HASTENING THE HARVEST
READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER
NOVEMBER 3-10/1973
Message From the General Conference Officers

HASTENING
the
HARVEST

The theme of the Week of Prayer messages this year focuses on the “Hastening Harvest.” There’s no theme that calls forth from God’s children deeper emotions than the one that causes their minds to dwell on the return of our Lord to this earth and the events that surround that glorious happening. Talking to His disciples, Jesus referred to His second coming as the time of the harvest, the time when the ripened grain from across the whole earth will be gathered into the Lord’s House.

A growing understanding of what the completed work of redemption means to the child of God brings him an overwhelming desire to be with the Lord; the ties that have bound him to the earth break loose, and he begins to live in the contemplation of heaven.

The writers of these messages lead us into a clearer understanding of the events that surround the harvest and what our relationship should be to that day.

We urge you to approach this Week of Prayer with an earnest desire to prepare your life for the Hastening Harvest and to share with others the glories that that day will bring.
Time of the Harvest

By D. A. DELAFIELD

"WE ARE LIVING in harvesttime," wrote Billy Graham in a recent letter to his television audience. "Having been reared on a farm, I know that harvesttime is short—it may not last long. We'd better take advantage of it now—with everything we have! Such a moment may never come again... because Satan is... at work politically, socially, spiritually, and morally, sowing his evil, dangerous, and vicious tares as Jesus prophesied he would."

The well-known evangelist declared that there never was a time in history when the "harvest was so ripe." His startling words sound like an echo of the Spirit of Prophecy counselors: "That which we see and hear calls us to our duty. The working of satanic agencies calls every Christian to stand in his lot."—Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 25, 26.

The Times in God's Hands

As we study prayerfully this Week of Prayer "harvest" theme the conviction in many Seventh-day Adventist minds will deepen that the time for probation to close is near and that the earth's harvest is ripe and the coming of the Lord is at the door. But as we study specifically the theme, "Time of Harvest," let us recall the words of our Lord to His disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come again... because Satan is... working politically, socially, spiritually, and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."—Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 19.

"The warning is to be given in certain tones. The way must be prepared for the coming of the Prince of Peace in the clouds of heaven."—Ibid., p. 25.

All to Be Witnesses

All church members may join hands in this good work of proclaiming the harvest message. Thus they may occupy the ground till probation closes. But some by their lives and the silence of their testimony proclaim, "my Lord delayeth His coming." There will be a sifting time, and a large number of those who profess to believe the truth will forsake it. This is evidence that the harvesttime is near. Wrote the servant of the Lord: "Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinner in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths."—Selected Messages, book 2, p. 380.

Listen to this inspired message: "There are men who will receive the truth, and these will take the places made vacant by those who become offended and leave the truth. . . . The Lord will work so that the afflicted ones will be separated from the true and loyal ones. Those who, like Cornelius, will fear God and glorify Him, will take their places. The ranks will not be diminished. Those who are firm and true will close up the vacancies that are made by those who become offended and apostatize."—Manuscript 97, 1898. (Italics supplied.)

Harvest of Wheat and Tares

In the book Christ's Object Lessons, page 75, we read, "The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. Then the tares are bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner of God." This is the grand harvest spectacle. (See Matt. 13:24-30 and Rev. 14:14-19.)

The tares are the indifferent professors, careless and worldly-minded; the wheat, the decided saints who live and witness for Him. The difference in character is seen at last. The division between the Lord's people is made. This comes at the end of probationary time (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 72) and figures largely in the grand eschatological harvest.

Keep in mind also that "the harvest of life is character," wrote Ellen White. And "it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come" (Education, p. 109).

Then again we have this statement: "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69. But the tares offer nothing of value to man or God, so as waste material the tares are burned up.

When Will the Harvest Be?

When will this time of harvest be? A year from now? Five years? Ten years? Certainly the time of the reaping of the harvest is overdue. The Lord's return is near, but Seventh-day Adventists are not and never have been time setters. In an article in the Review of March 22, 1892, Ellen White wrote: "Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord..."
has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth."—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 186.

The servant of God explained in the year 1883:

"The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.

"Forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, un consecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.

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With murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

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Fastening Our Lord's Return

In the year 1913 Mrs. White sent her last written message to be read at a General Conference session. Two years later she died. It was a message of courage and encouraging prospect:

"I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me in the night season. There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God's call. My brethren, the Lord is speaking to us. Shall we not heed His voice? Shall we not trim our lamps, and act like men who look for their Lord to come? The time is one that calls for light-bearing, for action."—Life Sketches, pp. 425, 426.

We are told in these same inspired messages that "by giving the gospel... to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return."—Evangelism, p. 696. "It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain."—Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 22, 23.

"Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord."—Evangelism, p. 700.

No Disorganization of the Church

And there will be no disorganization of the church in these days of final witness. We have these wise instructions:

"Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And in order that the Lord's work may advance healthily and solidly, His people must draw together.

"We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor."—Testimonies to Ministers, p. 489.

