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No. 1

Readings for the Week of Prayer

To Be Read in All the Churches, Dec. 10 to 19, 1948

THE TIME has once more come for the annual Week of Prayer. It should be to all the Lord's people an occasion of special seeking of God, and it may be to every believer a time in which he will receive a great refreshing from the Spirit's presence. The world is passing through a time of great perplexity and tribulation, and while the children of God have enjoyed His blessing and favor, yet in a measure they have participated in these sad experiences and have not wholly escaped from the tribulation of these past years. The Lord stands ready to redeem His promise given to His children through Moses: "If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice. . . . He will not forsake thee." Deut. 4: 29-31. It is impossible for one to seek God with all the heart and fail to find Him; but to seek after God with all the heart will necessarily mean an earnest searching of the heart and the putting away of every sinful thing found therein. If this is faithfully done, the promises of the Lord will not fail us.

During this special season of prayer those in charge of the meeting should ever keep before the minds of the people the great object of coming into a closer relationship with God. It should be our aim, therefore, to make this a week of prayer and consecration. We should work and

pray for every soul among us, for the conversion of those who have not yet yielded their heart to God. The young people and the children must not be overlooked; not only should they be held up before the Lord by us, but they should be encouraged to enter into the spirit of the meetings.

The success of the meetings will largely devolve upon the officers of the church. The burden should therefore rest heavily upon them. They should each plan and pray for the reviving power. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Isa. 62:10.

Sabbath, the 18th day of December, has been appointed for a day of fasting.

There are many isolated ones who will not have the privilege of meeting with those of like precious faith during the Week of Prayer, but they need not lose the blessing of God on this account. Like the psalmist, they can say, "When thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord will I seek." Ps. 27:8. Though separated from God's people, they may not be separated from Him, "for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." 2 Chron. 16:9.

May God abundantly bless us all as we unitedly seek Him on this occasion.

The Brethren.

(Reading for Friday, December 10)

Why God Permits Suffering

By F. Williamson

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28.

"Whatever our situation, if we are doers of the Word, we have a guide to direct our ways, whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor: whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend."—*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 248, 249.

IN THE contemplation of this subject our attention is at once called to the oft repeated query, "Why does God permit a Christian to suffer?" To many this is a perplexing question. Why then, if God is love, does He not give relief from all suffering, especially those of the household of faith? Very often this thought comes into our mind especially when we see some loved one suffering pain or affliction of some kind, more especially do we seek an answer to this problem when it comes directly into our own life.

The problem of suffering has puzzled the minds of a great many men. Ever since the day Adam was driven from the garden of Eden to our own time, have men sought an answer to this baffling question. It is interesting to note that some of the inspired writers of God's Word have voiced their perplexity over the suffering of the righteous. The writer of the Ecclesiastes observed: "There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness." Eccl. 7:15. The prophet Jeremiah expressed his perplexity in these words: "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee! yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments; Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" Jer. 12:1.

In discussing the question that has bewildered the minds of so many men and left thousands drifting into infidelity, brings to mind the question: Are we attempting to answer something that will always remain a mystery? Admittedly it is a difficult problem. While we may never fully understand or penetrate the mysteries of God's dealing with us in this life, we do know assuredly that He has not left us in darkness concerning His special care over those who have been adopted

into the great family of God. Indeed God has intervened in a miraculous way in behalf of His people. Often God has demonstrated His power over the forces of evil that the work of salvation may advance. Many have had deliverance from sickness, from the power of evil spirits, from prisons, from the mouths of lions, from the raging flames, and from the sword. While God intervenes in a special way to aid some of His children, there are others again who apparently seem to be neglected of Him. It is of this class, who are overtaken by awful trials, terrible tribulations and severe sufferings that we seek an answer as to why God permits them to suffer. So in seeking a solution to this problem we turn to the word of God. God does not resent our questions, but says: "If ye will enquire, enquire ye," Isa. 21:12. If the Lord encourages us to ask, surely He will answer. "Light is sown for the righteous," Ps. 97:11, and we can understand enough to know that "His way is perfect" and that His dealings with us are "for our good always." Deut. 6:24.

The Cause Of Suffering

First of all, we must find out what causes suffering. Suffering comes when God's laws are broken through ignorance or willful sin. "Through one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Rom. 5:19, and we are all "by nature the children of wrath." Eph. 2:3. Thus came suffering and death. "As by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin." Rom. 5:12. We are sinners by inheritance and by our voluntary acts. Let this thought impress us. that every disappointment, heartache, sorrow, sickness, suffering and death is the result of sin. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7. The result of all this, is that

suffering is everywhere prevalent in our world of sin.

There was a belief common among the Jews in the days of Jesus, that all who suffered had the displeasure of God upon them. Many entertain the same thought to-day. Suffering is really one of life's inevitables and is no evidence that God is displeased with the person. To the contrary Paul declares: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Heb. 12:5-7.

Many of us murmur and complain at our lot and long for ease and pleasure and deliverance from suffering. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that several outstanding Biblical characters actually preferred affliction and privation to comfort and freedom from suffering. Two such men are brought to our attention here. Moses, a man given the best of everything to prepare him for the ruling of a great nation, refused this high honor and chose rather to suffer. "By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Heb. 11:24,25. The apostle Paul was most happy to suffer for the Lord: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." 2 Cor. 12:10. In no wise does loyalty to Christ give us exemption from the pain of suffering, or provide us a passport to ease.

The Purpose of Suffering

Suffering is one of God's choice methods of developing character. Its value is at least three-fold. It has educational value; it has disciplinary value; and it is a corrective leading to perfection. It is definitely not a pleasant experience as many who have been kindled by the fires of affliction can testify. Yet it seems to be the only means at the disposal of God whereby He can chisel away the rubbish from our lives. The following words by the pen of Inspiration bears out this thought:

"The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 85.

Paul in his epistle to the Philippians told them that they were "not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Phil. 1:29. As followers of Christ we inherit suffering as part of

our Christian experience. However we can derive comfort and assurance that the Father's hand is in all our afflictions. God has not promised to deliver us from all the troubles of life, but He has promised to give us grace to bear our affliction. Suffering brings us nearer to God. It helps us to become dependent upon Him. It helps us to realize that God's way is best.

Perhaps one of the greatest examples of unwavering confidence found in the Scriptures is that of Job. He had such faith that he was enabled to declare: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Job 13:15. In all his tribulations he was confident that God had a purpose. He had implicit trust in God. For he said: "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10.

The ultimate purpose then, of suffering is glorification. This fact is brought out several times in God's word. Glorification is the final destiny of all who have suffered with Jesus. Paul says: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8:18. These inspiring words reveal the glorious purpose of God in permitting affliction to come upon His children.

"Through trials and persecution, the glory-character of God is revealed in this chosen ones. The church of God hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth: they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial, and experience bitter disappointments but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings they are destined to be partakers of His glory." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 50,51.

The Educational Value of Suffering

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Phil. 3:8-10.

One of the great lessons to be learned from trials and afflictions is that knowing Christ better. Far too few of us really know Jesus. Paul had an intense longing to know his Master better.

Paul's longing to know Jesus was well rewarded as he experienced such an intimate friend-

ship with Him as few men have ever known. How then can we, like the great apostle, enter more penetratingly into the unsearchable riches of Christ? The answer to this question is found in our desire to know "the fellowship of His sufferings." What are we prepared to pay for this knowledge? What did Paul pay? "The loss of all things." It looks as though his discipleship had cost him home and kinship and inheritance. But nothing was allowed to count in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. Nothing else was allowed for one moment to intrude its allurements. Ease, money, fame, were counted as dung that he might know Christ.

Let us go a little deeper into the meaning of "the fellowship of His sufferings." The bonds of suffering bring men and women into closer fellowship, it makes them companions in their mutual woes. This same thought applies in our relationship with Christ. We are not alone in our troubles. Our Lord has travelled the road of sorrow before us. He is ready to sympathize, to help lift the weary burdens, to be a companion, to cheer and encourage us on our way.

The words of Isaiah make it plain that the relation of God to His children is very close and personal. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old." Isa. 63:9.

"Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His Children, that trying experiences come to them. . . . God's care for His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon His children but such as is essential for their present and eternal good."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 524, 525.

The Disciplinary Value Of Suffering

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Heb. 5:8. There is no other lesson of greater importance than that of obedience. For without it, there is no hope of salvation. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14. Was it necessary for the Saviour to learn obedience? Yes! This was most essential in the work of restoration in bringing man back to the image of God.

