

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of several purple flowers, likely daisies, with a soft, out-of-focus green background. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing their centers.

The Reformation
Messenger
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WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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"I am the Vine"

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

"All who receive Christ by faith become one with Him. The branches are not tied to the vine; they are not joined to it by any mechanical process of artificial fastening. They are united to the vine, so as to become part of it. They are nourished by the roots of the vine. So those who receive Christ by faith become one with Him in principle and action. They are united to Him, and the life they live is the life of the Son of God. They derive their life from Him who is life." *—In Heavenly Places, p. 56*

"Can we conceive of a more intimate relation to Christ than this? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from Him." *—My Life Today, p. 11*

"We have nothing, we are nothing, unless we receive virtue from Jesus Christ." *—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 288*

"Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' Our

growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness--all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly--by abiding in Him--that we grow in grace. He is not only the author, but the finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. David says, 'I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved' (Psalm 16:8).

"Do you ask, 'How am I to abide in Christ?'--In the same way as you received Him at first. 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him' (Colossians 2:6). . . . You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly,

to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart, but having given yourself to God, you believed that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him--by giving and taking. You are to give all --your heart, your will, your service--give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all--Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper--to give you power to obey. . . .

"Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love--this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness." *—God's Amazing Grace, p. 293*

"A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. . . . The true believer chooses Christ as first and last, and best in everything." *—Messages to Young People, p. 118*

Ellen G. White

Lonely for a Reason



Tears of joy were rolling down my cheeks as I stepped outside the banquet hall. As I recalled the events of that day leading up to this special moment, I could only but exclaim “It is the Lord!” (John 21:7).

It was the last week of May 2018 and all Software Engineering Researchers around the world were gathering in Gothenburg, Sweden for the 40th edition of the largest and most prestigious conference in that field—The International Conference on Software Engineering (ICSE). About one thousand seven hundred participants from both academia and industry were in attendance and I was one of them! I had two roles at the conference: firstly, as one of the student volunteers, I was responsible for assisting conference attendees find their way to the various sessions as well as ensure that all presentations ran smoothly, e.g., that no microphone or projector was missing in a presentation room; and secondly, I was to present my own tool-demonstration paper at one of the sessions.

As always, before this conference, I prayed to God that He would provide an opportunity for me to preach the gospel to any one or more of the attendees, all of whom were unbeknown to me except very few from my University in Gothenburg. Since God knows everyone’s heart, I asked Him to show me my Nineveh just as he had sent Jonah, the son of Amittai, to the ancient Assyrian capital (Jonah 1:1–2). Nineveh to me meant any of the attendees who would be willing to listen to God’s word.

My paper presentation was scheduled for the morning of Thursday, May 31, 2018 and later that day, there would be a banquet to which all attendees had been in-

vited. This was the first time I was attending a research conference and it was also the first time I was presenting anything at such a gathering; I was excited but mostly nervous. The presentation did not go very well for me since the computer program I was supposed to demonstrate from my computer did not work as intended. I was very disappointed, and my entire conference experience was ruined by that one moment.

Disappointment turns into an appointment

Later in the afternoon it was time for the attendees to be transferred, by bus, from the conference location to the banquet hall. As a student volunteer I was required to be among the first to go to the banquet hall so that I could assist other attendees in finding their seats and ensure order in the seating arrangements. The program began with a small musical party outside the hall before the commencement of the banquet. During this small party, I tried to find someone I knew, perhaps a colleague from my University, but none were within sight. This added to my sad morning experience and made me feel very, very lonely. I even contemplated excusing myself from the banquet to go home and perhaps silently mourn my disappointment. However, no sooner than I made this contemplation, were my services required. It was time for everyone to get seated and get on with the rest of the banquet program. All guests got seated and most of my student-volunteer colleagues also found seats. To palliate my loneliness and disappointment, I had initially intended to seat next to anyone of the student volunteers I knew, once we were done helping guests, but to my further disappointment and loneliness, there were no available seats next to any them! I was forced to walk around the hall looking for a seat and finally found one amidst attendees that I had never met heretofore.

As we all sat waiting for the program announcers, we

began to introduce ourselves to our nearest neighbors (both adjacent and opposite); we gave our names, universities and the kind of research we were engaged in. After this round of introduction, what discussion we held next was random. As I sat there, I began to think to myself: "I may never again meet this person I'm seated next to. If I do not tell him about Jesus and the truth I hold, he may never know Jesus as I know Him." So, I began to silently pray that God would give me an opportunity to start a discussion with my immediate neighbor to my right, on something related to religion and thereby introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ to him. During the self-introductions he had told me that he was from Germany, but I had no idea whether he believed in God or not. So, how could I start a conversation with him on religious matters? I asked God again to give me an opportunity and create a way for me to speak of Jesus.

As I looked around the banquet hall, I noticed that there were several screens around, placed on the wall, on which they were displaying several things including some old movie clips. At this moment when I looked at one of the screens opposite me, I saw a movie clip of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Predator movie. So, I said to my neighbor, "you know, it's interesting how people's beliefs or activities these days are largely influenced by movies!" Then he asked me to give him an example of what I meant by that statement, so I said, "for instance, many people today believe in Zombies—walking dead people". Then he told me that he didn't believe in Zombies and asked me if I did, to which I replied, "No, I do not." Next, he asked me why I did not hold such a belief and I told him that the concept of a walking dead person contradicts what the Bible teaches about death. Next, he asked me If I was a Christian, to which I replied, "yes". He then asked which church I belonged to and I responded that I am a member of the International Missionary Society of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement. He told me that he belonged to the New Apostolic Church but personally he believed that the church to which one belonged did not matter! Immediately when I heard those words, I said to myself, "thank you LORD, this is the opportunity I was waiting for!"

I gave him the story of Paul's conversion to Christianity and why it was necessary for Saul (Paul) to join the Christian church instead of returning to his Jewish church after his encounter with Christ (Acts 9:1–6). Within the Jewish church, Paul could neither teach nor practice his newly discovered faith because it was explicitly forbidden to do so by the religious leaders of his

Church (Acts 4:18–19). I gave him several verses including 1 Timothy 3:16 that points to the Church being the support and stay of the truth in a revolted world and Acts 2:47 that shows that God added people who should be saved to the Christian church, and not the Jewish Church. I then asked him if it mattered which Church Paul and other Jews in his time would have joined, and he affirmed that indeed it mattered. I told him that it was no different in our time since the Church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9; Acts 2:47).

I told him how it was important that the Church of God teaches the truth as it is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21) because people's salvation depended on their knowledge of God and of Jesus His son, who also is the truth (John 14:6; John 17:3, 17; 1 Peter 1:22). I gave him my own experiences of my time being in the New Apostolic Church; how that church holds doctrines such as the service of the departed (offering sacraments to dead people), which go directly against Scriptures such as Ecclesiastes 9:6 that states that the dead have no part in anything that takes place under the sun. He became very interested in this conversation and began to be more open to me stating that he too had questioned some of the beliefs and practices his church holds and was looking for a church that teaches the truth. He asked me several questions including whether it was necessary for one to read the Bible at all provided that one "behaved correctly". In response I showed him how perverted our views of right and wrong are if left without a standard (Jeremiah 17:9) and showed him the necessity of consulting God's word in everything, and how God has given us a standard of righteousness which is His law of the Ten Commandments (Psalms 119:142, Romans 7:1–12). This led us to an interesting discussion of the Sabbath. I showed him how the Sabbath was God's appointed day of rest that would be kept even in the new earth (Isaiah 66:22–23). Beginning with Genesis, I showed him how the Sabbath has been the Seventh day of the week, and that even Jesus (Luke 4:16), His disciples (Luke 23:5–56), and the early Christians (Acts 13:42–44; 17:1–3; 18:4) kept. I then showed him how it was changed by the Catholic church (Daniel 7:25) and how it would end up being a special point of contention in the end of time (Revelation 13:16–18).

The entire discussion lasted about three hours, from 7 pm to 10 pm. As I kept explaining all these things to my neighbour, two other people, from India, who sat opposite me were very interested in the conversation and often interrupted me with questions of their own related

to the point under discussion. At around 10:30 pm the discussion ended, and my neighbour was very thankful and appreciated the fact that I was not afraid to share my faith with him. He lamented the fact that many people, especially scientific researchers, do not care about religion, and was surprised to find someone who was willing to talk about God at a conference such as this.