Will we respond to this call for unity of effort and join the armies of the Lord in active consecration and service? Wrote Ellen White: "Shall we deny self that the wasting harvest may be gathered?"

"God calls for talents of influence and of means. Shall we refuse to obey? Our heavenly Father bestows gifts and solicits a portion back, that He may test us whether we are worthy to have the gift of everlasting life."—Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 408.

We can make this a week of revival in our own hearts. Let all attend the services wherever possible and pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit upon the church. Pray, "Lord, send a revival and help me personally to experience the salvation of God." "And when the last great harvest is gathered in," Ellen White wrote concerning His servants, "the sheaves that they are enabled to bring to the Master will be the recompense of their unselfish use of the talents lent them."—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 340.
WHEN WE PLANT our gardens we do so with the reasonable hope that eventually we will have a harvest of good things. Who plants corn merely to watch it struggle with the weeds? The full-time farmer and the part-time gardener both look toward the harvest as the goal of their labors. No other goal makes sense.

But when corn, tomatoes, beans, and squash are planted, does the gardener know the day when each crop will be ready for harvest? In a way, yes! When corn seed, for example, is bought from a seed catalog, each variety is described in detail and its growing season is specified. Some corn should be ready in 68 days, other varieties in 72 or 78 days.

But does a wise gardener pick his corn by merely looking at the calendar and checking off the prescribed number of days? No, he keeps checking for the maturing characteristics that indicate when the corn is indeed ripe for harvest. The seed catalog tells the gardener when the harvest should be mature, when it could be picked—if all growing conditions are favorable. But if the summer is too hot or too cold, too dry or too wet, or if the ground is undernourished, the time of the harvest could be directly affected. The gardener must wait until his harvest is ripe, sometimes at a much later period than he had first hoped, because of the less than perfect conditions that thwarted his original schedule.

All that we seem to understand about our gardens will help us when we try to understand why Jesus waits, why His return to this earth has been so long delayed. Perhaps Jesus chose to compare the end of this world to a farmer's harvest, because He knew that men everywhere understood, to some degree, the hopes and problems connected with harvesting a field of wheat or backyard tomatoes. In His masterful way He compared the focal point of the plan of salvation to an earthly harvest.

Herbert E. Douglass is an associate editor of the Review.

In Mark 4, Jesus was explaining the nature of the kingdom of God: "So is the kingdom of God: as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (verses 26-29).

Harvest Principle Emphasized

When Jesus was describing to John on Patmos the nature and timing of His second advent, He re-emphasized the harvest principle as the key to an understanding of why all heaven would wait for a delayed harvest down in the twentieth century: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." (Rev. 14:14-16)

The goals of the kingdom of God and of the field of grain are the same: neither is ready to harvest unless the seed has matured. Even as the farmer must wait for his seed to mature, so Jesus must wait until the gospel seed has produced a sizable group of mature Christians in the last generation.

"The object of the husbandman in the sowing of the seed and the culture of the growing plant is the production of grain. . . . So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest as the reward of His labor and sacrifice. Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing— the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others."—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 67.

Farmers and prophets have several things in common, the chief of which is that both engage in conditional prophecies. Farmers know, for example, on the basis of the promises in the seed catalog that early corn should be ready in 68 days, if! The "if"—such things as the varying amounts of rainfall, how hot the day, or how cool the night—is often beyond the farmer's control.

Similarly, our Lord is saying to us that the delay in the harvest of this world has not been due to a change of mind on the part of the divine Husbandman. As far as God is concerned, the harvest could have and should have ripened decades ago. We live now in the time of the delayed harvest. The fruit—the personal witness that reproduces the character of Jesus—has not yet matured.

This line of thought is not new to Seventh-day Adventists. In 1883 Ellen White pleaded with fellow church members to understand why Jesus was delaying His return: "It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional. . . . "Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward."—Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 67, 68. (Italics supplied.)

Truth Vindicated in Character

Unequivocally, as clearly as words can convey thought, Ellen White declared the sad yet challenging truth that the return of Jesus was already delayed in the 1880's, that He would continue to wait until His church on earth had vindicated truth—His character—on their livings.

Furthermore, Ellen White warned that Adventists must not, no matter how plausible the reasoning, blame God for the delay in the Advent. "It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness . . . . For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same
sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the sins have delayed the entrance of the consequence of their own wrong many years."—Ibid., pp. 68, 69.

In 1901 she counseled, referring to the delayed Advent, that “for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action” (Evangelism, p. 696).

How would Seventh-day Adventists charge God with the consequences of “their own wrong course of action”? Surely not directly. Yet, could it be possible that by forgetting the harvest principle we have come up with reasons that indeed transfer the responsibility for the delay from God’s professed people to God Himself!

For example, explanations such as the following tend to lift the responsibility for the delay from the church on earth: a. In the judgment of the dead and the living since 1844, the angels have been turning each person’s page inexorably, tirelessly, day and night, and when the last page is turned, then and only then will probation close; b. God has His own celestial clock for all the world’s major events, the hands move relentlessly, and when the hand strikes midnight, probation will close, regardless of the state of the church; c. probation can’t close until Turkey comes to her end with none to help her.

