always an intrinsic part of the family bond. The touch may vary in degrees of gentleness, but it, too, ever abounds with that same precious element of endearing, self-sacrificing love.

Remembering that we, too, were once children, parents should understand that children do not

respond favorably when provoked to anger because it discourages them (Colossians 3:21). Whatever we express to them must be done in love, and our words are to be consistently upheld by action because children, too, have their own responsibility: They are also solemnly enjoined to obey their parents “in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (verse 20). Why not make it easier, more credible, and more pleasant for them to be in a position to render obedience cheerfully?

Start the process early:

“The mother should not allow her child to gain an advantage over her in a single instance; and, in order to maintain this authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm, steady hand and a kindness which convinces the child of your love will accomplish the purpose. But let selfishness, anger, and self-will have their course for the first three years of a child’s life, and it will be hard to bring it to submit to wholesome discipline. Its disposition has become soured; it delights in having its own way; parental control is distasteful. These evil tendencies grow with its growth, until, in manhood, supreme selfishness and a lack of self-control place him at the mercy of the evils that run riot in our land.

“Never should [the children] be allowed to show their parents disrespect. Self-will should never be permitted to go unrebuked. The future well-being of the child requires kindly, loving, but firm discipline.”³

To make this happen, we’ve got to keep in mind that the required “obedience is not to be obtained by scolding and threats. Many parents have yet to learn that no good is accomplished by outbursts of scolding. Many do not consider the need of speaking kindly to the children. They do not remember that these little ones are bought with a price and are the purchased possession of the Lord Jesus.”⁴

“It is not right for parents to pet and humor their children; neither is it

right for them to abuse them. A firm, decided straightforward course of action will be productive of the best results.”⁵

“As I have called mothers’ attention to the wrong habits they were encouraging in their little ones, some have listened indifferently, while others have said, with a smile, ‘I cannot bear to cross my children. They will do better as they grow older. They will then be ashamed of these passionate outbursts. It is not well to be too strict with little ones. They will outgrow the inclination to tell untruths, to meddle, to be indolent and selfish.’

“A very easy way truly to dispose of the matter, but a way that is **not** in harmony with the will of God. If a field is left uncultivated, a crop of weeds is sure to appear. So it is with children. If the soil of the heart is uncultivated, Satan sows his seeds of anger and hatred, selfishness and pride, and they quickly spring up, to bear a harvest that parents reap with bitter regret. Too late they see their terrible mistake. The wrong they have done can never be wholly undone. Even if the child, by patient, untiring care, is at last won to the Saviour, his character will always bear the marks of Satan’s seed-sowing.

“Children left to themselves grow up selfish, exacting, unlovable. Unable to enjoy their own society or the society of others, their lives are filled with discontent.”⁶

How soon can healthy discipline start—and how is it fostered?

The mother can restrain and control her wants during the prenatal phase and hold her own choices subject to the control of reason. Then, after the birth:

“The little ones, before they are a year old, hear and understand what is spoken in reference to themselves, and know to what extent they are to be indulged. Mothers, you should train your children to yield to your wishes. . . .

“The mother’s influence is an unceasing influence; and if it is

always on the side of right, her children's characters will testify to her moral earnestness and worth. Her smile, her encouragement, may be an inspiring force. She may bring sunshine to the heart of her child by a word of love, a smile of approval."⁷

How long does discipline last?

"Discipline" comes from the same word as "disciple," a pupil or apprentice. Christian discipline involves parents apprenticing their children for Christ in preparation for eternity. The Lord is not seeking robots to follow Him blindly, yet neither will spoiled, wayward brats be found corrupting His kingdom. God is preparing a Christlike people to serve Him willingly out of love, not fear—and He is seeking genuine, heartfelt service, not a mere outward show. Purity of heart on the inside is to foster uprightness glowing from within. The Lord's plan is "that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace" (Psalm 144:12).

Example will always speak louder than words. Our youth will imitate more closely who we are and what we do than anything we may profess. So perhaps the greatest influence to improve our child training efforts will be to raise the level of our own consecration to God. Preach the gospel to them at all times and, if necessary, use words.

The Lord bids us, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 11:18, 19).

Thus we are to keep the word of God ever before us as our own path of life and naturally share it with our children as a practical guide in everyday life.

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and what we do than anything we may profess.
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The kindness to be returned

"If every family professing to be the children of God were indeed what they profess to be, what happiness would exist in the home. Christ would be represented in the home life, and parents and children would represent Him in the church.

"God requires children to care for their parents when the parents are unable to care for themselves. There is a record kept in the books of heaven of the crime of neglecting parents. Some children may give their parents a home but withhold love and tenderness and sympathy, and deprive their fathers and mothers of that for which they most long in their old age. While your father and mother live, it should be your constant study to bring cheerfulness and sunshine into their lives. You should smooth their pathway to the grave. This conduct toward parents would recommend you to the world and will recommend you to heaven, as a child that obeys the divine precepts.

"Children should remember that aged parents have but little joy and comfort at best, and they should not through neglect and indifference heap sorrow upon sorrow on their parents' hearts. That children pursue a heartless course is not only a terrible grief to the aged father and mother, but it brings grief to heaven, for such children are recorded as violators of the commands of God. Those who do not respect and love their parents will never reverence the God of heaven,

never be deemed worthy of a place in the new earth."⁸

Conclusion

In summary, let us ever keep in mind that "parents are entrusted with the present and eternal interests of their children. They are to hold the reins of government and guide their households to the honor of God. God's law should be their standard, and love should rule in all things."⁹

Yes, the degradation wrought in human families through the curse of sin can yet be wiped away by Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. The Lord has a plan for us—a hope and a future, to obtain a wonderful experience attainable through His grace. Our precious children need not fall as a restless prey of the enemy. But the truth is that this work of reformation must start first with us, not with them—and they will likely be drawn to respond in turn. So, let us redeem the time and begin the process anew!