As I stepped out of that banquet hall, I tried to recall just how such an opportunity to evangelize had been created. I could not fathom the way God had made this possible. Tears of joy began to roll down my cheeks as I recalled my earlier disappointment that day, how I had felt very lonely, how I could not find any of my friends to sit next to, how I found a seat next to a stranger who I had no idea would be interested in learning more about the Bible, how I even got started speaking with him about Jesus. I could not help it but exclaim, “[Great and] marvellous are thy works [oh LORD]; and that my soul knoweth right well.” Psalms 139:14

Other Ninevehs

The following day (on Friday, June 1, 2018), God gave me another opportunity to preach to another conference attendee from Hong Kong, who asked me to show him around the city of Gothenburg since I was a resident there. With this one, the discussion began when I told him that I had to get home early because I was a Sabbath keeper and then he asked me what the Sabbath was. Well, by now you should know how a response to such a question would go. The following week (June 5–8, 2018) I attended a summer school in another city in Sweden called Halmstad. This was a small gathering of PhD students who were interested in topics related to software testing. On one of the days, we were taken out for a social event to drive Go-carts. After this event we had to walk to our hotel rooms and it so happened that my hotel was close to the hotel of one other participant from a city called Uppsala in Sweden. The hotels were about 1.5 kilometers from the place of the Go-carts. As we started off to our hotels, I silently prayed that God would give me an opportunity to preach to this stranger I was walking with; but how do I start? So, to spark a conversation, I first asked him about the area of research for his PhD. As we walked among the beautifully architected buildings in the city, I then pointed to them and said, “it’s funny how some people would entertain ideas that all such wonderful designs came by chance!” I then asked him if he believed in God or not. I found out that he was an evangelical, so I asked him why Jesus had to die instead of just forgiving Adam and Eve. He had no answer to that question and that provided me with an

opportunity to explain the plan of redemption to him, and why Jesus had to die to vindicate God’s character and demonstrate that His law cannot be broken with impunity. This later led to a discussion of the many denominations and why the Sabbath is a sign of those that are loyal to God’s commandments! Exodus 31:17–18; Ezekiel 20:12, 20

In May 2019, I attended a research seminar in Germany at Schloss Dagstuhl, running from 5th to 10th of May. As always, I prayed for an opportunity to share the gospel with anyone willing. During that seminar we were treated with a social event where we toured the city of Trier. During this tour I walked next to someone I previously met at the summer school in Halmstad. She was a Post-doctoral researcher at IT University of Copenhagen in Denmark. As we toured the city’s Cathedrals filled with sculptures of Patriarchs like Abraham and Noah, and some Apostles like Peter, I prayed to God to give me an idea of how to introduce the gospel to this colleague. So, I asked, “do you think life has a purpose and, if there is, what is it?” I pointed to the cathedrals and sculptures and told her that despite having all these cathedrals, many still chose not to believe in God or are less serious with their faith, as evidenced by the few and old people we found in the largest and oldest cathedral we had just toured. She then revealed that she believed in God but that she was a Muslim. I then asked her what she thought God’s plan for the human race was, to which she expressed ignorance. This gave me an opportunity to speak of the creation, of Satan’s fall, of the plan of redemption, why Adam had to be tested, what purpose our lives serve and what God’s plan for the future is. I spoke of how God had sent Jesus to die so that we might have an opportunity to live eternally in a beautiful new world.



Later that afternoon we toured a wine refinery nearby at which venue we were also served with dinner from the restaurant located there. My plan was to sit next to someone I knew during the dinner so that I would not feel lonely, so I decided to reserve a seat with the one person I knew, while I stepped out. When I came back, I found that my seat was taken by someone else and I was forced to sit with people I did not know. While waiting for the main meal, everyone was served with wine, except me and the man to my immediate left who were offered apple juice. The man on my left (from Volvo Trucks, Sweden) then asked me: “So you also don’t take

wine, why?" In response, I told him that I do not take wine because as a Christian I considered my body as the temple of the Holy Spirit which should not be defiled with harmful articles of food or drink (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). He then told me that he too was a Christian (Catholic), but only took wine during the Lord's supper when he dips bread in the wine. I then told him that having fermented wine for the Lord's supper destroys the meaning of Christ's sacrifice since Jesus's blood was uncorrupted by sin; fermentation is a symbol of sin. He was surprised at this "new perspective" and wanted to learn more, so he asked me which Church I go to. When I told him the name, he was very interested to learn the difference between my church and the commonly known Seventh-day Adventist church. Considering that he was Catholic, I first spoke about God's purpose for His church and what position it should hold in the world; after which I told him the history of Adventism and why Christians cannot participate in War. To my right was another man from General Motors, USA, who also appeared to be listening attentively and asking questions. At the end of our discussion, I understood why someone else had filled the seat I originally reserved. God had answered my prayer and provided an opportunity for me to preach to three people in one single trip.

What would it cost?

Think for a moment about your neighbours, friends, relatives, co-workers, school mates, etc.; what would it cost the church to send a Minister or Bible worker to preach to even one of them? What are the chances that a Bible Worker or Minister from our church would be able to reach them with the message of truth? Perhaps close to zero! Yet, many a member of God's church waits upon the efforts of the Minister or Bible Worker to evangelize! Many make little-to-no effort to reach out to others with the gospel truth, citing how hard it is to preach nowadays. It is true that the world today does not want anything to do with God, but it is also true that there are some people in this world, dark and unbelieving as it may seem, who are hungering and thirsting for the truth. Our duty is not to presume who is or is not interested in God's word but to pray for opportunities to present the truth and leave the rest with God. The message we hold is God's; the people we want to preach to are His by creation and redemption; the time we have also belongs to Him; thus, all we need is to pray for opportunities and then act intelligently and do our part.

"There should have been great diligence in seeking to save those who were still in error, yet interested in the truth... There is much close thinking to be done. We must

not enter into the Lord's work haphazard and expect success. The Lord needs men of mind, men of thought. Jesus calls for co-workers, not blunderers. God wants right-thinking and intelligent men to do the great work necessary to the salvation of souls." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 67

Example of the Waldensian Youth

During the Dark Ages, the Waldenses were shut out of public view due to persecution and lived in seclusion—hiding in mountains and caves. However, "while the Waldenses regarded the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom, they were not blind to the importance of a contact with the world, a knowledge of men and of active life, in expanding the mind and quickening the perceptions. From their schools in the mountains some of the youth were sent to institutions of learning in the cities of France or Italy, where was a more extended field for study, thought, and observation than in their native Alps. . . . In the schools whither they went, they were not to make confidants of any. Their garments were so prepared as to conceal their greatest treasure—the precious manuscripts of the Scriptures. . . . and whenever they could do so without exciting suspicion, they cautiously placed some portion in the way of those whose hearts seemed open to receive the truth. **From their mother's knee the Waldensian youth had been trained with this purpose in view; they understood their work and faithfully performed it.** Converts to the true faith were won in these institutions of learning, and frequently its principles were found to be permeating the entire school; yet the papal leaders could not, by the closest inquiry, trace the so-called corrupting heresy to its source. The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour. Such was the spirit of the Vaudois Christians. **They felt that God required more of them than merely to preserve the truth in its purity in their own churches; that a solemn responsibility rested upon them to let their light shine forth to those who were in darkness.**" —*The Great Controversy*, p. 70



Since they could not go openly as preachers, they sent their youth, some as students to the various universities of the land, and others as merchants trading in various things permissible. While studying or trading, these

youth and missionaries had opportunities to share the truth with those they met who were interested. This earlier work of the Waldensian youth preserved the truth and laid the foundation for the great reformation of the 16th century that many are familiar with today. Similarly, today we have several youth studying at various levels and institutions; what impact would be created if each one of them labored like the Waldensian youth, knowing that they owe the world the truth! Yet many children of Reformers today consider themselves “lonely” and deprived of several pleasures that other youth are privileged to enjoy. Many want to be like other youth in the world; and this results in greater darkness in the world. Recall that it was when the faithful descendants of Seth decided to marry and be like the unbelieving descendants of Cain, that iniquity abounded to an extent that God “regretted” making man (Genesis 6:1–7) and decided to destroy the world with a flood. Similarly, today iniquity abounds (Matthew 24:12) because the love of many for God and for one another waxes cold; those who should be light bearers in their various stations of life hide their candles and the world is left in darkness! (Matthew 5:14–16).

“Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds for the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example,—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world.” —*The Desire of Ages*. p. 307

What we can do to improve?

Today the world is in darkness because only few scattered lights shine while the majority of professed Christians follow their own course (see *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 28–29). Our mission demands diligence and training of, especially, our youth. In that regard, we can:

Conduct missionary seminars for youth. Parents, youth leaders, and the church at large must invest time and effort to train the youth in evangelism (just like many do with singing and music practice). The church must organize seminars or series of Bible studies targeting youth and missionary service. This should not be done for those in Bible school only but for all youth. Youth must learn and practice praying for the salvation of their friends. They should be made more aware that their conduct will lead to someone being saved or lost.

Promote reporting and testimony meetings. Churches should motivate their members by encouraging (or re-

quiring) that they report their missionary activities more often and give testimonies of God’s working power through them as much as is possible on Sabbath. The youth could even be given specific assignments, by their leaders, either weekly or bi-weekly to reach out to someone they know. As they begin to practice this and pray, they will soon lose all fear of preaching and being ridiculed by their friends.