In the beginning when Adam was placed in the garden of Eden, he was put on probation. God designed to teach mankind obedience through Adam; but Adam failed to obey the command of God. So in carrying forward the plan of salvation it was necessary that Jesus undertake to do what Adam failed to do. Thus the victory of the Son of God over the fallen disobedient nature

of man made the development of an obedient character possible. Here we see the reason for the ordeal of suffering that Jesus had to bear. Now if Jesus could learn obedience only through suffering, can we expect to learn the same lesson without it? No indeed! We want to be faithful and obedient, yet we shrink from the method God employs by which we learn this essential characteristic.

Our characters must reflect the image of Christ. We must learn obedience as He learned it. It is God's purpose that we shall be strong to do His will under all circumstances. His concern for us is not to make life easy, but to make us strong; and that even the awful realities of life in this sinful world, will develop that ruggedness of character which we must have to be worthy subjects of the eternal kingdom.

"God leads His children by a way that they know not; but He does not forget or cast off those who put their trust in Him. . . . God permits trials to assail His people, that by their constancy and obedience they themselves may be spiritually enriched, and that their example may be a source of strength to others. . . . The very trials that task our faith most severely, and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are to lead us closer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at His feet, and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange."—*Patriarches and Prophets*, p. 129.

A Corrective Leading To Perfection

In the beginning God made man perfect. The plan of salvation was brought about to restore him to that original condition where he will reflect the image of God. This work of restoration is accomplished through much purifying and refining. This is indeed a painful process.

To be restored to perfection, to holiness, we must get sin out of our life. How can we do this? By looking to Jesus, by following Him, by abiding in Him. But this is not all. We read the following: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:10. This text reveals to us that in order for the Captain of our Salvation to become perfect, it was necessary that He should suffer. So with us. We cannot expect to reach Christian perfection in any other way. Peter supports this thought with these wonderful words; "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter, 5:10.

As we follow in the footsteps of our Master let us not shrink from trials, but like Paul, "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." 2 Cor. 12:10.

For if we murmur and complain we cut ourselves off from the only pathway that leads to the development of a noble character.

The End Of All Suffering

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4.

What a contrast is this glorious future prospect to present conditions where the forgetfulness of God and foolishness of men have covered the earth with sorrow and distress. But the purpose of God will triumph. That glad day to which all the saints of God have longingly looked forward to, during the long reign of sin and suffering, is near to come. Yes, —Jesus is coming soon! Our heavenly Father has not left us in doubt or uncertainty regarding the future. There are many promises given to the child of God to encourage him along the Christian way. How wonderful it is to know we are approaching the end of the way.

The beloved John saw in vision the deliverance of the people of God from all the woe and suffering of this world. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14. The conflict is over. All sorrow will be ended. The time of our redemption draweth nigh. Oh, what gratitude and words of praise to Jesus will fill the hearts of

those who, having known the sorrows and fears and suffering of this earth, now bid them farewell forever.

Dear brethren and sisters! Let us consecrate our lives anew to God during this solemn Week of Prayer. Let us be willing to yield to whatever blows God sees fit in order to prepare us for a place in that celestial home. Concerning the example of suffering in the life of Christ we read in the Spirit of prophecy:

"Oh, why are we so sensitive to trial and reproach, to shame and suffering, when our Lord has given us such an example? Who would wish to enter into the joy of their Lord while they were unwilling to partake of His sufferings? What! the servant unwilling to bear the humility and shame and reproach which the Master bore unselfishly for him! The servant shrinking from a life of humility and sacrifice which is for his own eternal happiness, by which he may finally obtain an exceedingly great, and eternal reward! The language of my heart is, let me be a partaker with Christ of His sufferings, that I may finally share with Him in glory."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 491.

Suffering before the eternal reward. Those who desire to reign with Him must first suffer with Him. Let us welcome the trials and suffering that the cross of Christ brings to us, so that at last we can hear the welcome words: "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

(Reading for Sabbath, December 11)

The Spirit of Prayer

By W. O. Welp

"When this reformation begins, the *spirit of prayer* will actuate ever believer, and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife." *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 251.

THE SPIRIT of prayer is an outstanding characteristic in the work of reform. We believe that prayer is going to play an important part in the finishing work. When the spirit of prayer takes hold of the true believer, it will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. It is impossible for the spirit of prayer and the spirit of discord and strife to be manifested in the church at the same time. What a glorious condition will it be,

when through the spirit of prayer, the church will have attained perfect unity. This is an absolute necessity before God's people will be blessed with the outpouring of the latter rain. This condition was fully met by the early disciples before the day of Pentecost. We read in the following testimony:

"The disciples prayed with *intense earnestness* for a fitness to meet men, and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners

to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. . . . They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls."—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.

It is truly inspiring to notice that the disciples prayed with *intense earnestness*. The spirit of prayer was mightily manifested among them. The spirit of discord and strife was banished, and they came close together into Christian fellowship. Their main object was to lead sinners to Christ. This same condition is to be manifested among God's children before the Lord can finish His work on earth in righteousness.

There is a vast difference between the form of prayer and the spirit of prayer. One is lip service, the other is heart service. The question may be asked: What is the meaning of true prayer? The answer is: "Prayer is the *opening of the heart* to God as to a friend."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 533.

In prayer we talk with God. We commune with Him as with a friend. We take Him into our confidence. We open our heart to Him and tell Him all about our troubles. We bring our burdens to Him asking for divine aid. As we sing in that beautiful song: "Bring your burden to the Lord and leave it there." What is the greatest burden we carry? It is the burden of sin. We can bring this burden to the foot of the cross and leave it there. It is here that we shall find rest for our weary souls. "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." He invites us: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matt. 11:28-30.

If we come to Christ with our burden of sin and ask Him to take it away, He will surely answer our prayer. Regarding such a prayer the Spirit of prophecy says:

"When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask; but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 70.

May we all heed the admonition of the word of God to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Heb. 12:1.

When we bring our burden of sin to Jesus He bids us in return to take His yoke upon us. In comparison with the burden of sin this yoke is easy and this burden is light. What is meant by

this yoke that we should carry? The Spirit of prophecy gives the answer:

"The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him. *The yoke that binds to service is the law of God.*"—*Desire of Ages*, p. 329.

How important it is for us to know that "the yoke that binds to service is the law of God." It is sad indeed that so many professed Christians today make light of the law of God. They even go as far as to say that it is impossible to keep the law of God. Those who do this deny the power of God. Jesus said: "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. And He is the One who will give us power to keep the law of God. By keeping the law we show our love to God. We read: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:4. Yes, the commandments of God are not grievous no matter what men may say. When Jesus has taken possession of our life, He will fulfill the law of God in us.

How To Make The Lord Hear?

There are many today who do not understand what is necessary in order to make the Lord hear our prayers. There are certain requirements to be met and they are fully outlined in the word of God. We read:

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Ps. 66:18.

"The Lord is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous." Prov. 15:29.

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." 1 Peter 3:12.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55:6-7.

Here is enough Scriptural evidence to show that the Lord will not even hear the prayers of those who desire to continue in sin. It is therefore necessary that sin, which is the transgression of the law, be banished from our life. The true child of God has a deep yearning for righteousness. His desire is that the righteousness of Christ may also be manifested in his life. All those who have such a hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. The Lord will hear their prayers, as they will be a sweet incense before Him.

How To Make The Lord Answer?

The Bible is likewise very plain how we can make the Lord answer our prayers. We read:

"And this the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." 1 John 5:14, 15.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Eph. 5:17.

If we ask according to His will the Lord will answer our prayers, and we are admonished to be understanding what the will of God is. The Bible tells us: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. 4:3. If we are willing to submit our will to the will of God, and be cleansed from sin, the Lord will not only hear but also answer our prayers. Jesus Himself has left us a wonderful example of submission to the will of His Father. While in great agony in the garden of Gethsemane He prayed: "Father, if Thou be willing remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." Luke 22:42. Did His Father hear and answer this prayer? Yes indeed, but in a different way. "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Verse 43. God could not take away the bitter cup, but He provided strength that Jesus might be able to drink the bitter cup. From this experience we may likewise learn a lesson. We read in the Spirit of prophecy:

"That prayer which cometh forth from an earnest, believing heart is the effectual, fervent prayer that availeth much. God does not always answer our prayers as we expect, for we may not ask what would be for our highest good; but in His infinite love and wisdom He will give us those things which we need most."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 531.

Another condition how we can make the Lord answer our prayers is found in the following Scripture:

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22.

When we keep the commandments of God the Lord will answer our prayers. This is close language. There are millions of so-called Christians who are not willing to meet this condition. And in connection with this we read again:

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28:9.

The next condition how we can make the Lord answer our prayers is that we believe in them. We read:

"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24.

"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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."—James 1:5-7.

And still another condition is found in the following Scripture:

"Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear." Ps. 10:17.

So we have found that in order to make the Lord answer our prayers we must first of all pray according to His will. Second, we must keep His commandments. Third, we must have faith. Fourth, we must be humble, and last, we must be filled with the love of God, for "love is the fulfilling of the law." If we meet these conditions, we may rest assured that the Lord will not only hear but also answer our prayers.