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). *R*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 62.
- ² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 218–220.
- ³ *Child Guidance*, p. 83.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 313.
- ⁶ *The Review and Herald*, January 24, 1907. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁷ *The Signs of the Times*, March 16, 1891.
- ⁸ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, pp. 84, 85.
- ⁹ *The Signs of the Times*, March 16, 1891.

A compilation from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, with commentary by M. Stroia



The Ultimate Goal— Seeking for Excellence

*“Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way”
(1 Corinthians 12:31).*

A bleak picture

The overall population on planet Earth is currently estimated at over 7 billion inhabitants, most of whom live just because they are here—without having a clear explanation for the reason of their existence, nor any definite, worthwhile purpose in life. Another rather large category have inherited or adopted various kinds of questionable explanations, imagining that they know why they are here,

while, in reality, they are only poor victims of misleading ideologies which promise much but don't deliver satisfying answers.

Unaware of the real purpose of their existence, people have the tendency to concentrate on short-term aims, trying to make their limited time here on earth as pleasant and comfortable as possible. Yet, few of them succeed even in this temporary endeavor. Most fail both to achieve fulfillment in this world and to attain to everlasting life.

According to the Bible, humanity was created perfect in every respect and had the wonderful prospect of being absolutely happy for eternity. Yet, because of sin, this initial perfection of all their components—

body, intellect, and affection—began to deteriorate at an alarming rate, so it didn't take long for the wickedness of humanity to become nearly universal until finally “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Genesis 6:6).

It was not only the outward behavior that became corrupt. In a majority of cases, the very thoughts and feelings went so far beyond every limit of decency that there was nothing left to respond to the exhortations of the Holy Spirit: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**” (verse 5, emphasis added).

Forsaking allegiance to the Creator, humanity made friends with the enemy of souls—and, under his influence, became so corrupt until every likeness with God was wiped out and the human race began to reflect the image of the enemy. Sin was no longer “an accident” or “a mistake,” but rather it became the predominant component of the human lifestyle: “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, **to work all uncleanness with greediness**” (Ephesians 4:19, emphasis supplied).

By following the arch deceiver, human worth decreased dramatically, daily bringing the race closer to zero—a value which meant there was no more good in humanity at all, just like the antediluvian inhabitants in the times of Noah or the ancient Canaanites who were considered “ripe” for destruction.

Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), humanity, through poor choices, were doomed to live an unfulfilled life on Earth, forever thirsting and never able to obtain lasting, long-term satisfaction. This kind of life would eventually end in a desperate, hopeless death that would bring a tragic close to a deliberately chosen life of sin and put to nought all achievements, which would no longer be of much benefit.

Hope on the horizon

God, being the very essence of love, could not sit back and watch how humanity—the crown of His earthly creation—was heading towards utter ruin, without being given a chance to escape such a doom. Therefore, in His infinite goodness and mercy, as a loving Father, He provided a way out of this desperate situation at the infinite cost of His only begotten Son’s life, granting the human race a chance to be restored to their original perfection through the plan of salvation.

This is actually what the message of Scripture is all about—the inestimably precious opportunity for salvation and restoration granted

unto us through the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

“The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. . . . **The burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme—man’s uplifting—the power of God, ‘which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 15:57).**”¹

Through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, human beings are not only to be forgiven of the sins and trespasses of the past but are to be changed from a state of physical, intellectual, and moral decay to the similitude of God, for “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, **and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” (1 John 1:9, emphasis supplied).

This is the ultimate opportunity of our life—and since it has been provided for us at a cost beyond computation, we bear a tremendous responsibility regarding the way we deal with it. We could simply ignore it, or we could make the best use of it, thus reaching to ever higher levels of perfection through the power and guidance of God’s Spirit: “**Our first duty to God and our fellow beings is in self-development. Every faculty with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection**, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable. In order to purify and refine our characters, we need the grace given us of Christ that will enable us to see and correct our deficiencies and improve that which is excellent in our characters.”²

This cleansing work, performed by the Holy Spirit, is not a mere surface work. Instead, it enters the very core of human nature, the essence of our being, transforming not merely a few aspects of our outward appearance and behavior, but rather it affects our entire understanding, perceptions,

and feelings. As Jesus told Nicodemus in their remarkable conversation at night, in order to be genuine, this change can be nothing less than a new birth. Christ explained, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). This new birth involves a thorough change of our character and identity, so that we end up being entirely different people, being restored to bear the similitude of God: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness**” (Ephesians 4:22–24, emphasis supplied).

Cooperating with the heaven-born process

What aspects of life are involved in God’s plan to transform us, and how far should it go? Through the grace given by Jesus Christ, God’s children should be progressively enriched in absolutely every aspect of their existence, **growing “into him in all things**, which is the head, even Christ” (verse 15, emphasis supplied) “in all utterance, and in all knowledge; . . . **so that [they] come behind in no gift**” (1 Corinthians 1:4–7, emphasis supplied) and “**be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**” (2 Timothy 3:17, emphasis supplied).

There is no aspect of life, no field of our existence whatever, which should be excepted from this process of thorough transformation: “[Proverbs 4:7; 15:2 quoted.] **True education** imparts this wisdom. It **teaches the best use not only of one but of all our powers and acquirements. Thus it covers the whole circle of obligation—to ourselves, to the world, and to God.**”³

This process, also known as sanctification, will ultimately lead to the state of holiness or God-given

perfection in all things, which constitutes our readiness for heaven: “God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. . . . **But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life**” (Romans 6:17, 18, 22, emphasis supplied).