Be more social and strive to introduce Jesus in social interactions as much as possible. In all my experiences above, perhaps none of those I evangelized to would have accepted if I directly went up to them and told them that I wanted to share the gospel with them. God created opportunities to preach, not during times of formal work, but during social events! By taking advantage of conversations on common things and turning them into a gospel discussion, I was able to present subjects I could never have presented if I went openly as a gospel preacher to my intended audience. We can be more social, for instance, by wearing happy faces and smiles, greeting our neighbours always, looking for ways to initiate conversations with people we meet e.g., on public transport, not being too distracted by our phones all the time while opportunities to interact with people pass us by, seeking interaction with people we do not know rather than being always found with the people we already know, etc.

We must not get discouraged because we baptize few people. We must plant the gospel seed and let the Holy Spirit water it. In the grand time of the harvest, in the great millennial year, when the King shall take His scepter and to judge the world appear, then shall we know as we are known. Then shall the fruits of our labours be revealed.

So, if you are wondering why you are the only Reformer at your workplace, at your school, in your family or even in your entire city, wonder no more. Like Ezekiel, you have been set as a Watchman to hear the word of the Lord and warn others (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7). You are “lonely” for a reason.

Br Mukelabai Mukelabai, Sweden



Was the Destruction of Jerusalem a

Symbol of the World Today?



Is there a parallel between our day as the professed people of God and ancient Israel's in their life and time prior to the destruction of Jerusalem?

Dear Brethren, let us look at this two-thousand-year-old historical setting to find out if there is an object lesson waiting to be had as we look through the lens of history.

There is an adage: "The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you can see." —*Winston Churchill*

Set in the Bible and depicted in the book, *The Great Controversy*, written by E.G. White, is a striking parallel between the characters of ancient Israel prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and, as it were, modern Israel. The setting, the beautiful city of Jerusalem.

The Pleasant Land

The time was AD 70. Jerusalem was shown to be in her glory at the height of her attainment, oblivious of her final pending visitation. *"If thou hadst known" said Christ, "even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."* Luke 19:42-44

Called "the pleasant land" Jerusalem was the most beautiful sight during the turn of the century. It was a nation that attracted millions of worshippers to its gate. Its architecture was looked upon by the Jews with pride. "A thousand years before, the psalmist had magnified God's favor to Israel in making her holy house His dwelling-place: in Zion." Psalm 76:2; —*The Great Controversy*, p. 23

This house, however, was destroyed and replaced by one less outwardly glorious. To the spiritual eye, this was even more

glorious, as says Haggai: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts." Haggai 2:9

In the fulness of time, the Lord of the Temple was thrown out. "From the crest of Olivet, Jesus looked upon Jerusalem. Fair and peaceful was the scene spread out before Him. It was the season of the Passover, and from all lands the children of Jacob had gathered there to celebrate the great national festival. In the midst of gardens and vineyards, and green slopes studded with pilgrims' tents, rose the terraced hills, the stately palaces, and massive bulwarks of Israel's capital. The daughter of Zion seemed in her pride to say, I sit a queen and shall see no sorrow; as lovely then, and deeming herself as secure in Heaven's favor, as when, ages before, the royal minstrel sang: 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, . . . the city of the great King.' Psalm 48:2. In full view were the magnificent buildings of the temple. . . . [in] 'the perfection of beauty' it stood, the pride of the Jewish nation." —*Ibid.*, p. 17

A Moment of Reflection

"The history of more than a thousand years of God's special favor and guardian care, manifested to the chosen people, was open to the eye of Jesus. There was Mount Moriah, where the son of promise, an unresisting victim, had been bound to the altar—emblem of the offering of the Son of God. There the covenant of blessing, the glorious Messianic promise, had been confirmed to the father of the faithful. Genesis 22:9, 16-18. There the flames of the sacrifice ascending to heaven from the threshing floor of Ornan had turned aside the sword of the destroying angel (1 Chronicles 21)—fitting symbol of the Saviour's sacrifice and mediation for guilty men. Jerusalem had been honored of God above all the earth. The Lord had

‘chosen Zion,’ He had ‘desired it for His habitation.’ Psalm 132:13. There, for ages, holy prophets had uttered their messages of warning. There priests had waved their censers, and the cloud of incense, with the prayers of the worshipers, had ascended before God. There daily the blood of slain lambs had been offered, pointing forward to the Lamb of God. There Jehovah had revealed His presence in the cloud of glory above the mercy seat. . . . Had Israel as a nation preserved her allegiance to Heaven, Jerusalem would have stood forever, the elect of God. Jeremiah 17:21–25. But the history of that favored people was a record of backsliding and rebellion. They had resisted Heaven’s grace, abused their privileges, and slighted their opportunities.” *–Ibid.*, p. 18

“Looking down the ages, Jesus saw the covenant people scattered in every land, ‘like wrecks on a desert shore.’ In the temporal retribution about to fall upon her children, He saw but the first draft from that cup of wrath which at the final judgment she must drain to its dregs. Divine pity, yearning love, found utterance in the mournful words: ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!’ O that thou, a nation favored above every other, hadst known the time of thy visitation, and the things that belong unto thy peace! I have stayed the angel of justice, I have called thee to repentance, but in vain. It is not merely servants, delegates, and prophets, whom thou hast refused and rejected, but the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer. If thou art destroyed, thou alone art responsible. ‘Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.’ Matthew 23:37; John 5:40.” *–Ibid.*, p. 21. “Jesus declared to the listening disciples the judgments that were to fall upon apostate Israel, and especially the retributive vengeance that would come upon them for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah.” *–Ibid.*, p. 25

Retributive Judgment

Precisely forty years later, retribution fell. Everything changed. Terror struck. The judgment of God visited them. Christ had



foreseen and predicted its downfall yet “for nearly forty years after the doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced by Christ Himself, the Lord delayed His judgments upon the city and the nation. Wonderful was the longsuffering of God toward the rejectors of His gospel and the murderers of His Son. . . . The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. . . . Then God withdrew His protection from them and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen. They became satanic in their cruelty. In the family and in the nation, among the highest and the lowest classes alike, there was suspicion, envy, hatred, strife, rebellion, murder. . . . Friends and kindred betrayed one another.” *–Ibid.*, p. 26–27

The scenario

“Terrible were the calamities that fell upon Jerusalem. . . . The city was invested at the time of the Passover, when millions of Jews were assembled within its walls. . . . So fierce were the pangs of hunger that men would gnaw the leather of their belts and sandals and the covering of their shields. Great numbers of the people would steal out at night to gather wild plants growing outside the city walls. . . .

“Thousands perished from famine and pestilence. Natural affection seemed to have been destroyed. Husbands robbed their wives, and wives their husbands. Children would be seen snatching the food from the mouths of their aged parents. The question of the prophet, ‘Can a woman forget her sucking child?’ received the answer within the walls of that doomed city: ‘The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.’ Isaiah 49:15; Lamentations 4:10. Again was fulfilled the warning prophecy given fourteen centuries before: ‘The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, . . . and toward her children which she shall bear, for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.’ Deuteronomy 28:56, 57.” *–Ibid.*, p. 31–32

“Men and women, old and young, insurgents and priests, those who fought and those who entreated mercy, were hewn down in indiscriminating carnage. The number of the slain exceeded that of the slayers. The legionaries had to clamber over heaps of dead to carry on the work of extermination.” *–Ibid.*, p. 35

A Warning

What caused this? Were they not warned? They were not left

without warning after warning. Says Micah the prophet: "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and the princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priest thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they will lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us." Micah 3:9-11

"These words faithfully described the corrupt and self-righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. While claiming to observe rigidly the precepts of God's law, they were transgressing all its principles." *-Ibid.*, p. 27. "Prophets had wept over the apostasy of Israel and the terrible desolations by which their sins were visited. Jeremiah wished that his eyes were a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people." *-Ibid.*, p. 19

A Bed of their Own Spreading

"The Jews had forged their own fetters"; says E.G. White: "they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.' Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control." *-Ibid.*, p. 35

A Two-fold Fulfillment

So, that was the life and times of Jerusalem. She lost her privilege. Woefully, after the destruction of the second temple, Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Romans—a pathetic end. Retribution. Our model.

Now we are brought forward where modern Israel now sits in her seat. Particularly, in the western world, a people upon whom the fabric of their society was woven in truth and righteousness. Will she too also rebel and forsake their God, forsake His law? The question is, has Christ's prediction spanned this generation and how and when will it be fulfilled?