Prevailing Prayer

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:6.

The closet is the place where we can really commune with God. It is here that we can spend much time in prayer. It is here that we can best prevail with the Lord. The following parable gives us a wonderful illustration of importunity:

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord help me. But He answered and said, it is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matt. 15:21-28.

When this woman prayed to Jesus for the healing of her daughter she did not at first receive an answer from the Lord. The disciples then

spoke up and said to Jesus: "Send her away." All this must have been very discouraging, but this woman would not be denied. Her faith was great and she continued to plead with Jesus. He finally answered her and said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But even this did not discourage her, but instead she "worshipped Him, saying, Lord help me." Then Jesus tested her faith still further and said: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs." This was no doubt a great test to be compared with a dog, but she was humble enough to take this also, and even said to Jesus: "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table." By prevailing in prayer she was finally rewarded, because the Lord said unto her: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

It is very important for God's children of today to prevail in prayer. If we hold on to the arm of the Lord we shall receive the blessing. In this Week of Prayer we should press our petitions to the throne of God. Let us pray with intense earnestness, and the Lord will not only hear but also answer our prayers. Please note carefully the following testimony:

"I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said, 'Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.'"—*Early Writings*, p. 73.

Agreement In Prayer

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that

they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:19-20.

It is the desire of Jesus that His children shall be one as He is one with the Father. This complete unity must be manifested among us before we can expect to receive greater blessings from the Lord. We must be one in spirit, we must be one in the faith, we must be united in our prayers.

"Our Savior follows His lessons of instruction with a promise that if two or three should be united in asking anything of God it should be given them. Christ here shows that there must be union with others, even in our desires for a given object. Great importance is attached to the united prayer, the union of purpose. God hears the prayers of individuals; but on this occasion Jesus was giving especial and important lessons that were to have a special bearing upon His newly organized church on the earth. There must be agreement in the things which they desire, and for which they pray. It was not merely the thoughts and exercises of one mind, liable to deception; but the petition was to be the earnest desire of several minds centered on the same point."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 429.

May God grant that we may be united in prayer as never before. May the spirit of love and sweet fellowship be manifested among us in a special way in this Week of Prayer. Let us ask the Lord unitedly for rain, and the promise is that "the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain." Zech. 10:1. May God grant that His work on earth will soon be finished in righteousness. Amen.

(Reading for Sunday, December 12)

Our Great Need of the Latter Rain

By E. J. Stabel

"ASK YE OF the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zechariah 10:1.

"Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seed-time and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in

the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time, the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church. But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their

petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' — *Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

These and similar statements should prove dearer to our heart as the days pass, for do not signs clearly foretell that we are rapidly approaching that long-hoped for day? Yes, indeed to the Christians of this age these are precious gems of truth, food for the innermost thoughts and themes of meditation comparable to the glorious experiences of the disciples following the day of Pentecost. For centuries the fulness of the Holy Spirit had been restrained due to man's alienation from God, but now, that blessed nearness had again been reinstated as the result of our Saviour's labor. Therefore Peter, embued with the Spirit could, with gratitude and thanksgiving, arise to his feet and exclaim: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;" Surely, dear brethren and sisters, we should be longing, yet, anxiously waiting for a repetition and glorious re-enactment of such heavenly experiences.

Constant Connection Vitally Necessary

"To us to-day, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will to-day endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 20.

But why do we not see the manifestation of His power in such a marked manner? Has God changed, is God less omnipotent, or is He less concerned about His church? No, for though all men change God is unchangeable. We read:

"But unless the members of God's church to-day have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping." — *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

Herein lies the answer to that all-important question. Many, professing to be followers of the Divine teacher are merely professors and not possessors, thereby severing their connection with heaven. Oh! how important it is to have a constant communion with the Father. Not for one moment should we be separated from God, lest the enemy gain a foot-hold and lead us astray. Jesus, our great example, was repeatedly seen praying earnestly to the all-powerful and ever-present One, longing for more light and life and wisdom. Let us look to Jesus, dear brethren and sisters, the "Author and finisher of our faith," our great High Priest. Let us glance through the door of the Holy into the, "Most Holy," and behold Him pleading before the mercy seat in behalf of fallen mortals. There He is continuing His soul-saving

mission, ever watchful, ever waiting to receive our petitions offered up in earnest prayer.

Let us make this Week of Prayer a pattern for our lives throughout the coming year. Let the prayers be from the heart, not formal, not vain repetitions, but real and earnest as it were to a close personal friend. We sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus," let us believe it from the depth of our hearts, not only in word but in deed. In this Week of Prayer there should be such a re-consecration as is depicted in Joel 2:12-19; then we may well be able to exclaim as in verse 21: "be glad and rejoice for the Lord will do great things." We must have a living connection with the source of spiritual growth in order to become heirs to the promises.

A Daily Experience

We are not His people unless we are such wholly; unalloyed and that daily. As followers of Jesus, professing to believe present truth, we must have a daily experience. Unless this is apparent in our lives our religion will degenerate into a form, very displeasing to God. Standing before the world as reformers we must show that we are not depending on man, but God for our source of strength.

It takes the same Spirit to illuminate the scriptures that it took to pen them and unless we depend upon His Spirit to enlighten His word for us we will be deceived. Christians must eat of the, "bread of life" daily, or they will die out spiritually. Unless we have a personal experience with Him daily we lose our experience. And if we have lost that precious gem we are separated from heaven, and our light turns into darkness. Consider the example of the Apostolic church:

"And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:46, 47.

They realized the need of a constant connection and a daily experience, consequently the Lord added to the church "such as should be saved." We too must abide in the Spiritual temple constantly. The "Master Builder" accepts only such material as will prove to be an honor and glory to His name.

This work of reformation is to prepare us for the "latter rain." Each and every soul must now in this time, when cases are being decided in the Sanctuary above, live closer than before. We must lay off every weight or burden of sin that is besetting us, for it will take all to buy the field. Any individual who is affiliated with God's church and has as yet declined to fully surrender, is de-

laying the day of the Lord. The inspired messenger records that if the people had been ready, the Son of man would have appeared long ago.

The Need Of The Spirit

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:7.

Jesus left the promise that He would send the Comforter, or Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit would guide us into all truth. This promise was fulfilled forty days after His ascension. To the repentant sinner, the work of the Holy Spirit is equally as essential as the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, for it is the Spirit that convicts of sin. As the third power of the God-head, He represents Christ in His ministry to His children. It is the Holy Spirit that is to prepare the church for the coming of Jesus. The Spirit must work in us individually to prepare us for that collective work. Unless we have become partakers of the "former rain"—that is the precious gospel of His saving power,—we will not be baptised with the "latter rain." It is true that the Spirit is working with individuals to-day preparing them for a repetition of Pentecost, but is it not true that the "latter rain," has, or is falling. It is not conclusive evidence that a man is filled with the Spirit because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Mere emotional fanaticism is often confused with the working of the Spirit but does not bear the divine attributes that follow the out-pouring of the Spirit. God's people must not become confused nor misled. The church is sorely in need of the "latter rain," but the conditions must be met before heaven will release those bountiful blessings. The Spirit of prophecy states:

"Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children." — *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

The Lord is willing indeed, the promises are sure, but why the delay? We must reform our lives, we must unify, being bound together with the band of love, then we will be partakers of those divine blessings.

It is further stated by this same inspired writer:

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will

fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 214.

A solemn thought indeed, a thought worthy of contemplation and deepest concern, that not one of us will receive the seal of God while we are imperfect, and all who will receive the latter rain are sealed. Dear reader ask yourself the question, have I met the qualifications, have I formed such a character upon which God can stamp His mark of approval? If not, now is the time to begin. If we are not in that company who will receive the, "latter rain," we will be doomed, for at that time probation closes for those who know the truth but have not been sanctified by it. God's destructive judgments will fall upon them.

"The time of God's destructive judgments, is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 97.

It is during this period of time that the call will be extended to those who are still lingering within the borders of the fallen churches. The thought of the "latter rain," should inspire us with more zeal to labor for precious souls who are still within the borders of Laodicea, that they may respond to the call and come into line while the door of mercy is open. We should do all in our power to hasten the coming of the day of the Lord.

The Finishing Of The Work

If it was necessary for the power of the Spirit to accompany the work in the days of the apostles, surely, dear reader, you will realize that it is ultimately necessary and important for that power to accompany the work in our day. The work in earth will be finished rapidly, yet under forbidding circumstances, in trying times of persecution; therefore we can only conclude that the outpouring of the "latter rain" will be more glorious than the former. In a few short years the apostles carried the gospel to the then inhabited world. Heaven beheld the scene in awe, and rejoiced to witness such unity and love. The apostles raised their voices in amazement, exclaiming: "Herein is love." The sword of the spirit, newly sharpened with power, and whetted in the realms of heaven cut its way through doubt and unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day, miracles were performed, and the sick were healed; truly, it was an occasion for rejoicing. These scenes are to be repeated. "The Spirit of prophecy states:

"The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the, 'former rain,' and glorious

was the result. But the latter will be more abundant." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 21.