“True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection. **Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all.**”⁴

These holy attainments increase the value of the believer beyond any human imagination, perfecting in him or her an all-round Christian character, making that individual most desirable and lovable in this life, and perfectly fit for the glorious life to come:

“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But his efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth.”⁵

“The religion of Christ never degrades the receiver. It never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hardhearted. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the

“Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all.”

judgment, and purifies and ennobles the thoughts, bringing them into captivity to Jesus Christ.

“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. . . .

“The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character.”⁶

The Lord assures us, “Them that honour me I will honour” (1 Samuel 2:30). The history of Daniel and his three friends tested by the king and found ten times more capable than all their fellows is just one of many examples revealing that unflinching faithfulness, especially under severe trial, is often honored even in this life (Daniel 1:19, 20; 2:48, 49).

If we were to ponder the life of other great men of faith, such as Joseph, Moses, or David, we could recognize the same pattern everywhere: God took each of them and brought them progressively unto perfection of character by showing them their weak points, leading them through trials, and helping them to overcome and grow “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). In many cases, even their social status changed dramatically, reflecting God’s recognition of their faithfulness as well as their willingness to be changed by God according to His will.

Since Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8), He has a similar way

of dealing with people throughout time. Today, He is just as willing to lead His faithful ones to the highest peaks of spiritual attainment as He did in the past. Yet Christ will not perform this act as an arbitrary intervention in the life of anyone. He changes a person for the better only to the extent that he or she is willing to welcome the Holy Spirit to take control to improve the life unto perfection:

“The Lord does nothing without our cooperation.”⁷

God can only accept willing, joyful obedience; it is against His nature and character to try to force us into anything—not even into obedience. Therefore, every step of advancement requires our acceptance and cooperation. The Lord cannot advance in the process of changing us faster than we are ready and willing to accept.

“We are all debtors to God. He has claims upon us that we cannot meet without giving ourselves a full and willing sacrifice. **He claims prompt and willing obedience, and nothing short of this will He accept.**”⁸

Submission to the changing process is not always painless or comfortable, but it is definitely worth accepting, because it is the condition upon which we as sinners can escape our doom and be endowed with a value incomparably higher than any material value in the universe: “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect**, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10, emphasis supplied).

A disciplined life

The apostle Paul compares the Christian life to the training of

professional athletes who lead a very disciplined life, governed by all kinds of rules and restrictions in order to increase their physical performance and develop fitness to achieve some kind of attainment—a crown which will eventually wither. For this they dedicate their lives, as if living for this one single purpose. “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 9:25).

“It was this singlehearted purpose to win the race for eternal life that Paul longed to see revealed in the lives of the Corinthian believers. He knew that in order to reach Christ’s ideal for them, they had before them a life struggle from which there would be no release. He entreated them to strive lawfully, day by day seeking for piety and moral excellence. He pleaded with them to lay aside every weight and to press forward to the goal of perfection in Christ.”⁹

The awesome power of God’s word

Those who recognize the superior value of spiritual attainments will try to promote their intellectual and spiritual development by dedicating quality time to their relationship with God. Among all, the prayerful study of the Scriptures stands out as one of the most efficient means leading to the achievement of this goal. This can bring about the utmost results, because the Word of God is the powerful means used by God to change lives:

“The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in **the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life.** Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. **It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.**”¹⁰

“He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God’s word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the possibilities of his development.”¹¹

By beholding we are being changed according to the subject of our contemplation. If this is Christ, fixing our eyes upon Him and beholding Him daily with a deep interest will change our nature into His likeness: “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

By looking unto Jesus (Hebrews 12:1–3), we will be looking forward, since each passing day will make sense for us, bringing us to a new level of development. In spite of the passing of time, which may leave some traces on our physical body, we will not get discouraged or depressed as so many do, but rather will press on cheerfully, in good courage and strong faith, not fainting—because we have the assurance that “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Focusing on eternity

Being confident that the Lord who has begun this good work in us “will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6), we have the greatest and most wonderful motivation to keep strongly in the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3) so that no one can beguile us of our reward (Colossians 2:18). To this end, the apostle exhorts us not to give up, “for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:36, 37).

When the Lord comes, we shall ever be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:17; John 14:3), yet our personal development never ends:

In the earth made new, “immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. . . .

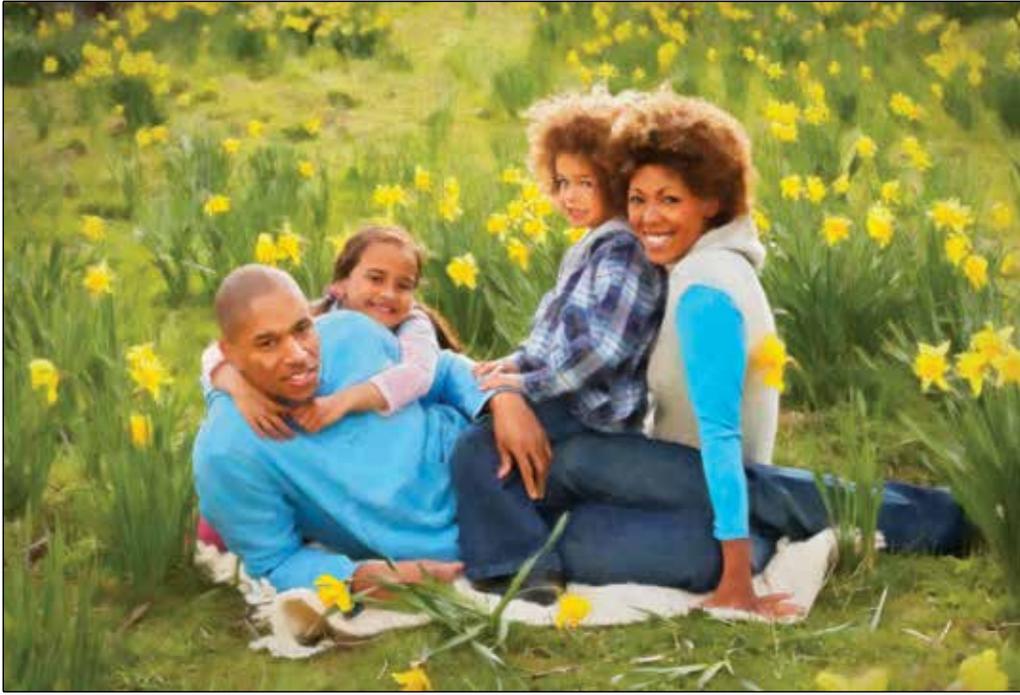
“And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. . . .