"The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law. Dark are the rec-



ords of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplation. Terrible have been the results of rejecting the authority of Heaven. But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future." *-Ibid.*, p. 36

Says the Spirit of Prophecy: "The same danger exists today among the people who profess to be the depositaries of God's law. They too are apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments will preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reproved for evil. . . . Neglect to repent and obey His word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people today as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which He will no longer delay His judgments. The desolation of Jerusalem stands as a solemn warning before the eyes of modern Israel, that the corrections given through His chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 166 (1876)

"Jerusalem is a representation of what the Church will be if it refuses to walk in the light that God has given. Jerusalem was favored of God as the depositary of sacred trusts. But her people perverted the truth, and despised all entreaties and warnings." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 67

A Modern Model

There is a paradigm shift; the stage is now occupied by the Church. Will she perform in a similar manner as ancient Israel? Will she too be weighed in the balance and found wanting, thus fulfilling the other leg of the two-fold prophecy? Sadly, history's record chronicle so far is grave; it shows that the professed church of God is, in a certain sense, displaying the same characteristic as Israel, one of pride and unbelief while seeking to maintain piety. Will Jesus view her with the same lens and likewise remark: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation"? Luke 19:42-44

Note, even in our dispensation, this pointed warning proceeding from the Pen of inspiration, Mrs. White: "I have been

shown that the spirit of the world is fast leavening the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God's peculiar people. . . . Your concord with unbelievers has provoked the Lord's displeasure. You know not the things that belong to your peace and they are fast being hid from your eyes. Your neglect to follow the light will place you in a more unfavorable position than the Jews upon whom Christ pronounced a woe. . . . I saw that at present we are under a divine forbearance, but no one can say how long this will continue." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 75–76. All the signs are fast fulling to meet the final retributive judgment.

More pointed, "Christ saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God. . . . He saw the record of sin traced in human misery, tears, and blood; . . . but few would come to Him that they might have life." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 21

Modern Israel

In the nominal churches, the law of God has been brought into dishonor, and so says Isaiah: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:5. Daniel prophesied about this change. Namely: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws. . . ." Daniel 7:25. Not to mention the thousand forms of traditional teachings brought about by this same power. Unfortunately, when the persecuted Protestants moved from under the persecuting hand of Rome, they carried and proselyted these erroneous teachings such as the state of the dead, Sunday sacredness, and many more, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9

National Apostasy to Come

"A time is coming" declares the Spirit of Prophecy "when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land. The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God's people will be brought into great peril. When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land; and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin." —*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888

Leave the City

There is one object lesson that we cannot miss. Not one Chris-

tian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Why? Christ had given His disciples warning. That when they saw a certain sign namely: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies. . . depart out." Luke 21:20–21. Is this not an object lesson? Should we not likewise be ready accordingly? "As God's commandment-keeping people, we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them." —*Evangelism*, p. 79. "Let men beware lest they neglect the lesson conveyed to them in the words of Christ. As He warned His disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their escape; so He has warned the world of the day of final destruction and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will, may flee from the wrath to come." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 37

Final Warning

Just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, a final warning was given to Israel. Affirms the Spirit of Prophecy: "For seven years a man continued to go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, declaring the woes that were to come upon the city. By day and by night he chanted. . . . 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' 'woe, woe to the inhabitants thereof!'" —*Ibid.*, p. 30

Similarly, there is a final warning as given in Revelation 14:9, with its far-reaching effect, namely, "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. . . ."

There are today to be a people like that man, who fit the following description: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. It is this said people that will preach the final message of mercy to an impenitent world. Notwithstanding, most will reject it. "The world is no more ready. . . than were the Jews to receive the Saviour's warning concerning Jerusalem. Come when it may, the day of God will come unawares to the ungodly. When life is going on in its unvarying round; when men are absorbed in pleasure, in business, in traffic, in money-making; when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security—then, as the midnight thief steals within the unguarded dwelling, so shall sudden destruction come upon the careless and ungodly, 'and they shall not escape.' (1 Thessalonians 5:3)." —*Ibid.*, p. 37–38

Yet "God permits the wicked to prosper and to reveal their enmity against Him, that when they shall have filled up the measure of their iniquity all may see His justice and mercy in their utter destruction. The day of His vengeance hastens, when all who have transgressed his law. . . will meet the just

recompense of their deeds." *Ibid.*, p. 48

The Plagues

Ancient Israel received its retributive judgment via the destruction of Jerusalem. To modern Israel is appointed the seven last plagues. "When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people." *Ibid.*, p. 627

Says John the Revelator: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice

out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." Revelation 16:1-17

In conclusion

Affirms the pen of Inspiration: "These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals." *The faith I Live By*, p. 340

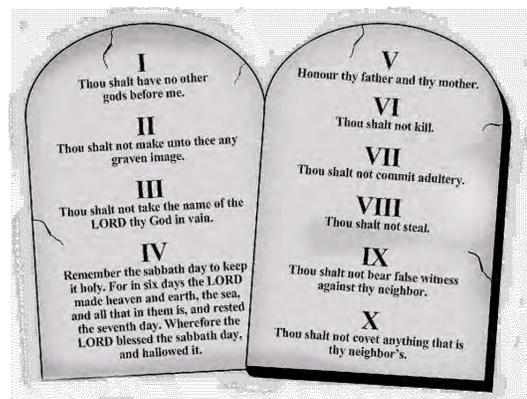
Without a doubt, dear Reader, the parallel is unmistakable. Modern Israel evidently fits the specification. Jesus' panoramic view clearly spans the condition of a people even today. Her retributive judgment is imminent! Says John, the Revelator "...The hour of [God's] judgment is come." Revelation 14:7. Similarly like the man who had forewarned Jerusalem of her doom, so in 1844, God raised up a man to forewarn the fallen nominal churches, using this said line of scripture. Yet God the Father warns and appeals: "I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin . . . for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. . ." Ezekiel 18:30-32

The Saints of God

On the other end of the continuum, there will be a people—a people like the Christians who escaped the utter destruction of Jerusalem. "The people of God will not be free from suffering; but . . . they will not be left to perish. . . . While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous, and supply their wants. To him that 'walketh righteously' is the promise, 'Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.' Isaiah 33:16." *Ibid.*, p. 340

It is the people that John, in Revelation 14:12, identified as: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Rose Powell



Use Your Talents



Jesus spoke a parable about talents. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Matthew 25:14-15

The servant who received five talents traded with them and made another five talents. Also, he that received two talents gained another two. "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou has not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Matthew 25:24-28

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:30

The outer darkness is the eternal destruction that awaits the unprofitable servants. How many Christians have neglected to use their talents in the cause of God? If you have five talents, and you use only four of them, it is a sin. Sister White has written 550 testimonies about talents, how to use them, and of the danger of neglecting to use them. It is our duty to use every talent that God has given us. Satan tries to make our lives so busy that we have no time to use our talents for missionary work.

Our money is a talent that God has given us; we can use it wisely and it will be a blessing to us. But, if we use it only for our own benefit it will be a curse to us.

"God calls us servants, which implies that we are employed by Him to do a certain work and bear certain

responsibilities. He has lent us capital for investment. It is not *our* property, and we displease God if we hoard up our

Lord's goods or spend them as we please. We are responsible for the use or abuse of that which God has thus lent us. If this capital which the Lord has placed in our hands lies dormant, or we bury it in the earth, even if it is only one talent, we shall be called to an account by the Master. He requires, not ours, but His own with usury.

"Every talent which returns to the Master will be scrutinized. The doings and trusts of God's servants will not be considered an unimportant matter. Every individual will be dealt with personally and will be required to give an account of the talents entrusted to him, whether he has improved or abused them. The reward bestowed will be proportionate to the improvement of the talents. The punishment awarded will be according as the talents have been abused.

"The inquiry of each one should be: What have I of my Lord's, and how shall I use it to His glory? 'Occupy,' says Christ, 'till I come.' The heavenly Master is on His journey. Our gracious opportunity is now. The talents are in our hands. Shall we use them to God's glory, or shall we abuse them? We may trade with them today, but tomorrow our probation may end and our account be forever fixed.

"If our talents are invested for the salvation of our fellow men, God will be glorified. Pride and position are made apologies for extravagance, vain show, ambition, and profligate selfishness. The Lord's talents, lent to man as a precious blessing, will, if abused, reflect upon him a terrible curse." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 668

God is our example on how we should use our talents. "Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; And all these things shall be add-

ed unto you." Matthew 6:31–33

God takes care of us, and gives us all the things that we need. This is how we need to care for needy persons. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents." Matthew 18:23–24

"The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." Matthew 18:26–27

We, as the children of God, must follow the example of our heavenly Father, and have compassion, and help, and forgive even those who have offended us.

Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

This is a clear message to us. Give and it shall be given unto you. The more we give the more we will receive. Sister White writes on how to use our talent of money. "God also entrusts men with means. He gives them power to get wealth. He waters the earth with the dews of heaven and with the showers of refreshing rain. He gives the sunlight, which warms the earth, awakening to life the things of nature and causing them to flourish and bear fruit. And He asks for a return of His own.