As Christians we should be hungering and thirsting, yes, watching and praying for the manifestation of the Spirit. No human instrumentality could ever accomplish such an enormous task as finishing the work without the power of the Spirit. There are localities where the gospel has been preached and in the meantime children have reached the age of accountability, not having heard of Jesus, subsequently the work must needs be repeated. The Lord therefore declares: "For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Rom. 9.28. The Holy Writ further declares: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6. During that period of time God will take the reins into His own hands, and through His Spirit triumphantly finish the work and that shortly.

No one should desire to be partakers of such divine glory for the purpose of self-glorification or gain. The sorcerer, Simon, desired the gift that he might convert it into a profitable channel by exacting pay for miracles performed. A dreadful condemnation fell upon him. This gift can not be purchased with silver or gold which perish, but was transmitted through the precious blood of Jesus to be imparted to those who will not employ it to glorify self, but to the honor and glory of God. In order to receive it we must do as Jesus, hate sin and love righteousness. Our greatest need of the "latter rain," is to finish the work.

The Time Of Trouble And Translation

I am positive that we all wish to experience that rapture, we all wish to meet Jesus in the air.

but dear friends if we neglect that vital preparation for the "latter rain," heavens blessing will pass us by. We must go into the mountain with Jesus for a higher experience, we must be willing to give up all that separates us from Him. We make great sacrifices for temporal enjoyments why should we not be willing to make great sacrifices for the eternal. Every soul to be translated must pass through the "time of trouble," which is to precede the coming of Jesus. The "latter rain," is our covering and shield in this time and will carry us through. Let us read concerning this in the Spirit of prophecy:

"At that time the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven plagues shall be poured out." — *Early Writings*, p. 86.

In order to stand in that period of devastation we must drink deep from the heavenly supply just now, the golden pipes must be flowing to capacity replenishing the dwindling supply and preparing for the emergency. Only those who have received the fulness of the Spirit will realize its great value in this time. Let us not delay but let us lay off the garments of darkness and filthiness and put on the pure garment, the righteousness of Jesus. Let us all in this Week of Prayer earnestly petition God to prepare us for the "latter rain," so that soon we may all united be privileged to accompany Him to our new and eternal home is my prayer. Amen.

"When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost will fall on us." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 246.

(Reading for Wednesday, December 15)

Home Training—Its Importance and Results

By Mrs. E. G. White

IT SHOULD be the object of every parent to secure to his children a well-balanced, symmetrical character. This is a work of no small magnitude and importance. It will require earnest thought and prayer, no less than patient, persevering effort. A right foundation must be laid, a framework, strong and firm, erected, and then day by day the work of building, polishing, perfecting, must go forward.

Upon the mother rests, to a great degree the responsibility of the early training of her children. Did mothers but realize the importance of their mission, they would be much in secret prayer, presenting their children to Jesus, imploring His blessing upon them, and pleading for wisdom to discharge aright their sacred duties. Let the mother improve every opportunity to mold and fashion the disposition and habits of her children. Let her watch carefully the development of charac-

ter, repressing traits that are too prominent, encouraging those that are deficient. Let her make her own life a pure and noble example to her precious charge.

The mother should enter her work with courage and energy, relying constantly upon divine aid in all her efforts. She should never rest satisfied until she sees in her children a gradual elevation of character, until they have a higher object in life than merely to seek their own pleasure. Children should be taught at home to exert every faculty of mind or body. Thus they gain an understanding of their own capabilities, and at the same time strengthen and develop every power by calling it into action.

Parents, your own home is the first field in which you are called to labor. The precious plants in the home garden demand your first care. To you it is appointed to watch for souls as they that must give account. Carefully consider your work, its nature, its bearing, and its results. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, you must instruct, warn, and counsel, ever remembering that your looks, words, and actions, have a direct bearing upon the future course of your dear ones. Your work is not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas, or to chisel it from marble; but to impress upon a human soul the image of the Divine.

Mothers, will you not dispense with useless, unimportant labor for that which must perish with the using? Will you not seek to draw near to God, that His wisdom may guide and His grace assist you, in a work which will be as enduring as eternity? Aim to make your children perfect in character. Remember that such only can see God.

I speak the more freely and earnestly, because I know that many parents are neglecting their God-given work. They are themselves far from purity and holiness. They do not see the defects of their children as they would if their own eyes were beholding and admiring the perfection of Christ's character.

For Christ's sake, for the sake of your children, seek to conform your life to the divine standard. Let nothing come in between you and your God. Be earnest, be patient and persevering, instant in season, out of season. Give your children intellectual culture, and moral training. Let their young hearts be fortified with firm, pure principles. While you have the opportunity, lay the foundation for a noble manhood and womanhood. Your labor will be rewarded a thousand fold.

You must make the Bible your guide, if you would bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let the life and character of Christ be presented as the pattern for them to copy. If they err, read to them

what the Lord has said concerning similar sins. There is need of constant care and diligence in this work. One wrong trait tolerated by parents, uncorrected by teachers, may cause the whole character to become deformed and unbalanced. Teach the children that they must have a new heart; that new taste must be created, new motives. They must have help from Christ; they must become acquainted with the character of God as revealed in His word.

Family prayer receives too little interest and attention. In many cases, the morning and evening worship is little more than a mere form, a dull, monotonous repetition of set phrases in which the spirit of gratitude or the sense of need finds no expression. The Lord accepts not such service. But the petitions of a humble heart and contrite spirit He will not despise. The opening of our hearts to our Heavenly Father, the acknowledgement of our entire dependence, the expression of our wants, the homage of grateful love,—this is true prayer. When we come pleading the merits of Christ's blood, and trusting with implicit faith His promises, we shall secure the blessing of the Lord.

Redeem the precious hours worse than wasted in talking of your troubles, or gossiping over the faults of others. Seek earnestly to God for help, and you will become strong in His strength. You may have Christ as a guest in your home. Be not satisfied merely to bear the name of Christians. Be in truth followers of Jesus. Let your hearts be warmed with His love. Make Him your friend, your helper, your counselor.

The most valuable rules for social and family intercourse, are to be found in the Bible. There is not only the best and purest standard of morality, but the most valuable code of politeness. Our Saviour's sermon on the mount contains instruction of priceless worth to old and young. It should be often read in the family circle, and its precious teachings exemplified in the daily life. The golden rule. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," as well as the apostolic injunction, "In honor preferring one another," should be made the law of the family. Those who cherish the spirit of Christ, will manifest politeness at home, a spirit of benevolence, even in little things. They will be constantly seeking to make all around them happy, forgetting self in their kind attentions to others. This is the fruit which grows upon the Christian tree.

Few realize the influence of the little things of life, upon the development of character. Mothers, cease to spend your time and strength for that which is merely attractive to the eye, but which does not minister to comfort or real happiness, and you will cut off a large share of the cares and worries that make you nervous and irritable, impolite and unchristian. The precious

moments heretofore given to needless labor should be devoted to beautifying the souls of your children, teaching them how they may obtain the inward adorning, the meek and quiet spirit which God accounts of great price.

If real politeness were practiced by all the followers of Christ, if obedience to the golden rule were made one of the corner-stones of Christian character, we would see fewer church-trials, less hardness and animosity between brethren. There would be no harsh, thoughtless words, no strife for the highest place. God's people will be tested. Every one will be exposed to the fierce fire of trial and temptation. If we would not be consumed as dross, we must have the love of God—the gold that has been tried—abiding in us. Now is the time to soften and subdue our rough, harsh traits of character. We must cherish kindness, forbearance, Christian integrity. Ungenerous criticism, hard speeches, questioning the motives of another, or magnifying his faults, open the door to Satan's temptations, and lead many away from God. The Holy Scriptures give us a safe and profitable rule for thought and conversation. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." If we would have our children practice kindness, courtesy, and love, we ourselves must set them the example.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind." It "thinketh no evil,"—another fruit borne on the tree of love. Our souls must be stayed upon God, imbued with His Spirit, if we learn these sacred lessons. Said the apostle, "Gird up the loins of your mind." If the thoughts are rightly disciplined, it will be a far less difficult task to control the feeling. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, will give us courage, hope, and constancy. Shall we not obey the teachings of God's word? Shall we not make it our guide and counselor? Shall we not devote time and thought to its perusal? How can Christians neglect the book in which God has revealed His will to men? Our children need help to understand the Scriptures. They should become acquainted with the life and character of Jesus, that they may love Him, and choose to obey Him.