“One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”¹² *R*

References

- ¹ *Education*, pp. 125, 126. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ² *Child Guidance*, p. 164. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ³ *Education*, p. 225. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 565. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁵ *Education*, pp. 18, 19.
- ⁶ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 365.
- ⁷ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 236. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 369. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 315. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁰ *Education*, p. 126. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹² *The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678.

By A. Balbach



The Influence of a Christian Home

“Keep therefore and do [the statutes and judgments given by the Lord]; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deuteronomy 4:6).

“We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (2 Corinthians 2:15).

A beautiful illustration of this verse from Paul to the Corinthians was told by the first Protestant missionary to Japan. He went back to England on furlough, and there, in his apartment, he was visited by some members of the royal family of Japan. They were his acquaintances and were now touring Europe. After their visit, another group of Japanese

tourists came to see the missionary. “Oh,” one of them exclaimed, “you have entertained royalty here today.” “What makes you think so?” the missionary asked. “Why, there is a perfume manufactured in our country for the exclusive use of the royal family. No one else is allowed to use it, and its fragrant odor is evident in this apartment. We can tell you have had members of the royal house to visit you here.”

Today, we profess to be fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the royal family of God. If we actually are what we profess to be, we will also leave behind us a spiritual fragrance which will identify us with the family of Heaven. Then, when people look at us, notice our attitude, and hear our words, they will be

compelled to say about us what some of the leaders of the Jewish nations said of Peter and John: “These have been with Jesus.”

We have been put here for a purpose

There is a purpose for everything that came from the hands of our Creator. When God made human beings in His image, He made them male and female, for “it is not good that the man should be alone.” “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:18, 24). One of the intents of this twofold association was announced in these words: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

“God himself formed the earth...; He formed it to be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18). After the casting out of Lucifer and the angels that rebelled, “it was God’s purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word.”¹

If sin had not entered into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, the purpose of God for humanity could have been accomplished in a short time. The human family would have become one with the heavenly family. But the entrance of sin brought a delay in the fulfillment of God’s plan. Sin caused the emptiness in heaven. Sinful humans could not fill a void made by evicting angels who sinned. Sinners must cease to be sinners before they can have a place among the heavenly family. And this change in sinners is accomplished through the plan of redemption.

The love of God is revealed in offering free salvation to all men. How sad that so few accept His love and are actually willing to be saved. “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14).

Why do so many of us who are sinners disrespect God’s love and reject salvation? Because many prefer to follow the example of Cain in bargaining with God. They don’t want to be saved in the way that God has prescribed. If we actually want to be received into the everlasting kingdom at the coming of Christ, then we will take great interest in the program that God has established for us.

The Lord has called us “out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9), that we may “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). Christ said, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). What a privilege you and I have! And what a responsibility! God wants every Christian to be an influence for good in this world. We are to experience here a foretaste of the delights of life in heaven. We are to let our neighbors gain a glimpse of the beauties of a superior existence. In other words, God has made every provision to

The Christian home is like a greenhouse where the precious seeds of the principles of heaven have the best chance to spring up, flourish, and bear fruit.

enable us to partially enjoy and exemplify here on earth the “things which He hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9) before we enter into the actual and full enjoyment of these blessing in heaven.

And this is where the Christian home comes into the picture. God’s program for the Christian family has blessings in store for the builders of the home, the church, the society, and for the government. The Christian home will be a piece of heaven on earth. “A happy family,” said the English statesman Sir John Bowring, “is but an earlier heaven.”

Blessings in the home

One of the blessings that God wants us to possess is the blessing of happiness. A good family life can be a great source of happiness. This has been generally recognized and confirmed by many writers.

A. Edward Newton wrote: “If this world affords true happiness, it is to be found in a home where love and confidence increase with the years.” Goethe, German poet and philosopher, stated: “He is the happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home.”

In the Bible, a happy man is depicted, not as one who lives as a hermit, but in company with his wife and children (Psalm 128:1–3).

Notice that it is not enough just to have a home in order to enjoy the promised blessing. A secular man may say, “All is well with me and my family, without God,” but he is not blessed and happy in the fullest sense. Over the years I have observed that a person who does not have peace with God cannot be really happy. Such a person is deceived, without hope, and actually on his or

her way to destruction. There can be no happiness in the prospect of extinction (Malachi 4:1, 3). Not only non-Christians are deceived, but also half-converted Christians, who “profess that they know God; but they deny him in works” (Titus 1:16). If we believe we can serve God once a week and walk in the ways of sin the other six days of the week, we are deceived. There is no greater deception than self-deception.