"Our money has not been given us that we might honour and glorify ourselves. As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honour and glory of God. Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord's. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord's, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny, it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves.

"Money has great value, because it can do great good. In the hands of God's children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked. It is a defense for the oppressed, and a means of help to the sick. But money is of no more value than sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life, in blessing others, and advancing the cause of Christ." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 351

We are to use our talents to gain souls into the church, and every soul gained adds talents into the church. A new member in the church will then put his labours into the work of saving more souls.

We are living in the last days of this world and the last message of mercy is to be proclaimed to the world before the end. Who is responsible to do this work? It is the church of God – you and me.

Members who have talents are to do this work; they must take time out from their regular work and contribute time and effort to win a few more souls to the flock of Jesus. One day in heaven they will come to you to thank you for saving them.

"God bestows various talents and gifts upon men, not that they may lie useless, nor that they may be employed in amusements or selfish gratification, but that they may be a blessing to others by enabling men to do earnest, self-sacrificing missionary work." – *Evangelism*, p. 266

"The solemn, sacred truth—the testing message given us of God to communicate to the world—lays every one of us under the strongest obligation to so transform our daily life and character that the power of the truth may be well represented. We should have a continual sense of the shortness of time and of the fearful events which prophecy has declared must speedily take place. It is because these truths are not made a reality that the life is so inconsistent with the truth which we profess. Many hide in the earth talents which should be invested where they will be accumulating to be returned to God when He shall say: 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' Moses became great because he used his talents to do the work of God, and an increase of talents was then given him. He became eloquent, patient, self-reliant, and competent to do the greatest work ever entrusted to mortal man. This is the effect upon character whenever men give themselves to God with the whole soul, and listen for His commands that they may obey them." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 612–613

If we do not use our talents in the work of God, we will lose them. The man with the one talent lost his talent and he was cast into outer darkness and he lost his salvation. Millions of unconverted Christians will be lost for not using their talents. The apostle Paul gave up his job, and started working in winning souls to Christ. Can we do the same? Is eternal life so important? May God bless us to make a right decision in our lives. AMEN.

Timo Martin



Mother— Queen of the Household

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5

“Woman should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband’s equal. . . . Let woman realize the sacredness of her work and in the strength and fear of God take up her life mission. Let her educate her children for usefulness in this world and for a home in the better world.” *—The Adventist Home*, p. 231

“The sphere of the mother may be humble; but her influence, united with the father’s, is as abiding as eternity. Next to God, the mother’s power for good is the strongest known on earth.” *—Ibid.*, p. 240

The wife has many responsibilities placed upon her and must, therefore, take good care of herself to preserve both her physical and her mental health for her great work. It is of utmost importance that she takes the best care of her health by choosing wisely what she consumes so that she is in the best of health. Not only is she to look after herself, but she is also responsible for her family’s well-being.

Some wives and mothers, while working at home, do not think it matters what they look like when they are seen only by their children and husband; but, it is more important that you have the love of your husband and children than strangers. Remember to be neat and clean in your dress and home, but make sure that you follow God’s instructions.

“Order and cleanliness Is the law of heaven; and in order to come into harmony with the divine arrangement, it is our duty to be neat and tasty.” *—Ibid.*, p. 254

When the wife is a mother-to-be, many changes will occur in her body; and it is then even more important that she takes care of her physical as well as her mental health, in order that both she and her child will be in

good health.

“The idea that women, because of their special condition, may let the appetite run riot is a mistake based on custom, but not on sound sense. . . . If ever there is need of simplicity of diet and special care as to the quality of food eaten, it is in this important period. . . .

“The basis of a right character in the future man is made firm by habits of strict temperance in the mother prior to the birth of her child. . . . This lesson should not be regarded with indifference.” *—Ibid.*, p. 257–258

During her pregnancy the husband and father-to-be can contribute much to the expectant mother’s disposition by lightening his wife’s burdens as much as possible and being attentive to her needs. Her contentment and happiness will be reflected upon their family and they will be rewarded in the physical as well as the moral character of the child.

Mothers must take care that their children are not dressed too warmly, nor end up being dressed too lightly and freeze, but feel comfortable. Great care should be taken that the baby and all children live in a comfortable and clean environment. Another important factor is to let plenty of fresh air and sunshine into the home every day.

“While it may be necessary to protect the little ones from sudden or too great changes of temperature, care should be taken that, sleeping or waking, day or night, they breathe a pure, invigorating atmosphere.” *—Ibid.*, p. 262. Let the fresh air and sunshine into the home.

Many times during the day the children may want their mother’s attention. One child may need its mother in a difficult situation for some problem perhaps which needs resolving; and another may want to share his/her happiness while playing. Although the mother is busy with chores, she must take time to attend to their needs

and make them happy by spending time with them in play, too, whenever possible.

“Many precious beams of light and gladness can the mother shed here and there among her precious little ones. How closely can she bind these dear ones to her heart, that her presence will be to them the sunniest place in the world.” *-Ibid.*, p. 241

The mother is sometimes so engrossed in her work and when the baby or her other small child is fretful she thinks that it may be hungry, so she feeds her child to keep it quiet. But this has often resulted in the little one being overfed and can lead to sickness; or, when this is done often enough, it can eventually lead to obesity. The cause of its crying may have been that he/she was just missing the attention of the mother. It may have longed to be held in her warm embrace and feel her love. So, mothers, take some time out of your busy schedule and spend quality time with your child. This is how your hearts will be united.

“The more quiet and simple the life of the child, the more favourable it will be to both physical and mental development. At all times the mother should endeavour to be quiet, calm and self-possessed.” *-Ibid.*, p. 261

Sometimes the mother is discouraged when she is worn out from looking after the children, cooking the meals and keeping the house in order, and when her husband comes home he speaks about his own accomplishments on his job. But he neglects to show appreciation for all the work his wife has done. He does not think that she, perhaps, may also be tired and sometimes he expects her to serve him. So, fathers and husbands, remember to express your appreciation for all that your wife and mother of your children does daily in carrying many of the burdens in your home.

“The mother is queen of her household.” *-Ibid.*, p. 231. The mother’s work is grand and noble, and her duties and responsibilities are many. As a Christian mother, under God’s control, and following the teachings of Christ in her own life, she will guide and teach her children to become disciples of Christ. This training and lessons are lessons and training for eternity. This is the most sacred duty to her children; for this work she will receive a great reward.

“Great responsibilities rest upon you, mothers. Although you may not stand in national councils, . . . you may do a great work for God and your country. You may educate your children. You may aid them to develop characters that will not be swayed or influenced to do evil, but will sway and influence others to do right.

By your fervent prayers of faith you can move the arm that moves the world.” *-Ibid.*, p. 264

“The education and training of their children to be Christians is the highest service that parents can render to God. It is a work that demands patient labour—a lifelong, diligent, and persevering effort. By neglect of this trust we prove ourselves unfaithful stewards. . . . Kindly, interestedly, tenderly, parents are to work for their children, cultivating every good thing and repressing every evil thing which develops in the characters of their little ones.” *-Ibid.*, p. 268–269

When children have lost their birth mother, it is a loss that can never be replaced. Therefore, the stepmother, one who has taken the place of their mother, must be more patient and loving, if possible, than their own mother may have been. This may perhaps fill some of the loss the children are experiencing.

We have spoken much about the Mothers’ duties in raising the children, but one thing we may never forget and that is that the mother has a Best Friend whom she can always depend upon for help. This work cannot be accomplished alone. In the days of Jesus, mothers brought their children to Him that He may bless them because they were concerned for the present and future welfare of their little ones. His heart of love was open and He spoke words of encouragement to them. He is still inviting the mothers today and says to them, “Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” Luke 18:16. These precious words are to be cherished, not only by every mother, but by every father as well.

“The mothers that brought their children to Jesus did well. . . . Let mothers now lead their children to Christ. Let ministers of the gospel take the little children in their arms and bless them in the name of Jesus. . . .

“Let mothers come to Jesus with their perplexities. They will find grace sufficient to aid them in the management of their children. . . . Even the babe in its mother’s arms may dwell under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. If we live in communion with God, we too may expect the divine Spirit to mould our little ones, even from their earliest moments.” *-Ibid.*, p. 274–275

May God bless every Mother, Father, Grandmother and Grandfather and the precious children and grandchildren, is my wish and prayer. Amen.

Franziska Pedersen

Resist



for Your Holiness

When we read the Bible, we see that in the Old Testament God set Israel apart to be a Holy nation among all nations. God gave them instructions concerning His will, but Israel failed to reach the state of holiness He desired. Of all the people who were 20 years old and older who came out of Egypt, after wandering for forty years in the wilderness, only two reached the Promised Land. Then afterwards, many of those who did enter Canaan joined in the idolatry of the surrounding nations. This continued up until the death of Jesus Christ and beyond.