Parents and guardians must themselves maintain purity of heart and life, if they would have their children pure. They must give the needed instruction, and in addition to this, they must exercise unceasing watchfulness. Every day new thoughts are awakened in the minds of the young, new impressions made upon their hearts. The associations they form, the books they read, the habits they cherish—all must be guarded. The

interests of your children, for this life and the next, are at stake.

*"What now you do, you know not,
But shall hereafter know,
When the seeds your hands are sowing,
To a ripened harvest grow."*

When you stand before the great white throne, then your work will appear as it is. The books are opened, the record of every life made known. Many in that vast company are unprepared for the revelations made. Upon the ears of some, the words will fall with startling distinctness, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting." To many parents the Judge will say in that day. "You had my word, plainly setting forth your duty. Why have you not obeyed its teachings? Knew ye not that it was the voice of God? Did I not bid you search the Scriptures, that you might not go astray. You have not only ruined your own souls, but by your pretensions to godliness you have misled many others. You have no part with me. Depart, depart!"

Another class stand pale and trembling, trusting in Christ, and yet oppressed with a sense of their own unworthiness. They hear with tears of joy and gratitude the Master's commendation. The days of incessant toil, of burden-bearing, and of fear and anguish, are forgotten, as that voice, sweeter than the music of angel harps pronounces the words, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." There stand the host of the redeemed, the palm branch of victory in their hand, the crown upon their head. These are the ones who by faithful, earnest labor, have obtained a fitness for Heaven. The lifework performed on earth is acknowledged in the heavenly courts as a work well done.

With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children. The days of hope and fear are ended. The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their heart harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed.

Fathers, mothers, shall the voices of your children swell the song of gladness in that day? *Signs of the Times*, May 25, 1882.

"Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend, our prayers should ascend that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised." Mrs. E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 2, 1887.

(Reading for Friday, December 17)

Our Personal Preparation and the Finishing Work

By Otto Welp

"BE YE ALWAYS ready, in the evening, in the morning, and at noon, that when the cry is heard, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh! go ye forth to meet Him, you may, even though awakened out of sleep, go forth to meet Him with your lamps trimmed and burning." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 9 p. 48.

In the contemplation of this subject our attention is at once called to the wonderful experiences of God's children on the day of Pentecost. The opening of the gospel was attended by powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and a mighty work was accomplished in the work of saving souls. As the work of the everlasting gospel begun with the fulness of the Holy Spirit, so the work will likewise be finished with the same power. Concerning the finishing work we should all remember the well known text: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," Zech. 4:6. Here the power is revealed by which the work of God will be finished on earth. Not in the power of human strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit will the work be finished. This mighty power will be manifested in the lives of those who are willing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We are told by the servant of the Lord: "We cannot use the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is to use us." (*Gospel Workers*, p. 285.) Through this power all things will be brought to a final decision. God's Holy Spirit—the Finisher of the Work—will separate the good from the evil, the righteous from the unrighteous; the just from the unjust, and He shall fully reveal the mystery of all iniquity before a fallen world. It is almost impossible to fully comprehend all the different ways and means of the Holy Spirit in the finishing work. We can only look back to the wonderful manifestations of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to get a glimpse of the work which is to be accomplished in our day. It was then that some spoke in different tongues; others were caught up by the Holy Spirit and brought to those who were hungering for the message of truth; and still

others were impressed by the same Spirit to repentance without any human aid. "The same work," so writes the inspired servant of the Lord in *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507, "only in a greater degree, must be done now." The earth shall be lightened with the glory of God.

Preparation Of Our Personal Life

To the finishing of the work of God on earth belongs the important work of our personal preparation. The standard of a true Christian is to reach perfection in Christ. This is the condition which must be fully met before we can expect to receive the fulness of the Spirit, and thereby be enabled to have a part in the finishing work. Even though it is a wonderful privilege to have a part in this reform movement—to be united with those who keep the commandments of God and are willing to walk in the light which the Lord has so graciously given—yet, it will be a still far greater privilege if we prove faithful in the work of our personal preparation, and shall then be permitted to have a part in the finishing work. How poor and imperfect would be our own power, how dark the outlook of our personal efforts, if not the all important power of the Highest—the Holy Spirit—were promised for this work. Praise be to God for this wonderful gift!

The promises of God await our demand and reception, yet some are indifferent to the wonderful gifts of grace that are promised unto us. The eternal inheritance before us; the love of Christ, the judgment of the righteous and the wicked, all these things should inspire us to greater zeal and earnestness in the work of our personal preparation. We must reach God's standard if we expect to receive an entrance into His kingdom. We must love Jesus if we expect to be with Him throughout eternity. We must live a life that is pleasing in His sight if we do not want to come under condemnation in the day of judgment. The fast fulfilling signs of the times tell us in unmistakable language that only a short time remains in which we can prepare ourselves to

meet God. In these signs a reproof is likewise found for those who are not in earnest in the work of preparation, those who do not appreciate the time of grace that has been allotted unto us. May the Lord help us to be more in earnest than ever before, that when He comes we may be found ready to meet Him.

We are now one year nearer the end since our last Week of Prayer, and we should individually ask ourselves the question: Have I during the past year made continual progress in the divine life? Is the work of Jesus—to reflect His image fully—daily being accomplished in my life? We should consider these solemn thoughts, and examine ourselves. May the following words of admonition be fully accepted by one and all.

“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. . . . Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breast: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O’Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” Joel 2:12, 13, 15-17.

The spirit of a true and genuine reformation is here vividly placed before us. If we heed these admonitions we are well on our way to holiness. We should therefore lay aside all indifference in regard to the work of our personal preparation. With “fear and trembling” we should work out our salvation. Each day we should petition the Lord earnestly for divine help to reach this high standard. He is a holy God, and only those who attain unto holiness will ever dwell in His presence. The call of the Lord is: “Arise, arise.” Arise to earnest and persevering prayer. Arise, and lay aside all those things which are displeasing to God. Be faithful in all things. Weigh your words before you open your mouth to speak. Examine yourselves carefully, and see whether your daily actions are interwoven with the love to serve your blessed Lord and Master.

The great manifestations of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost will be repeated in our day, but before these wonderful manifestations will be seen in God’s true church the thorough preparation which preceded this wonderful work will likewise be repeated.

Before the Lord can bless us with the fulness of the Holy Spirit a thorough preparation must

take place in our life. We must gain the victory over every besetment, and over every wrong word and action. This is a personal work, that can only be accomplished through the power of Jesus Christ, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The following testimony reveals the sad condition of many professed Christians:

“I saw that it is the privilege of every Christian to enjoy the deep movings of the Spirit of God. A sweet, heavenly peace will pervade the mind, and you will love to meditate upon God and Heaven. You will feast upon the glorious promises of His word. But know first that you have begun the Christian course. Know that the first steps are taken in the road to everlasting life. Be not deceived. I fear, yea, I know that many of you know not what religion is. You have felt some excitement, some emotion, but you have never seen in sin in its enormity.” — *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 159.

The last part of this testimony is of utmost importance. Many, the Spirit of prophecy declares, “have never seen sin in its enormity.” We can not trifle with sin and expect to escape its punishment. Sin is enormous and must be put aside. We should often be found at the foot of the cross, and consider the great sacrifice which has been brought in our behalf in order to be better able to understand how heaven looks upon sin. To become perfect in Christ Jesus is our high and holy calling. This means that your will must be entirely surrendered to the will of God. It requires a knowledge of our weaknesses, so that in the power of Christ we can overcome them. Let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not consider ourselves better than what we really are. Our only safety is to recognize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to abhor it.

The transformation that must take place in our life is accomplished through the new birth. Some have accepted the theory of the truth, but have never felt its saving power. If one is born again, he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. He is gentle, loving, patient, longsuffering; in brief, all the fruits of the Spirit are manifested in his life. He will love his neighbor and God above all. The word of God gives us clear instructions in regard to what the Lord expects of those who are truly born again. Our downfall begins “with the neglect of secret prayer.” Therefore, prayer in the closet, is of the utmost importance in the work of our personal preparation.

If one is not converted, his heart is like a stone, and that is the reason why so much hardness of the heart is seen everywhere today. The poor are neglected; old age is not respected, and the spirit of brutality is prevalent in all the lands. These signs show unmistakably that the Spirit of the Lord is being withdrawn from the earth. Having the world under his control, it is now Satan’s special aim to destroy the love and the unity of

God's true church. We should always be on the alert against the fiery darts of the wicked, and pray the Lord earnestly that He may especially protect our youth from the snares of the enemy. We should all be wide awake, that the devil may not succeed to come in among us. The enticing methods to follow evil; the call to court the world an enjoy its pleasures; must all be firmly resisted. All the promises which the world gives are only deceptions. If someone is praising or flattering you, tell him that all glory belongs to God. If someone is taking it upon himself to condemn and to judge others, let him remember that "him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12.