The love of the world, the lusts of the flesh, the covetous desires of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15, 16) come from him who tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Satan “sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,” but made it very clear that the acceptance of these things involved a serious commitment: “All these things will I give thee,” said the tempter, “if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8, 9). When we are tempted to love the world and the things that belong to it, do we realize whom we are tempted to worship through our wrong attitude?

The blessing that the Lord promised in Psalm 128 is for “every one that feareth the Lord” and “walketh in his ways.” Therefore, the most essential element in any home is the presence of the Lord, who says: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). The Christian home is like a greenhouse where the precious seeds of the principles of heaven have the best chance to spring up, flourish, and bear fruit, if properly cultivated by the parents and other members of the home.

This blessing of God will lead every home that experiences the influence

of Christ to demonstrate love for each family member. Each parent and child will be treated fairly, with dignity and benevolence. Firmness and mercy will be apparent. The well-being of every family member will be the constant goal of every family member.

Even for those that have been so injured by sin and Satan as to lose their family on earth, they can and will learn to treat those around them, their close friends and adopted “family,” so well that the world will know these suffering people have been with Jesus.

The influence on the children

“Immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution in the Soviet Union, the Russian leaders tried to destroy the family and marriage, eliminating the so-called capitalist monogamy. . . . Instead of the marriage institution, there was only a social contract entered upon between a man and a woman to live together for a period of time, as long as one year, one month, one week, or even one night. Divorce was obtained as often as desired. A few years later, hordes of homeless . . . children became a menace even to the Soviet Union. Millions of lives were ruined, especially of girls. The hatred and conflict amongst polygamists and polyandrists increased, and so did their psychoneurosis. Work in the factories decreased. This condition forced a change in the political arena. The State then exalted chastity and the sanctity of marriage, and a law was enacted in 1944 making divorce virtually impossible to obtain for the majority of the citizenry. These measures seemed to have ameliorated the situation.”²

An atheistic society, that did not acknowledge the home as a divine institution, came to the conclusion that the abolishment of the home is a social disaster and that the restoration of the home is an absolute necessity for the survival of society and the safety of the government. We as Christians go a big step further. We believe that the home is indeed restored only if the presence of God is

there. Only from a home where God reigns supreme, where the principles of heaven are exemplified, can the children carry blessings, happy memories, and a clear discernment between right and wrong. Therefore, let us bear in mind that through our example, which may be either a savor of life unto life or a savor of death unto death, we are helping our children secure a passport—either to eternal life or eternal death.

A few examples will show how important a role Christian religion plays in the home, and how detrimental the absence of Christianity in the home is.

When the English theologian Henry Alford decided to give up his teaching career, he wrote to his wife:

“I anticipate with much pleasure our domestic life, now about to begin. May it be spent in mutual profit, and love, and improvement, and, above all, in the fear and love of God. Our dear children are of an age to enter into all our thoughts and feeling—[thoughts] of good characters and warm hearts. Don’t let us mar these. . . . I will try my part by guarding against suddenness of temper and hasty words; and you, darling, do yours by striving against coldness of manner. And let us both pray to our God that He will bless us to one another and to our dear children.”

Here, Alford reveals the blessings that belong to every real Christian family.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss educational reformer, who established a method of teaching based on the value of hard work, praised the Christian home atmosphere in the following words:

“Our home joys are the most delightful [joys] earth can afford, and the joy of parents in their children is the most holy joy of humanity. It makes their heart pure and good, and it lifts men up to their Father in heaven.”

In contrast, please consider a very different example. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as in any other

large city, there are many homeless children. Begging, stealing, and early prostitution are their means of survival. One day the police picked up a young boy and took him to the juvenile hall. “What is your name?” “Joe.” The routine questions continued and soon startled the officers. “Who is your mother?” “A harlot.” “And who is your father?” “The devil.” “Where do you live?” “In hell.” The officers could not understand him until, upon further questioning, it became clear that there was fighting between the parents practically every day. During the usual brawl the father would shout at the mother, “You’re a harlot,” and she would holler back, “You’re the devil.” And when not content with a bilateral stream of coarse and abusive language, they would come to grips. And finally, when calming down, they would agree on one point, “This is hell.” It was in this sordid environment that the boy had developed his peculiar state of mind, which was a great curse to him. This is surely the result of a lack of real Christian influence in the home. And what must be expected from children who come from such homes?

Hans Christian Andersen, Danish author, says: “Eighty percent of our criminals come from unsympathetic homes.” Certainly that cause would disappear as we allow the love of Jesus to fill our homes with Christian sympathy and goodwill.

Albert B. Hines, former director of the Boy’s Club of New York, asserted that eighty percent of the crime in the United States is committed by men and boys who have had no real religious training.

Samuel Smiles says that sociologists studied the hereditary effects of the character and deportment of two individuals with a view to ascertaining the influence that they exerted upon their descendants over five generations. One was a sailor whom he called Jukes. This man was a gambler, a drinker, a smoker, and a licentious man. The other, a certain Jones,

was a sober, decent Christian. Jukes had five daughters, who got married but within a few years became prostitutes. In the fifth generation, Jukes had 1,200 descendants, among whom there were 450 syphilitics, 300 professional beggars, 130 thieves, and seven murderers. Among Jones' descendants, in the fifth generation, there were 300 bearers of different university degrees, 100 lawyers, 80 government officers, 60 doctors, 60 writers, 30 magistrates, three senators, and a certain number of bankers and businessmen. In light of these statistics, who can deny that humanity is the product of home influences?