“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 7:6

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them holy and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Why did God later drive them out of the Garden? They had lost the state of holiness, and only holy beings can eat of the Tree of Life and be in the mountain of Jehovah. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

The death of Christ opened the way for us to enter into the Garden once again. Whosoever will may enter in, yet the same condition of holiness required to be in the Garden at creation has not changed.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,

an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

“But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:15–16

What has delayed us from entering heaven? Why is Christ’s return delayed so long? When the church reaches the state of holiness required, Christ will come. We need to strive for holiness, brothers and sisters. We are waiting for the Latter Rain; we need to reach the state of holiness before the Latter Rain will be poured out. For us to carry the Bible and go to church causes no concern to Satan. Many people in the Christian churches are unconverted; they sing, preach and do many things in the church, but are not converted. Going to church is not a guarantee that you will go to heaven; it means that the way for salvation is being opened for you. The story of the ten virgins has a lesson for us that not all who claim to be Christian will be saved (Matthew 25:1–13).

Judas Iscariot failed to resist the sin of his greed and finally he sold our Lord for only thirty pieces of silver. He received the same opportunity as did the other disciples, but he did not improve on the opportunity given to him. Thus, the devil is working moment by moment, hour by hour, to see that we do not reach the state of holiness required to enter heaven.

“Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw

that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that." Matthew 27:3-4

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7. Brethren, holiness comes as a result of continuous resistance; when we resist temptation we climb the spiritual ladder. Many will be resisted by God in the end because they did not resist sin.

"And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." 1 Kings 21:1-4



King Ahab who was very rich failed to resist sin; he coveted the vineyard of Naboth. Ahab wanted Naboth to give him the inheritance of his father's, for it was near his house. Grapes represent holiness, the pure life of Jesus Christ. When the Israelites came out of Egypt they ate bread and herbs, symbolizing their suffering in sin in Egypt. Ahab represents the devil. Naboth represents you and I. God has planted his

church in this world and placed in it many Naboths. You need to resist sin and to keep your inheritance; do not give it to Ahab.

In Eden God had instructed Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden. The devil, being more subtle than any beast of the field, came to Eve, and started talking with her. She was very amazed to hear the serpent speak. At last, she was deceived, and ate the fruit; but, Adam was not deceived. He understood that Eve had met the enemy. However, Adam failed to resist the beauty of his wife, thinking that if he refused to take of the fruit, his wife would die and who would give him another one? He ate the fruit and then they were naked. Their holiness was gone. Why? They failed to resist sin. My brother, my sister, resist temptations for your holiness. If we fail to resist sin we will never enter into the Garden of Eden. It is through resisting the world that we enter through the heavenly gate into the Garden.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24. To strive is the war of resisting sin. It is a spiritual war. We must strive so that no fault may be found in us.

In Egypt we see the young man, Joseph, who was very handsome. God put Joseph into the house of Potiphar. In that house was a beautiful woman, Potiphar's wife. She failed to resist the handsomeness of Joseph and she did many things to try to entice him. She followed him every day and everywhere, hoping that he might be attracted to her. "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me." Genesis 39:7. Joseph answered, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." Genesis 39:9-10

One major sin of the last days is fornication and adultery; few will resist. Young people and married couples, let us resist for our holiness. Joseph resisted the temptation from Potiphar's wife and he was put into jail. We are in a spiritual warfare. The devil is very deceptive and will never show you that beyond the pleasures of sin there is hell. If we are connected with anything in this world right now, let us make a firm



resolution to disconnect from it today.

Regarding Jacob and Esau, we read, "And Jacob sold pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I

pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Genesis 25:29–34. So, Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup.

Brethren, the devil has no free gift for you. If he has given you something, he will want your soul in return. Only God is willing to give you a free gift. Do not sell your birthright as Esau did. You are a child of God. Jesus calls you "kings and priests." Revelation 1:6. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Revelation 3:11. It is better lose everything else rather than lose your eternal life. If you sell your birthright you are a child of Satan, waiting for destruction. It was supposed to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Esau; but now, since Esau sold his birthright it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Esau, as the firstborn, sold his birthright and became a child of the devil.

In Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar built an image of gold and commanded everyone to worship it. "Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up." Daniel 3:4–5



When the music played, there were three young men who refused to worship the image. When they were brought before the king he asked, "is it true that you are not worshipping the golden

image nor serving my gods?" The king was willing to give them a second chance, but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered, "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Daniel 3:18. The king was furious and commanded that the Hebrews be thrown into the burning furnace. When they entered the fire they were protected by Jesus because of their holiness, but the mighty men who cast them in perished from the heat. How did they gain holiness? Through continuous resistance of temptation.

Jesus, after He was baptized, was taken into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He spent forty days with no water or food and then Satan came to tempt Him. "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Matthew 4:3.

Similarly, the devil waits to tempt at a time when you are in a desperate situation. You have finished your university degree, you apply for a job and the interview is on Sabbath. The boss says, "Just come for one hour for your interview and then you can go do your prayers." That one hour is enough for the devil; Satan waits until you are desperate. When Satan approached Christ, he knew that this was an opportune time to allure the son of God; but, Jesus answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. The devil was defeated. He could not tempt Jesus into a sin of hypocrisy or presumption.

Today, the devil is showing us that many who claim to be Christians are of the world and do not love God anymore. Fellow pilgrims, if you are connected with anything in the world it is time to cut it out now; make a resolution to resist all temptation. You do not want God to say of you, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17. When God says, "let him alone", it means lost forever. My brother, my sister, resist all temptations for your holiness. God bless you while you strive to reach holiness. Amen.

Jenifer Akello, Uganda

The next article in the Health Series about Physical Exercise will appear in the June issue of the Reformation Messenger



The Grass is Greener



This saying that we have in the English language, “The Grass is Greener on the other side of the fence” is thought to have been derived from seeing a herd of cattle grazing through the fence on the grass on the other side, or some cattle who have escaped from one pasture and gone into another in search of new grass to eat.

It became popular in the early 1900’s when a song written by Raymond B. Egan and Richard A. Whiting used the words, “The Grass is Always Greener in the Other Fellow’s Yard.”

It is said to have originated from, “A Latin proverb cited by Erasmus of Rotterdam was translated into English by Richard Taverner in 1545, as:

“The corne in an other mans ground semeth euer more fertyll and plentiful then doth oure own.” (The corn in another man’s ground seems ever more fertile and plentiful than our own does.)

The poet Ovid takes this further, saying in his ‘Art of Love’ (1 BC) that:

‘the harvest is always richer in another man’s field.’”

<https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/479662/origin-of-the-grass-is-always-greener>

Although this saying is nearly 500 years old, it is very common in the English language; and many people have been guilty of seeing things this way. The meaning of this saying is that we see something someone else has and it is something that we do not currently have, but we think that if we do have it, we will be in utopia—or at least a lot happier. Things always seem better somewhere else. It seems that someone else’s life is better than ours and out of our reach. No matter how good you may have it, if you are suffering from this syndrome, there is always something else that someone else

has that you think will bring you more happiness.

We live in a society that thrives on comparison. We often look at the lives of others and determine based on “what we see” that their lives might actually be better than our own. Their lives look so good that we find ourselves wishing we were living their “good life.” People read magazines and books about the lives of the rich and famous and wonder what it would be like to have enough money to not have to work another day in their lives. They strive to get to what appears as greener pastures only to find that once they get there those pastures do not look any greener than the ones they left. The grass may actually look greener on the other side only until they get there.

We do not always get there, but this endless longing robs a person of life and happiness in the present moment.

Why would the neighbour’s grass look greener?

It is normally thought that a greener lawn is a healthier lawn. As you compare your lawn with your neighbours it sometimes looks greener, why?

For grass to grow, it needs sunshine, water, and sometimes people add a chemical fertilizer to make it look really green. The sunshine we cannot control. The water we do have some control over. If we have a sufficient water supply, we can water our lawns regularly during the dry season. Perhaps the neighbour waters his lawn more frequently since depending on the rain from the sky is not enough in some areas of the world. And maybe he adds a fertilizer.

Comparing our spiritual lives to the lawn, for you to grow you need the sunshine of God’s presence by continual prayer and communion with God. You need the



addition of the water that Jesus offered to the Woman at Samaria, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14. Your spiritual lawn is watered by studying the word of God on a regular basis.

And then it also helps to feed our soil. “And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger.” John 6:35. Jesus is the Bread of Life. When we feed on this Bread, He becomes a part of us. It is not enough to only know *about* Christ, we need Christ living within. “Which is Christ *in* you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27

If the grass in our yard does not look green as our neighbour’s, who can we blame? Sometimes we are at fault. If my neighbor has the same type of grass that I have, and the same type of soil, and his always looks greener than mine, then it must be something that I am not doing that is making my grass less green.