Burden For Souls

Not one shall have a part in the final redemption of God's people who has not been active in the work of saving souls. We do not need to be ministers in order to engage in this blessed work, for to every true follower of Christ has been given a place in which he must labor for His Master. If we engage in earnest work for the salvation of souls, we shall be better able to overcome all selfishness. In faithfully working for others we shall begin to understand the true value of a soul. If through much effort and untiring labor a soul has been won to Christ, we shall have cause for rejoicing. But those who have no burden for souls, are usually the ones who in one way or another become instruments to drive precious souls from the fold. Such have not a clear knowledge of the great sacrifice of Christ. If because of our unchristian behavior souls are being led astray, the blood will be required from our hands. Unless such experience a real conversion, there will be no place for them in the kingdom of God.

But a true burden of souls will be manifested in our walk of life. We must be a living testimony for Christ. How is it with your testimony, dear brother, dear sister? How is your burden of souls manifested among your neighbors, your children, your relatives and friends? Do you make earnest efforts in working for their salvation? If so, the blessing of the Lord will rest upon you. If all the members of the church faithfully perform their duty in this respect, the work will soon be finished on earth in righteousness. The power of the Holy Spirit will then be manifested among us, and the earth will be lightened with the glory of God. The sick will be healed, and signs and wonders shall follow the believers. The last message of mercy will then be accepted by those who are honest in heart, and they will gladly take their stand with God's remnant people.

Let us follow the example of the disciples before the day of Pentecost. Let us put away all

differences and draw closer and still closer together in Christian fellowship. Let us be filled with the spirit of prayer, and God shall send us showers of blessing.

Ministers and People

Every soul that has been added to the ranks of the believers becomes a co-worker with Christ. A working church is a living church. Dead, heartless professors, should have no place in the church of God. If we are alive unto God the Holy Spirit will pervade all our churches. Lights will be burning everywhere for Christ, and coldness and formality will disappear. All will be one heart and one soul. God's faithful servants will work earnestly for those who are still in darkness. Their example will inspire the believers to rally to the work. This is the only way in which the work shall come to a glorious finish. Please notice the following testimony:

"Every one on whom is shinning the light of present truth is to be stirred with compassion for those who are in darkness. From all believers light is to be reflected in clear, distinct rays. A work similar to that which the Lord did through His delegated messengers after the day of Pentecost He is waiting to do to-day. At this time, when the end of all things is at hand should not the zeal of the church exceed even that of the early church? Zeal for the glory of God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a longing to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified? Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed to-day than in the time of the apostles?" — *Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 33.

Yes, we should earnestly pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this power the work shall be finished, and it will enable us to stand through the last great conflict. When this power takes a hold of our life, we shall not cling to our own opinions, but will be firmly united upon the eternal platform of truth. The battle to be fought will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. God's children will fight under the banner bearing the inscription: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. Under this banner all the faithful will rally to meet the foe, and with Christ they will be gloriously victorious.

In closing, I like to pray you dear brethren and sisters, "be ye ready." Do not neglect one precious moment of this time of grace. It is my earnest desire that the Holy Spirit may take full charge of all our churches. May He cause the admonitions which have been given to be heeded, that our life may be a living testimony for the

truth. May God grant that when the work is finished we may be found among those who shall be able to say: "Lo, this is our God; we have

waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9

(Reading for Sabbath, December 18)

The Coming of the King

By A. W. Doerschler

"**O**UR GOD shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather my saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is judge Himself." Ps. 50:3-6.

We stand on the eve of one of the greatest events the world has ever witnessed. Signs are multiplying on every side of us, compared with which there has been no parallel either in the history of the Church, or the world. All these signs point unmistakably to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the second time in power and glory, to bring all things in subjection to Himself, and to be "King of kings and Lord of Lords."

*Hail to the Coming King, the Lord's Anointed,
Who truth and righteousness maintains!
Hail to the happy time, the time appointed,
When He will take the mighty power and reign!
O watch and pray, ye saints, and nothing fearing,
Look for His bright and glorious appearing.*

Nothing is so important for you and for me as the fact that the Lord is soon to come again. Let us see what the Psalmist says of this event in the passage under consideration.

"Our God"

The first word is a striking one—"Our God." It is the family word. None but the child can use it. That child is one of the family. He is related to His heavenly Father. He has been redeemed and brought by the blood of Christ. He is in the bonds of the everlasting covenant. He is a joint-heir with Christ. He can look up and say, "My beloved is mine, and I am His." He will be able to say with joy when the Lord shall descend from heaven in flaming fire, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for

Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9. Yes it is the family word. He who now puts into our lips the sweet words, "Our Father," enables us to look forward to that solemn hour and say, "our God."

We are about to meditate on a solemn scene—God coming down to this earth in human form as a devouring fire, with storms and tempests raging around Him. Oh! how necessary to be able to say before we gaze upon it, "our God!" What will it be if we cannot say "our God?" With what feelings of terror and alarm must it be viewed unless we can say in prospect "our God?" Let us make sure of this before we go one step further. The servant of the Lord declared:

"The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. O, how glorious it will be to see Him, and be welcomed as His redeemed ones? Long have we waited; but our hope is not to grow dim. If we can but see the King in His beauty, we shall be forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud, 'Homeward bound!' We are nearing the time when Christ will come in power and great glory to take His ransomed ones to their eternal home." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 253.

"Shall Not Keep Silence"

"Our God shall come and not keep silence." In order clearly to understand what is meant here by God "not keeping silence," we must refer to the closing part of the chapter, from the sixteenth verse to the twenty-second.

"But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth, seeing

thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I keep silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

Here God reviews the character of the wicked in this dispensation. It is exactly what has been going on in our world for the last six thousand years. Men have been taking God's covenant "in their mouth," in other words, making a profession of religion, while all the time, the power of religion has been absent. Underneath this profession, sin and iniquity of the worst form has been carried on. The Spirit of prophecy in revealing the present condition of the professed people of God says:

"One who sees beneath the surface, who reads the hearts of all men, says of those who have had great light: 'They are not afflicted and astonished because of their moral and spiritual condition.' 'Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighted in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them, because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.'" — *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 249.

"Our God shall come and shall not keep silence." He shall come and reprove men, and set each act and deed in order. We are all judgment bound. To those who are willing to walk in the way of the Lord it is a thrilling truth to know that the day of the Lord is nigh at hand. The command "be ye ready" must be the keynote of the message in our day. God will have a holy people, who will show forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

"A Fire Shall Devour Before Him"

And what are to be the heralds of the coming? "A fire shall devour before Him; and it shall be very tempestuous around about Him." Here the Holy Spirit confirms the testimony of the apostle Paul:—

"And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

Yes, from one end of professed Christendom to the other, one piercing cry shall rend the heavens, "Ye rocks and hills fall upon us and hide us from the presence of the Lamb." The entreaty, earnest and loud, will then be heard from many a lip "Lord, open to us." But "too late." It shall be "very tempestuous." The nations shall then come to their end. The ties of nature and of society shall be set at naught. Men's hearts on all sides will be "failing them for fear, looking after those things that are coming on the earth." But thanks be to God that a few will lift up their heads in that universal wreck, who joyfully know that their redemption is nigh, and that their hour of triumph is at hand. O, to stand among that little band — "the faithful few"—in that awful hour and be able to say, "Our God."

"Judge His People"

But what will the Lord do then? "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people." The earnestness of this solemn scene is the fact that God Himself will preside in the judgment. All flesh must appear before Him, and the Lord will give to every man according as his work shall be. Dear brethren and sisters! let us earnestly search our hearts especially in this Week of Prayer and ask God to reveal to us anything that might separate us from Him. It is our duty to live up to the precious rays of light which God has so mercifully revealed to us in this wonderful message of reform. Only a short time remains in which we can have the opportunity to prepare ourselves for the coming of the King.

"Gather My Saints Together Unto Me"

Who are they that are called? "Gather My saints together unto Me." What an expressive word—"My saints!" How the Lord appropriates them as His own! "They shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels." What precious words—"My saints," "My jewels!" "He shall gather the lambs in His arms." We shall not rise to meet the Lord individually—in isolations. We shall be gathered together. So the apostle Paul speaks of "our gathering together unto Him." And again, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them." No more separation. All together! "And so shall we be ever with the Lord." O, the joy of those words! Here thought fails. The lips falter. Eternity alone can tell their depth.

But mark yet one word more, the sweetest of all, "unto Me." Ah, what would all the others be without this? Nothing, nothing! What would that meeting be without Jesus? What is any meeting without Him? Jesus through eternity. For this the Lord Jesus Himself prays:—

"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." John 17:24.