During a meeting held in Valparaiso, Indiana, U.S.A., a mother shared the following: "I was left with five children. My oldest boy became rebellious and I could do nothing with him. He would lie and steal, and I began to think that I would have to put him in the reformatory [the predecessor of juvenile detention]. One night I dreamed that a voice came to me telling me to read the Bible with my children. I had never read the Bible with my children, though I had a beautiful one for an ornament on the living room table. I began to read it with the children, and, oh, what a difference it made in our home! The children would gather around me as gentle as kittens, and my eldest boy, two or three days after I commenced, broke down and, putting his arms around my neck, promised he would be a good boy and be saved."³

With David we must say, truly, "the entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130). The Bible transforms the home, and the transformed home transforms society.

The influence on society

The influence of the home on society is a well-established fact that no person will deny. "It is by the youth and children of today that the future of society is to be determined, and what these youth and children shall be depends upon the home. . . .

"It is by the youth and children of today that the future of society is to be determined, and what these youth and children shall be depends upon the home."

"Parents may lay for their children the foundation for a healthy, happy life. They may send them forth from their homes with moral stamina to resist temptation, and courage and strength to wrestle successfully with life's problems. They may inspire in them the purpose and develop the power to make their lives an honor to God and a blessing to the world. They may make straight paths for their feet, through sunshine and shadow, to the glorious heights above.

"The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life. Such an illustration will be a power for good in the world. Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives. As the youth go out from such a home, the lessons they have learned are imparted. Nobler principles of life are introduced into other households, and an uplifting influence works in the community."⁴

The following quotation is reproduced from the *Wall Street Journal*: "What America needs more than railway extension and western irrigation, and a lower tariff, and a bigger wheat crop, and a merchant marine, and a new navy, is a revival of piety, the kind of mother and father we used to have; piety that counted it good business to stop for daily family prayers before breakfast, right in the middle of the harvest; that quit work a half hour earlier on Thursday night, so as to get the chores done and go to prayer meeting; that borrowed money to pay the preacher's salary and prayed fervently in secret for the salvation of

the rich man who looked with scorn on such unbusiness-like behavior. That's what we need now to clean this country of the filth of graft and greed, petty and big."

Someone wrote: "The picture of the family circle, the father, mother and children sitting together reading the Bible, is a scene of inspiring beauty. There, the Word of God is at work—molding character, lighting the path of good, inspiring deeds of service. Religion has a vital meaning, touching every aspect of life." This is what the world needs more than any other thing.

Jane Addams, American social worker, directed an appeal to parents in the U.S.A.: "America's future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what it is taught, hence we must watch what we teach it, and how we live before it."

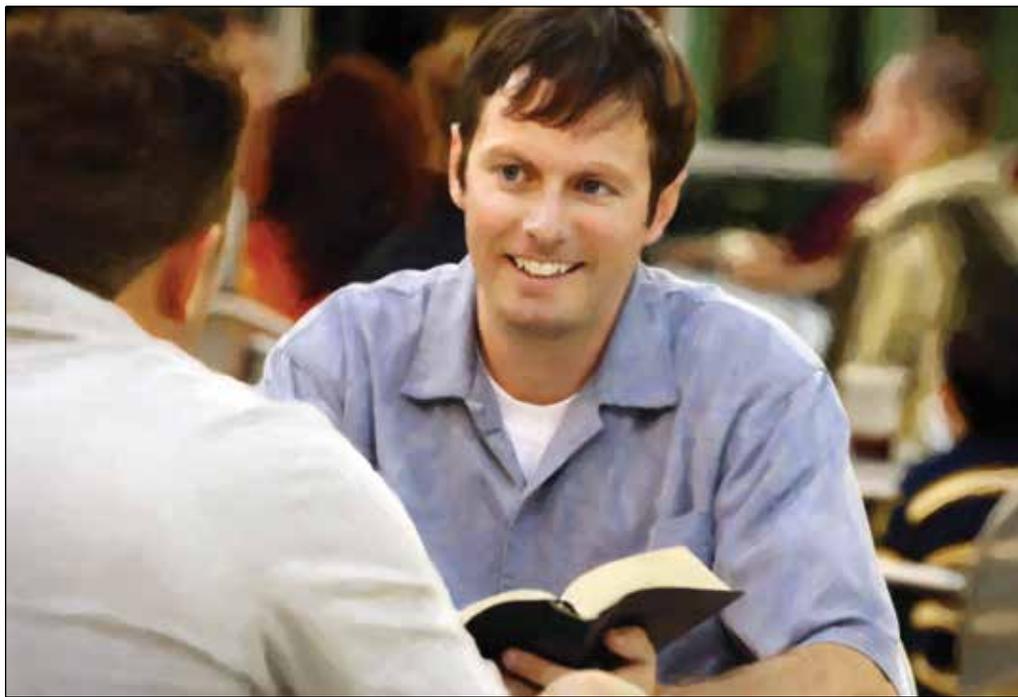
William Aikman, famous English portrait painter, said: "Civilization varies with the family, and the family with civilization. Its highest and most complete realization is found where enlightened Christianity prevails."

Much more than the force of any civil government, it is the well-ordered and solid home that exerts a powerful preservative influence, keeping society from utter deterioration. The Christian family, following the teachings of the Master of masters, is the salt of the earth. *R*

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By P. D. Lausevic



Serving Christ in the New Millennium

In our childhood years, many of us never entertain thoughts of missionary labor or involvement in religious or church work. For that matter, we may not even have any interest in church affairs. Normal, youthful dreams would perhaps arise when we would see the excitement of firemen dressed in their suits, holding onto the back of the fire truck, racing to save someone's life—and then we would decide to become firemen. Then we might have been impressed with some of the teachers at school—but public speaking was personally not anywhere on my list, so that idea never took any root for me, anyway. Later, as we became aware of monetary benefits, our ideas would land on some occupation that yielded a very good income where we could be comfortable in at least the upper

middle class of society, if not actually becoming wealthy.