What would happen then if my neighbour and I decided to switch houses because I really love his yard better than my own? If I take care of my new yard like I took care of my old yard, my new yard will eventually become my old yard. My neighbour’s new yard would still look greener than my yard.

Yes, the grass might look greener on the other side but that is until we take over and ruin it. We can be fooled by the greener grass into thinking that it is not our fault. We blame the yard—the circumstance we are in, when it may, in fact, be our own fault.

Our grass (life) is in our hands and what we do with it is within our power. While we keep staring at the green grass of our neighbour’s we become more disappointed with our own until we are ready to get rid of what we have to gain that of our neighbour’s. We cease to have any desire to work on our yard any longer.

The neighbour has worked hard on his lawn and we want it without the labour involved. We can read what King Ahab did when he coveted the vineyard that Naboth worked very hard to maintain (See 1 Kings 21:1–19). Stop looking at your neighbour’s lawn and start to work on your own. And work!!!

If someone’s personal life or position in the church looks more favourable than ours, the solution is not simply to trade places. They worked hard to get there, and we are also expected to work hard. We can learn from others, but we cannot trade places with them. Do

they pray more? Spend more time in Bible study? Perhaps those are good habits to develop in the process of caring for our yard.

“We are on the great battlefield of life, and let it never be forgotten that we are individually responsible for the issue of the struggle.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 337–338

The greenness and quality of my neighbour’s lawn might not be meant for me.

What happens if you have a different type of soil than your neighbour? What if your soil contains more clay? Or perhaps there are insects infecting the lawn, or maybe just a lot of weeds have taken root.

You may work as hard as your neighbour, but you still may not have quite as green a lawn. Be content with your yard. Nurture it to the best of your ability, but do not compare it to your neighbour’s. The same amount of care may never make your lawn as green.

Similarly, do not keep comparing your life to others in the church who seem to have more advantages than you do in life. They may have more talents, they may have more positions, they may have more wealth. That is between them and God. They will also have more responsibility and be held more accountable for their talents. You need to keep your eyes on Christ and use what you have been entrusted with to the best of your ability. You may never be given more. What you do with what you have is what matters in the eyes of Christ.

“God considers more with how much love we work, than the amount we do. Love is a heavenly attribute. The natural heart cannot originate it. The heavenly plant only flourishes where Christ reigns supreme. Where love exists, there is power and truth in the life. Love does good and nothing but good. Those who have love bear fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life.” –*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 13, 1898

Onesimus had run away from his master, Philemon, for greener pastures. During his wanderings he ran into the Apostle Paul and his life was changed. He then ministered to Paul. Paul told Philemon about Onesimus. “Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me.” Philemon 1:11

Paul then mentioned, “Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.” v. 13. Onesimus ministered to Paul and would have loved to remain in Paul’s presence; however, Paul told him that this was not his yard. His place to be was with his master that he

had run away from. Paul then sent him back to his master, telling Philemon, "I have sent again." v. 12

Some things may be good—but they are not for you. Do not covet what others have—ask the Lord to guide you to where He wants you to be.

It is all in the perspective. From a distance the neighbour's lawn looks better. It might be better, but it might not.

In your own lawn by your feet you may see bare patches and other blemishes. Then looking over the fence to your neighbour's field in the distance you may see only green healthy growth.

In the heat of the summer, the grass may wilt a little and turn yellow, but the weeds remain green and vibrant. If you take a closer look at your neighbour's lawn, is it really greener or does it have more weeds? Also, if you look closely, you may find the odd bare spot here and there also in the neighbour's lawn. You cannot see the many blemishes in the neighbour's field because you are looking at it from a distance.

We can get fooled by the grass in someone else's yard which will make us "think" differently about our own grass. People often get fooled because what something appears to be is not always what it actually is. This is why we need to stop comparing ourselves with others.



Lot thought the valley looked greener. It appeared so from the distance, but it was a façade by the enemy. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." Genesis 13:10. It was there that he lost his family. Close-up, the pasture in Sodom was filled with weeds and corruption.

In the days of Christ, to many simple-minded people the Jewish leaders seemed to have great privileges and advantages, but upon close inspection, their lives were

corrupt. Jesus called them a "generation of vipers." Matthew 23:33

If we have adequate sunshine and water, but still we want our grass to be greener, we can add fertilizer. But, what happens if you add too much fertilizer? It will kill and burn the grass. Food is good, but too much of a good thing is not so good "Many who discard flesh meats and other gross and injurious articles think that because their food is simple and wholesome they may indulge appetite without restraint, and they eat to excess, sometimes to gluttony. This is an error." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 133–134

When we work with souls and are sharing the Bread of Life, we need to be very careful how we present the words and to whom. It is a science. We have to know the soil of the person's heart and the condition of their spiritual life. We do not want to destroy or burn them with too much good information. We do not go to people and tell them on the first study that their current church (which they are very active in) is Babylon and will be punished by the wrath of God. We present the love of Christ. We gently fertilize, little by little.

From the first sin of Adam and Eve we can learn how far this desire for a greener pasture can lead to.

Adam and Eve did not need to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. They had plenty of trees to eat from. They were not suffering from hunger. But the one they could not have, was the one that Eve looked at with admiration. For the moment it looked greener than the other fruit because it had a special quality to make one wise (as she was told by the serpent—Genesis 3:5).

"The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. On perceiving that she was alone, she felt an apprehension of danger, but dismissed her fears, deciding that she had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and to withstand it. Unmindful of the angels' caution, she soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 53–54

There are a few problems with this scenario. Firstly, Eve "unconsciously wandered." In other words, "aimlessly wandered." She wandered around without thinking of

where she was going. Everything we say and do, and places we go, every moment we live, should have a purpose. Even if it is a walk in the park—we should be aware of our surroundings and not wander aimlessly, mindlessly. Some people wander aimlessly through life with no fixed purpose or direction. This is true with some worldly people but also Christians who have become complacent. The enemy then leads them where he wants them to go. We need to have purpose in our lives and a clear direction, heading in the direction God wants us to go, making every moment purposeful.

Then Eve found herself in the face of danger. She felt an apprehension—an inspired impression, but she shrugged it off. Have you ever felt impressed that you are on the wrong course, and it bothered you for a few minutes, but, like Eve, you simply shrugged it off? You dismiss your fear, although this fear could have come from inspiration from above alerting you of potential danger—but you shrug it off. It may be something that family or friends influence you to do, or places they want you to go, or shows they want to watch with you on Netflix, that you do not at first feel comfortable with, but you shrug off your fears. And then you go forward. . . only to regret it later. I am sure Eve very much regretted it later. She felt she “had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and withstand it.” Clearly, she did not. She showed what man is, when he trusts in his own strength and wisdom. Complete failure. She should have realized her helplessness without Christ and should have cried out to the Lord for help at that very moment. He would have come in answer by His personal presence. He will come to our aid also, if we cry unto the Lord in times of temptation when we are not sure how to get out of a situation.

“Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am.” Isaiah 58:9. The promises are many. “Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Jeremiah 33:3. “Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” Isaiah 65:24

And then Eve found herself gazing at the tree with curiosity and admiration. Just looking. However, her gazing created a longing.

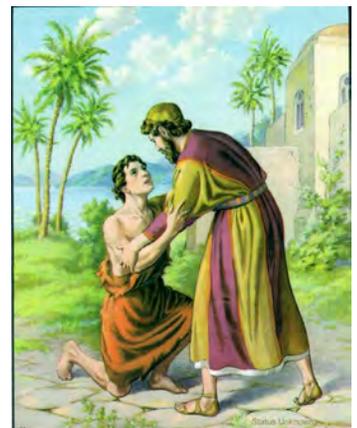
We are told to not only just turn away from evil, but to, “Flee from idolatry.” 1 Corinthians 10:14. Eve should have fled when she saw she was in a dangerous situation. The end result was that Eve ended up questioning God, and thus committed the outward act in sin.

Christians often question God as is shown by the many Christian churches with a variety of standards. Do we ever question the standards of our own church as being too strict? Or perhaps God does not *really* expect that. Surely some of the churches are being fanatics. God will not destroy me if I spend too much time on the Internet, or if I am a few minutes late for Sabbath opening, or if I once in awhile eat some food that I know is not healthy. We may be church members, but do we question the finer points of the law?

Jesus told the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–24). The Prodigal son grew up in a good Christian household and was taught in the ways of the Lord and the benefits of good, useful labour. He grew up in the country where it was necessary to do good, honest work for a living. His family was well-off. However, the young man was not satisfied. He was unhappy, thinking that he was wasting his youth. He apparently was aware of the frivolity of city living, because he had a desire to be a part of it. It seemed that people in the world were happier and having a great time in life. He got tired of the day-to-day duties of life on the farm and requested his portion of his inheritance before his father’s passing, so he could enjoy it while he was still a young man. His wish was granted, and he left home with a pocket full of money to go find greener pastures.