"The Covenant"

The Saviour longs for us. He has prepared a place for all those that love Him and keep His Commandments. Again, who are these that He will gather unto Himself? "Those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." They are those who have made a covenant with God through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the blood-bought ones. They are those who have presented their bodies as a living sacrifice to the service of their beloved Master. They are those who cry from the depths of their hearts:

*"Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul to thee."*

Dear brother, dear sister, note carefully the following testimony:

"God will not break His covenant, nor alter the thing that has gone out of His lips. His word will stand fast forever, as unalterable as His throne. At the judgment this covenant will be brought forth, plainly written with the fingers of God; and the world will be arraigned before the bar of Infinite Justice to receive sentence."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 187.

The law of God is the standard of righteousness. The last great struggle will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. This test will come to every soul. Only those who meet the requirements of God's holy law—who have kept His covenant—will be delivered.

"The conditions of eternal life, under grace are just what they were in Eden,—perfect righteous-

ness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His Law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. The standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives, there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will, and thus frustrate His grace."—*Mount of Blessing*, p. 116.

John, the Revelator, speaking about those who shall be delivered, said. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14.

Dear brethren and sisters, let us strive earnestly to be among that company of the redeemed who shall hear the covenant of peace that God has made with those that have kept His law. Let us aim to glorify Jesus. Let His praise fill our hearts. Let His image be clearly written on every act of our life. Be whole-hearted for Christ. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." Luke 12:37.

*He will come and will not tarry;
He will fold them to His breast;
He will make His watchers happy
In a calm and holy rest;
He will give them satisfaction
For their days of waiting here;
May we be among the watchers
When the Master shall appear.*

(Reading for Sunday, December 19)

"The Lord Loveth A Cheerful Giver"

By O. Kramer

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he hath, and bought it" Matt. 13:44-46.

WE ARE witnessing the last scenes of earth's history. The last life and death struggle of nations lies right ahead of us. With it falls the curtain of six-thousand years of the tyrannical rule of Satan. Soon—much sooner than we think—it will be too late to work for the salvation of others. Today the doors are still open to warn a dying world and point them to their only hope in Christ.

In view of these established facts, what is our attitude? Do we sit unconcerned as if these things were not quite so serious? Where is our faith? I speak of the faith which worketh by love; which makes you a doer of the word; which shows in daily actions; which rouses to activity; which is on fire with a burning zeal for the cause of God on earth. Where are men and women who show by their conversation and actual life that they are "living stones" in the heavenly building and not mere mouth-professors? I believe that foremost above all other things a consecration to the service for Christ is the most vital issue among us. And had we no facilities at our command to speed on the cause of truth, there would be an excuse. But look upon our lives and behold the abundant blessings which the Heavenly Father has showered upon us. Are not many of us actually living in such luxury which once belonged to kings? Most of us have more than is really needed to sustain life. The Scriptures admonish us:

"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." 1 Tim. 6:8.

Savior, More Than Life To Me

Have you found the heavenly treasure? Is the Savior in reality "more than life" to you? Is His suffering cause on your mind all day long and is it a subject of your daily prayer? It takes ALL to buy the field. Only recently, some among God's people have made the supreme sacrifice for Him as faithful martyrs. Throughout the ages God's people, "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." "And others had trial of cruel mocking and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Heb. 11:33-37.

"The heirs of God have come from garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains, from deserts, from the caves of the earth, from the caverns of the sea. On earth they were 'destitute, afflicted, tormented.' Millions went down to the grave loaded with infamy, because they steadfastly refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals they were adjudged the vilest of criminals."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 650.

What a stark contrast to most of our lives! Indeed, there is no greater danger to a Christian than prosperity. The tree which has withstood the howling storms of the tornado, is felled by the worm which eats quietly away on the root. Prosperity successfully undermines the greatest spirituality and, if left unchecked, will finally destroy it completely. Therefore, instead of seeking for

greater creature comfort in life, let us rather cut off the non-essentials and live a simpler and more natural life which is more subservient to spirituality. The great example of Jesus teaches us a lesson. Cut off from all comforts and ease, He steadfastly refused the invitations of the tempter in the wilderness and came forth as victor. At this time and age God's people is found transgressing the tenth commandment, more than at any time in history. Let us turn completely around. Instead of nourishing the tendency to keep up with the ever-upward trend of a Satan-inspired society, let us rather sharply curtail these evil desires. For, most assuredly, they will jeopardize our eternal salvation. We read the following inspired words:

"The selfishness which exists among God's people is very offensive to Him. The Scriptures denounce covetousness as idolatry. 'No covetous man,' says Paul, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.' The trouble with many is, they have too little faith. Like the rich man in the parable, they want to see their supplies piled up in their granaries. The world is to be warned, and God wants us wholly engaged in His work; but men have so much to do to forward their money-making projects that they have no time to push the triumphs of the cross of Christ. They have neither time nor disposition to put their intellect, tact, and energy into the cause of God.

Brethren and sisters, I wish to exhort in your minds disgust for your present limited ideas of God's cause and work. I want you to comprehend the great sacrifice that Christ made for you when He became poor, that through His poverty you might come into possession of eternal riches. Oh! do not by your indifference to the eternal weight of glory which is within your reach, cause angels to weep and hide their faces in shame and disgust. Arouse from your lethargy; arouse every God-given faculty, and work for precious souls for whom Christ died."

"All that you have and are belongs to God. Then will you not say from the heart, 'All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee?' Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.' Paul thus exhorts his Corinthian brethren to Christian beneficence: 'As ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.' In his epistle to Timothy he says, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against

the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

Liberality is not so natural to us that we gain this virtue by accident. It must be cultivated. We must deliberately resolve that we will honor God with our substance; and then we must let nothing tempt us to rob Him of the tithes and offerings that are His due. We must be intelligent, systematic, and continuous in our acts of charity to men and our expressions of gratitude to God for His bounties to us. 'This is too sacred a duty to be left to chance, or to be controlled by impulse or feeling. We should regularly reserve something for God's cause, that he may not be robbed of the portion which he claims. When we rob God we rob ourselves also. We give up the heavenly treasure for the sake of having more of this earth. This is a loss that we cannot afford to sustain. If we live so that we can have the blessing of God, we shall have His prospering hand with us in our temporal affairs; but if this hand is against us, He can defeat all our plans, and scatter faster than we can gather.'—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 270-272.

'I saw that there are many who have wrapped their talent in a napkin and hid it in the earth. They seem to think that every penny which is invested in the cause of God is lost to them beyond redemption. To those who feel thus, it is even so. They will receive no reward. They give grudgingly, only because they feel obliged to do something. God loveth the cheerful giver. Those who flatter themselves that they can shift their responsibility upon wife or children, are deceived by the enemy. A transfer of property will not lessen their responsibility. They are accountable for the means which Heaven has entrusted to their care, and in no way can they excuse themselves from this responsibility, until they are released by rendering back to God that which He has committed to them.'—*Id.* Vol. 1, p. 530.

'The contributions of the Hebrews for religious and charitable purposes amounted to fully one-fourth of their income. So heavy a tax upon the resources of the people might be expected to reduce them to poverty; but, on the contrary, the faithful observance of these regulations was one of the conditions of their prosperity. On condition of their obedience, God made them this promise: 'I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field. . . . And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.'

A striking illustration of the results of selfishly withholding free-will offerings from the cause of God, was given in the days of the prophet Haggai. After their return from the captivity in Babylon, the Jews undertook to rebuild the temple of the Lord; but meeting determined opposition from their enemies, they discontinued

the work; and a severe drought, by which they were reduced to actual want, convinced them that it was impossible to complete the building of the temple. 'The time is not come,' they said, 'the time that the Lord's house should be build.' But a message was sent them by the Lord's prophet: 'Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.' And then the reason is given: 'Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.' When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the press-fat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting, and with mildew, and with hail in all the labors of your hands.'

Roused by these warnings, the people set themselves to building the house of God. Then the word of the Lord came to them: 'Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, . . . from this day will I bless you.'

Says the wise man, 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.' And the same lesson is taught in the New Testament by the apostle Paul: 'He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.' 'God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.'

God intended that his people Israel should be lightbearers to all the inhabitants of the earth. In maintaining his public worship they were bearing a testimony to the existence and sovereignty of the living God. And this worship it was their privilege to sustain, as an expression of their loyalty and their love to him. The Lord has ordained that the diffusion of light and truth in the earth shall be dependent upon the efforts and offerings of those who are partakers of the heavenly gift. He might have made angels the ambassadors of his truth; he might have made known his will, as he proclaimed the law from Sinai, with his own voice; but in his infinite love and wisdom

he called men to become co-laborers with himself, by choosing them to do this work.