But something happens with all our plans, goals, associations, and achievements the moment we surrender our life to Jesus as our personal Saviour. This change in perception and direction is clearly demonstrated in the greatest of all the commandments: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). Our relationship to God must be Number 1 in our life—our first, our best, and our everything. Many may accept Jesus as their Saviour, but are we ready to accept Him as the actual Lord of our lives? Acts 2:36.

When Jesus becomes my Saviour, He also becomes my Lord. What

exactly does “Lord” mean? By definition it means “he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding.”¹ We may be attracted to the idea that Jesus will forgive my sins and grant me eternal life at some distant future day, but each of us must consider: Am I truly prepared for Jesus to rule my daily life as my Lord? It is not what we say or teach or profess or even the wonders we may perform in the name of Jesus. Instead, it is what we are doing that shows whether or not we have actually accepted Jesus as the Lord of our life. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). It is only when my Saviour becomes my Lord that I can even begin to fulfill

my purpose in life and satisfy that implanted hunger in the soul.

The purpose of life

Why are we here? What does God expect from us while in this sinful world—once we have committed ourselves to the service of our Lord and Saviour?

You remember the experience of a very zealous persecutor in the first century. He was rushing everywhere throughout Palestine, “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). On his last such journey as he was approaching Damascus, he experienced a personal encounter with the very Jesus whom he was persecuting. This was not a sudden conversion as many would think. It was actually the fruit of a seed that had been planted by the bold and caring testimony of Stephen—and Saul, this chief persecutor, then surrendered to Jesus as His Saviour and Lord. By his life, we can see that this was no common surrender as of a person in a crisis; it was rather the result of a deep conviction that had needed just one more encounter to bring it to fruition.

Paul immediately understood what it meant for Jesus to be His Lord. “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, **what wilt thou have me to do?**” (verse 6, emphasis supplied). No sooner does a soul surrender to Jesus than are witnessed the results of that surrender. Paul saw himself no longer as a free agent to do with his life whatever he chose. Instead he saw himself as a servant to his Lord. All of us who are waiting for the second coming of Jesus also become servants. And what is a servant? In reality, the Greek word for “servant” in Matthew 24:45, 46 is the same as for a slave—one who does his master’s bidding. When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, we are committing ourselves to do whatever He may ask of us. Are you prepared to ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

It is this life of complete dedication and service to our Lord that brings

“All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established.”

joy and happiness into our lives. “Happiness that is sought from selfish motives, outside of the path of duty, is ill-balanced, fitful, and transitory; it passes away, and the soul is filled with loneliness and sorrow; but there is joy and satisfaction in the service of God; the Christian is not left to walk in uncertain paths; he is not left to vain regrets and disappointments.”² Do you want real happiness?

“Witnesses unto Me”

The fact that Christianity brings the greatest happiness to a person’s life is no secret. It is true that many who profess religion, even the present truth, never experience this state of bliss to any great extent. But Jesus has promised it to every true believer. “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11). A person can experience the depths of such joy only when living in a constant relationship with Christ. 1 Peter 1:8. This joy, even in tribulation, is something that words cannot describe, but it will be experienced to the depths of the soul. Paul describes, “Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation” (2 Corinthians 7:4).

Why is it that so many professed believers never experience this glow of happiness in their lives? Why is it that so many professed Christians seek for it in the myriad of fun things to do, in exotic places to see, in worldly attractions and clothing, in expensive housing, furniture and

cars, and in forbidden relationships? It is because they never experience the satisfaction that fulfillment of their purpose in life gives. And what is that purpose? The Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19, 20.

This is the natural reaction of a person who has tasted the water of life and becomes a Christian. The moment we experience the new birth, our plans and goals experience a radical change in direction. “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.”³ Naturally, we become missionaries. Every true Christian becomes a missionary in his or her own right. In reality, all who have Jesus in their life are missionaries—and everyone without Jesus is a mission field.

At conversion, we transform that natural reaction of joy in the plan of salvation and sharing the truth with others into a vow before God. “In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable.”⁴ The purpose of seeking excellence in everything we do is to fulfill our responsibility as workers for our Master. This is why in school we are not satisfied with anything but

the best. This best is not just in comparison with other students but with the perfection of the character of Christ in both life and studies, as seen in the marks we receive in the classroom as well as the way we act. All this determination to be faithful in our daily activities prepares us to use the gifts that God grants us for His service and the evangelization of the world.

Since the church is the body of Christ, then it is impossible for us to fulfill this obligation properly without connection with the church. This is why Saul at his conversion was directed to that small body of believers still meeting in homes rather than in synagogues or churches. "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). "The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church. Many have an idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His recognized followers on earth. But in the history of the conversion of Saul, important principles are given us, which we should ever bear in mind. He was brought directly into the presence of Christ. He was one whom Christ intended for a most important work, one who was to be 'a chosen vessel' unto him; yet he did not personally impart to him the lessons of truth. He arrested his course and convicted

him; but when asked by him, 'What wilt thou have me to do?' the Saviour placed him in connection with His church, and let them direct him what to do."⁵

"Everyone who connects himself with the church makes in that act a solemn vow to work for the interest of the church and to hold that interest above every worldly consideration."⁶ If this is not our experience, then we are actually holding the church back from accomplishing its purpose and are essentially delaying the coming of Jesus.

Who, me?

When Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," whom did He mean? (Mark 16:15). "The Saviour's commission to the disciples includes all believers to the end of time. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be coworkers with Christ."⁷ This is why "everyone who is added to the ranks by conversion is to be assigned his post of duty. Everyone should be willing to be or to do anything in this warfare. When church members put forth earnest efforts to advance the message, they will live in the joy of the Lord and will meet with success. Triumph always follows decided effort."⁸ The life of service is the only

way to experience the intended joy that Christianity brings.

Although all are expected to participate in this work, who is especially called to dedicate his or her life in serving our Saviour? The dedication and strength of the youth is needed to accomplish the task ahead of us. 1 John 2:14. This is why the youth are called to dedicate their heart to the Lord early in their life: "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26).

Although all may be called to dedicate their life to the Lord, the youth can accomplish so much more with a full life of service than someone who gives only his or her last remaining days. This is why "a young heart is a precious offering, the most valuable gift that can be presented to God. All that you are, all the ability you possess, comes from God a sacred trust, to be rendered back to Him again in a willing, holy offering."⁹ Although God is calling for everyone on this earth to dedicate his or her heart to Him, it is the youth that receive this special call because they are not only able to accept the plan of redemption themselves but can help so many others with a life dedicated in service to their Lord.

And what will happen when our youth truly experience this stimulus to service? "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!"¹⁰

Training for service

Working and serving is one thing, but doing it effectively is so much more. How can we be most effective in outreach activities? It is when those who have experience in working effectively train others in faithful and efficient service. This is why the whole issue of training became a law in Israel, first for the parents and then for the nation as a



whole. (See Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.) After experiencing the truth ourselves, we must share it with the next generation so that they can benefit from the experience of the older ones and surpass them in efficiency. “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts” (Psalm 119:99, 100).¹¹

“The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation.”¹²

When we think of training as essential in other trades, how much more we should understand this need for training in the highest occupation than anyone can have—working with souls for their eternal destiny. “Education and training are rightly regarded as an essential preparation for business life; and how much more essential is thorough preparation for the work of presenting the last message of mercy to the world! This training cannot be gained by merely listening to preaching. In our schools our youth are to bear burdens for God.”¹³ This is not just theoretical—it is also to be practical while the youth are studying, not just after they complete their education and training.

As we think of the responsibility of giving this message to a sin-sick world, our training institutions need to be more like the schools of the prophets.

What benefit is it for a child of God to obtain recognition from a worldly school in order to have authority to teach the third angel’s message? It is true that we can go to worldly schools and obtain other qualifications just as Moses did, but that is not the preparation needed to teach the word of God.

Who is to attend the schools?

Since every person, upon joining the church, is obligated to present the message to this sin-cursed

“Education and training are rightly regarded as an essential preparation for business life; and how much more essential is thorough preparation for the work of presenting the last message of mercy to the world!”

world, it would be quite natural to conclude that every member needs this training. This is why every person should go to our missionary schools no matter what his or her future occupation in life will be.

“‘Why,’ says one, ‘what is the need of being so particular thoroughly to educate our youth? It seems to me that if a few who have decided to follow some literary calling, or some other calling that requires a certain discipline, receive special attention, this is all that is necessary. It is not necessary that all our young people should be so well trained. Will not the thorough education of a few answer every essential requirement?’

“No, I answer, most decidedly not. . . . **All the youth** should be permitted to have the blessings and privileges of an education at our schools, that they may be inspired to become laborers together with God.”¹⁴

Not only that a person does not know what responsibilities he or she may have in the cause of God officially, but everyone, no matter what his or her occupation in life, has opportunities to witness for Jesus. That being the case, all need training to do so most efficiently. It is in this way that we can hasten the coming of our beloved Jesus. “The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.”¹⁵

In the place where I was born, Vrnjacka Banja, Serbia, there is an Olympic-sized pool where there are really high jumping platforms. On one occasion while we were walking

around it, a person jumped from the highest platform and missed the pool. I don’t remember all the details but that made a traumatic impression on my young mind. As a result of that experience, I can work on second and third story roofs on construction sites, but the moment you place water below me, some kind of phobia takes possession. One time we were in Tahiti where everyone was jumping off a bridge. I decided that it was time to jump as well and lined up with the others. Each person would hold onto the rails and then dive in. I held onto the rails and finally mustered the courage to jump. However, I did not go anywhere as my hands were still holding the rails and would not let go. After several attempts, I finally made the fearful jump. Unlike jumping from the bridge to the river below, when we jump into the arena of service, we have a Saviour that has promised, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). Are you ready to dedicate your life for service to our Lord? *R*

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- ⁹ *Messages to Young People*, p. 407.
- ¹⁰ *Education*, p. 271.
- ¹¹ Although this verse is specifically comparing the younger one who obeys what he learns to an older one who is not, it can also apply to a faithful older teacher imparting his or her knowledge to the younger generation.
- ¹² *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 593.
- ¹³ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 538.
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Once it was the blessing,
Now it is the Lord;
Once it was the feeling,
Now it is His word;
Once His gifts I wanted,
Now Himself alone;
Once I sought for healing,
Now the Healer own.

Once 'twas painful trying,
Now 'tis perfect trust;
Once a half salvation,
Now the uttermost;
Once 'twas ceaseless holding,
Now He holds me fast;
Once 'twas constant drifting,
Now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning,
Now 'tis trustful prayer;
Once 'twas anxious caring,
Now He has the care;
Once 'twas what I wanted,
Now what Jesus says;
Once 'twas constant asking,
Now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working,
His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him,
Now He uses me;
Once the power I wanted,
Now the Mighty One;
Once I worked for glory,
Now His will alone.

Once I hoped in Jesus,
Now I know He's mine;
Once my lamps were dying,
Now they brightly shine;
Once for death I waited,
Now His coming hail;
And my hopes are anchored
Safe within the veil.

—Unknown