He had a strong desire for what he thought was the greener grass. Many young people who have grown up in the church have also had this strong desire and have gone after what they thought was greener grass—a happier life in the world. Once they got there, some have found that, although it appears green, it is poisoned green, and they returned. Others never returned. They were intoxicated by the artificiality of the greener grass (chemical poisons) to the point where they could not think clearly enough any longer to discern right from wrong, truth from error.

To the Prodigal son, the pastures did not prove to be greener when he ran out of money. When his money was gone, and he was feeding pigs for a living, the greenest pasture he could think of was his own home in the country—his own pasture that he had left. He therefore returned home in humility and penitence. Yes, the pasture he was originally in was the green-



est pasture that the Lord had designed for his salvation. The other pasture may have been made green by the enemy's chemical stimulants and poisons. It was all a façade—a mask. That is what the enemy provides—a façade. There is no genuine happiness in his pasture regardless of how it looks from the outside and from the distance.

We need to accept the pasture we have been given and work with it. The apostle Paul learned to be content with his pasture. He did ask for a change at one point in time, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh. . . . For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." 2 Corinthians 12:7–8. But the Lord said, "no". That is the pasture you have been given to work in. "My grace is sufficient for thee." v. 9

It may not have looked good from the outside, but from hard diligent labour, it bore plentiful fruit. He had peace in Jesus. He was happy with his pasture. Later, he was able to say, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, . . . for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:10–13. Paul did not covet material goods, a spouse and a quiet family life—that was not his pasture. He had a difficult pasture to work in, but he worked it to the best of his ability.

"Those who allow a covetous spirit to take possession of them cherish and develop those traits of character which will place their names on the record books of heaven as idolaters. All such are classed with thieves, revilers, and extortioners, none of whom, the word of God declares, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' Covetous attributes are ever opposed to the exercise of Christian beneficence. The fruits of selfishness always reveal themselves in a neglect of duty, and in a failure to use God's entrusted gifts for the advancement of His work." —*The Review and Herald*, December 1, 1896

"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." 1 Timothy 6:7–8. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5. "Set your affection on things

above, not on things on the earth." Colossians 3:2

Look at your life and see what you are grateful for. When you visit with friends and family, watch your conversations. Do you speak more about what you are thankful for? Or more about what your problems are? Sure, we all have problems but is that the main focus of our lives? We want to know how to fix our problems and once our problems are all fixed, we believe we will be eternally glad.

Can the Christian expect a problem-free life? If you feel this way, then you are not being shaped and molded by the Lord. Never expect your life to be problem free. Your lawn may have weeds, it may have insects that are destroying the grass. It may be in an arid environment needing regular watering. It may have too much clay in the soil, resulting in poor quality outcome. Yet, with proper care it will grow as best as it can in the field that is provided to you.

When we have the right attitude and do honest labour for our grass it will be green enough to satisfy the Lord. We need to take time to care for, water, and nurture what we have.

Accept your lot in life and glorify the Lord for His gracious provision to you. The grass is not always greener on the other side, prosperity is not always good, and adversity is not always bad.

The greenest grass that the Lord has for you will be found in the keeping of His commandments. Then you will be perfectly satisfied with your yard.

"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:10–11

Your joy may be full.

Wendy Eaton



CHILDREN'S CORNER:



Showing Respect to God

“Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:30

Susie and Jimmy were excited. This Sabbath their cousin, Jane, would be back at church. Jane and her family had been away for one-year on an assignment that Jane’s father, the church missionary, had to do for the church. Susie and Jimmy loved Jane very much and they missed her dearly when she was gone. The three cousins were very close.

Sabbath morning came and the sun was shining in all its brilliance. The children were up early, and ready to go 15 minutes before their normal departure time. They were getting a little impatient as they so much wanted to see Jane again.

Finally, they arrived at church. Jane and her family were already there and seated in the second pew from the front. Susie begged her mother to go and share the same pew so that they could sit together. Mother agreed, as long as the children did not cause any disturbance in the church. Excitedly Susie and Jimmy quickly went up to the second pew and joined Jane and her family. Jane’s face lit up as she saw her cousins join her in the pew and quietly sit down beside her. It took great effort on their part to keep silent and just smile at each other. They knew that they would have more time later to talk and if they disrupted the service now, they would be separated.

This day, they had another guest speaker who did not speak English and the entire sermon had to be spoken through translation from Spanish to English. This made it longer and especially tedious for the young children. Soon the patience of Susie, Jimmy and Jane wore thin. When the Spanish preacher was speaking, they began to nudge each other, smile, and then whisper. This happened for about 15 minutes until Susie’s mother,

showed her displeasure and separated the children. Susie and Jimmy were glum and lost the blessing from the sermon. They knew a punishment was forthcoming, but they were just getting so impatient, wanting to be able to talk and laugh with Jane.

After the service, they did indeed receive a punishment. They had to go directly home and could not visit with Jane that afternoon. Susie and Jimmy were very sad.

After lunch, mother took the two children with her in the living room. She put her arms around them and prayed with them. Then she began to explain to them why they were being punished and what they did was so wrong.

“When you are in school, and the teacher walks in and begins speaking to the class, what do you do?”

“Why, we silently listen,” responded Jimmy, “we would not dare to speak or we would be sent to the principle’s office.”

“And what if you had dinner with the king or queen, how would you act when they were speaking?” continued Mother.

“We would listen carefully and not say a word,” answered Susie.

“But we were only whispering when the Spanish preacher was talking, so as not to disturb the listeners. They don’t understand Spanish anyhow.” Jimmy mentioned.

“Yes, that is true,” Mother replied. “However, it still does disturb the other listeners, and it also disturbs Jesus and the angels. Even though we do not see them, they are with us. They fill every pew and they write down every word that you speak, every thought that

you think. Every time you disrespect the sanctuary, you are disrespecting Jesus. This is His house and we are coming to worship Him, even though we do not see Him.”

“What about before the sermon begins?” asked Susie. “Maybe we should come a little early next time so we can exchange our greetings before the sermon.”

“No,” Mother answered softly, “it is never all right to speak in God’s house even when there are no services being conducted, unless you are teaching a lesson or answering a question, praying, or preaching. It is equally wrong to walk around except when coming in or going out, or collecting the offering. The sanctuary of God is a very solemn place and we are to show it utmost respect whether there are services in progress or not, even when there is no one in the sanctuary. It is always a very holy place.

“We are sorry, Mother,” replied Susie and Jimmy together.

“Let us pray,” said Mother, “that God will forgive us and help us show more respect in the future.”

“Yes, let’s pray,” answered the children.

Every Sabbath we have the privilege of gathering to worship the King of the universe. Take careful notice of your actions at church. See how many times you talk, whisper or communicate in some manner in the church. Does this please Jesus? Or how many times do we use our cell phones to communicate in church, or to look at various different web sites unrelated to the service.

“When you enter the sanctuary remember, ‘God is here; this is His house. . . . I am coming into the presence of the holy God.’ –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 494

“When the worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats.

“If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness, by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer. . . . The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find no sanction in the house where God is worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the word of God, that it may have

due weight and suitably impress the heart.

“When the minister enters, it should be with dignified, solemn mien. He should bow down in silent prayer as soon as he steps into the pulpit, and earnestly ask help of God. What an impression this will make! There will be solemnity and awe upon the people. Their minister is communing with God; he is committing himself to God before he dares to stand before the people. Solemnity rests upon all, and angels of God are brought very near. Every one of the congregation, also, who fears God should with bowed head unite in silent prayer with him that God may grace the meeting with His presence and give power to His truth proclaimed from human lips. . . . All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.

“When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most--the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths. . . . Sometimes a little child may so attract the attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground and bring forth fruit. Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence for the house and worship of God that they keep up a continual communication with each other during the sermon. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves. God wants attentive hearers. It was while men slept that Satan sowed his tares.

“When the benediction is pronounced, all should still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus blocking them up so that others cannot pass out. The precincts of the church should be invested with a sacred reverence. It should not be made a place to meet old friends and visit and introduce common thoughts and worldly business transactions. These should be left outside the church.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 492–494

The apostle Paul wrote, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1 Timothy 3:15



“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.”
John 15:5

“The regenerated man has a vital union with Christ. As the branch derives its sustenance from the parent stock, and because of this bears much fruit, so the true believer is united with Christ, and reveals in his life the fruits of the Spirit. The branch becomes one with the vine. Storm cannot carry it away. Frosts cannot destroy its vital properties. Nothing is able to separate it from the vine. It is a living branch, and it bears the fruit of the vine. So with the believer. By good words and good actions, he reveals the character of Christ. As the branch derives its nourishment from the vine, so all who are truly converted draw spiritual vitality from Christ.” – *The Upward Look*, p. 182