In the days of Israel the tithe and free-will offerings were needed to maintain the ordinances of divine service. Should the people of God give less in this age? The principle laid down by Christ is that our offerings to God should be in proportion to the light and privileges enjoyed. 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.' Said the Savior to his disciples, as he sent them forth, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' As our blessings and privileges are increased,—above all, as we have before us the unparalleled sacrifice of the glorious Son of God,—should not our gratitude find expression in more abundant gifts to extend to others the message of Salvation? The work of the gospel, as it widens, requires greater provision to sustain it than was called for anciently; and this makes the law of tithes and offerings of even more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy. If his people were liberally to sustain his cause by their voluntary gifts, instead of resorting to unchristian and unhallowed methods to fill the treasury, God would be honored, and many more souls would be won to Christ.

The plan of Moses to raise means for the building of the tabernacle was highly successful. No urging was necessary. Nor did he employ any of the devices to which churches in our day so often resort. He made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gayety, dancing, and general amusement; neither did he institute lotteries, nor anything of this profane order, to obtain means to erect the tabernacle for God. The Lord directed Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring their offerings. He was to accept gifts from every one that gave willingly, from his heart. And the offerings came in so great abundance that Moses bade the people cease bringing, for they had supplied more than could be used.

God has made men his stewards. The property which he has placed in their hands is the means that he has provided for the spread of the gospel. To those who prove themselves faithful stewards he will commit greater trusts. Saith the Lord, 'Them that honor me, I will honor.' 'God loveth a cheerful giver,' and when his people, with grateful hearts, bring their gifts and offerings to Him, not grudgingly, or of necessity, his blessings will attend them, as he has promised. 'Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 527-529.

And now, with all this heavenly counsel before us, how will we treat this important part of the message? Will we, with all means at our disposal, extend the triumphs of the cross? Or will we in sinful selfishness hold on to them?

Remember! Our ability to earn a living wage depends altogether on the divine blessing of abundant health. What if God would take off His hand to be laid on a bed of sickness? Then we will seek to find restoration by paying a high price to physicians. Fire might reduce our proud dwelling to ashes overnight to bring us to realize our utter dependence on God. Thus the Lord did to Israel of old! Thus He might do to us, unless we acquire the heart to sacrifice for God and His suffering cause. But the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. To give with a cheerful mood demands a complete personal sacrifice, as the apostle said of the noble Macedonian churches:

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." 2. Corinthians 8:5.

Cheerful giving is the fruit of true conversion and the Master did not leave us in uncertainty, when He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." What are your fruits? A mere profession of words or actual giving? May the God of all graces stir our hearts to heed these timely words and act upon them.

(Note: At the conclusion of the last Service of the Week of Prayer, a liberal thank-offering should be made. Let us all prepare for this.

"After the prayer is made, if the answer is not realized immediately, do not weary of waiting, and become unstable. Waver not. Cling to the promise, 'Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.' Like the importunate widow, urge your case, being firm in your purpose. Is the object important and of great consequence to you? It certainly is. Then waver not; for your faith may be tried. If the thing you desire is valuable, it is worthy of a strong, earnest effort. You have the promise, watch and pray. Be steadfast, and the prayer will be answered; for is it not God who has promised? If it costs you something to obtain it, you will prize it the more when obtained. You are plainly told that if you waver you need not think that you shall receive anything of the Lord. A caution is here given not to become weary, but to rest firmly upon the promise. If you ask, He will give you liberally, and upbraid not."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 131.

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace."—Ps. 144:12.



The Children's Friend

for Parents and Children
who would follow Jesus.

Suffer little Children to come unto me.

LUKE 10:16

A TRUE STORY

One beautiful evening in summer, a carriage drove up to a village inn. A stranger stepped out, and directed the landlord to prepare him a dinner. The last rays of the setting sun were visible on the fleecy clouds and on the vane of an antiquated church, which stood on the opposite side of the way. The stranger looked about him for a few moments, and then directed his steps to the church.

He entered the gate which opened into the grave-yard, and walked around; he viewed the grassy beds, beneath which the sons of other years lay silently resting from want, and toil, and pain. While he was reading the various inscriptions on the tombstones, his attention was drawn to a corner of the yard by the sobs of a child. He went immediately to the spot where two ragged children sat weeping upon a newly-made grave. A piece of hard bread lay between them. The stranger, being sensible to the sorrows of others sat down upon the grave, and inquired into the cause of their distress. The little boy, whose name was William, began to tell him that his sister Mary was a naughty girl, and would not eat the piece of bread which he had begged for her. She interrupted her brother here, and told the man that she had some bread yesterday, but that her brother had eaten none since the day before, and she wanted him to eat this.

The boy then proceeded to tell the stranger that a year ago his father left the village, and went to sea, and that in a storm he had been drowned. "And poor mother cried so hard, and said she must soon die, too; but that we must love each other, and that God would be our father. She called us to her bedside, kissed us both, and then died."

The stranger listened to the tale of sorrow until his eyes filled with tears, and he was moved with compassion for the wanderers. He

exclaimed as he rose from the grave:

"Come with me, poor children. God will be your father. He has, no doubt, sent me here this night to befriend you."

He took them to the inn, and had them provided for until he returned home. Then they were received into the bosom of his family, where they were fed, clothed, and instructed; and the stranger, in his declining years, witnessed them useful and honorable members of society. His hospitality was rewarded a hundred fold.—Selected.

HARRY'S EARNINGS

No Boy, or man either, in all the country was more ready and willing to help the needy than Harry Gray. One day he came to his uncle with an anxious look on his face, and said:—

"Uncle, can you help a poor man who lives down in the village? He is very sick and entirely destitute."

"No," said his uncle, gruffly. "I havn't any money to spare."

Harry looked disappointed. After a moment he said hesitatingly, "Uncle, I'd like to earn some money."

"Well," said his uncle, looking up from his paper, "I told you I would give you three cents for every wheelbarrow load of stones you carted away from the hill, but you did not want to do it."

"I will do it now, if I may," said Harry.

"Very good; you may begin as soon as you like," said his uncle.

Harry jumped up, and ran out to find the wheelbarrow. Picking up stones was dull work, yet he set about it as eagerly and merrily as if he loved it. He wheeled the great barrow up the hill, and began to fill it with stones, singing as gaily as a lark. The summer sun grew warm, and Harry's shoulders began to ache, but with

The Sabbath Watchman

with

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a bright smile on his face, he said to himself, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." That was the secret of Harry's readiness for this work; he was determined to earn eighteen cents, so he tugged away at the stones until the six loads rolled down the hill.

Harry went home with the same happy look on his face, and said, "Aunty, will you give me a loaf of bread?"

"To take to that sick man?"

"Yes."

"But you are too tired to go with it now."

"O no; I can go. Please let me have a little pitcher too."

"What do you want that for?"

"I'll bring it back safely," said Harry, coloring a little.

So aunty gave it to him, for she loved the little motherless boy.

First he went to find his uncle, who gave him the eighteen cents. Then he went to the village grocery store and brought some fruit and a pitcher full of milk. If there ever was a happy little boy it was Harry Gray, as he walked up the village street, holding fast to his precious packages.

He reached a forlorn, wooden house, and knocked at the door. "Come in," said a feeble voice. Harry went in, and there on the bed lay the sick man for whom he was looking.

"I have brought you something, because some one told me you were in want," he said gently.

"God bless you, boy!" said the sick man; "I have not tasted a mouthful today!" Just then

a woman came in. "See Mary," said he, "God has sent us food at last;" and the woman took Harry's hands in hers, and the tears poured down her face as she asked the dear Father in Heaven to bless him.

Harry lay down upon his bed that night a weary little boy; but do you think he was sorry he had worked so hard for His Saviour?—Selected.

Asleep in Jesus

Katie Ehrlich

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of our beloved sister, Katie Ehrlich, who fell asleep in Jesus on August 24, 1948, at the age of 83 years.

Our dear sister accepted the threefold angel's message in the year 1886, and she remained faithful to this precious message to the very last. About 20 years ago she became a member of the S. D. A. Reform Church at Shattuck, Oklahoma, and her absence from the band of believers in this city will be keenly felt by all.

Sister Ehrlich loved her Saviour dearly, and she was always willing to testify for the truth. She enjoyed the sweet fellowship with those of like precious faith, and her love and kindness was an inspiration to all. We lose in her a faithful sister, but we have the assurance that she will hear the voice of Jesus on the first resurrection morning.

The writer had the privilege of speaking to a large company of mourners in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, concerning the blessed hope we have in Jesus, and His soon coming to gather His children home.

May the Lord especially comfort all the dear ones which our sister left behind, who deeply mourn the loss of our beloved sister. May we soon have the privilege of meeting our dear sister again on the earth made new.

A. W. Doerschler.

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