But if Jesus could have come long before 1883, as Ellen White notes often (see L. E. Froom, Movement of Destiny, pp. 581-582), none of these human explanations have validity. The simple reason for the delay in the Advent is contained in the harvest principle—even though Jesus could have come a century ago, even though the harvest should have ripened four or five generations ago, Jesus will return only when the harvest is ripe.

The harvest principle as an explanation for the delayed Advent is not something new that the Adventist Church has thought up to explain away why Jesus has not come within the lifetime of several generations who waited and hoped.

Jesus emphasized the concept of a conditional harvest in Matthew 24 and 25 when He answered the question: “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

In His glorious answer to the question regarding the time of His second advent, Jesus emphasized the state of the church rather than the state of the world. His church primarily, and not conditions in the world, determines when the Landlord returns to His faithful servants, when the Bridesgroom comes to His bride, when the Businessman returns to His employees to whom He has given various responsibilities.

Jesus knew that to place undue emphasis on world conditions, which are always in distress, as the chief sign of the end of the world would be similar to a farmer saying, “It looks as if there will be a bad thunderstorm; it must be time to pick my corn.” There is as much relationship between a thunderstorm and picking ripe corn as there is between distress in the world and the readiness of the church for the Advent.

Throughout Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus emphasized the quality of life that separates, within the church, the faithful from the unprepared. The faithful and wise servant, the wise bridesmaids, the responsible employee, and those represented by the sheep “on the right hand,” all reflected a life-style that God could use in preaching the truth about life. These quality people are the instruments through whom “the gospel of the kingdom” will be heard and seen; their dramatic, distinctive life witness will indeed be the “good news” that Jesus reigns in the lives of men—this message in living color will be “preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come” (verse 14, R.S.V.).

Qualitative Difference

Only when this qualitative difference is seen in all its glory and power all over this world will probation close and the end come. “When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come” (Mark 4:29).

Those who work in hope and earnestness for the Advent can believe that our Lord will not wait one day past that moment when the decision is made by the last wavering person whether to accept the Adventist way of life or not. Already He has been waiting “at the door” much too long. He wants to return and end earth’s sad tale of sin and misery. He wants to fulfill His promises to the faithful as soon as possible.

But wait He must, “waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

“It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 69.

Each night this week some aspect of why Jesus waits will be discussed. He wants each one of us to hear His special call to His church at this time. He not only tells us to get ready, He tells us what it means to be ready. He offers the help we need to become His special representatives of grace, power, and love so that we can do our part to turn our generation into the last on earth. Hear Him as He speaks to you.

Monday, November 5

The Harvest Generation

By C. D. BROOKS

TODAY’S BILLIONS of people around the circle of the globe—with all their myriad activities and problems; their sanguinary nationalism, militarism, and terrorism; their mighty complexes and power politics; their unbridled lust and frenzied hedonism; their blatant infidel-ity and nominal religion; their seething hatreds and unnatural affections; their awful poverty and incredible wealth—are living in the very end of the ages. These billions
with their mind-jolting inventions and deep spiritual ignorance, their secularism, paganism, their "form of godliness," their eating, drinking, marrying and "giving in marriage" are the harvest generation of prophecy. Over this fact they exercise no veto. Their opinion is disallowed, their plebiscite is invalid. Prophecy has indicated that this is the final age of this world and prophecies of divine origin are invincible in their forward march to fulfillment.

Men seem oblivious to the fact that for more than a century and a quarter their fortunes and destinies have been residing between two verses of Scripture—between verses 13 and 14 of Revelation 6. They are spared and sustained by the amazing grace of a patient God who loves them with unspeakable love and who is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:8, 9).

In her messages to the church, Ellen White says that "had the purpose of God been carried out by His people . . . Christ would, ere this, have come" and that the saints would have been in the kingdom. This was written at the turn of the century. She placed responsibility on the church for the delay in Christ's coming. For to "whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). It is an awesome thing to repeat what has been written in the Bible. (Anchors such as the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, our belief in this great message and church, our conversion, our faith in the ultimate triumph of truth, et cetera.) The Lord's prophet spoke of the nearness of the end more than a century ago and in the most urgent terms. She wrote in Early Writings, page 58, that Jesus' work in "the most holy place was nearly finished and that time can last but very little longer." But wait! Paul did no less in 1 Corinthians 7:29 when he declared, "the time is short." In Romans 13:12 he proclaimed, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." John wrote from Patmos, "The time is at hand." And he closed the canon with "Surely I come quickly," and "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The true saints of God have always held the promise of the Lord's return as so beloved and blessed, so necessary and true that they lived in an attitude of constant, precious expectancy. Far from making them lose confidence, or turning them into scoffers, it brought fresh thrills of positive delight and hope—especially in the times of great trial.

Mrs. White makes it clear that these have been times in the history of the church that this message should not have been proclaimed with a great sense of urgency. "The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as short."—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 67. The urgency of the message says to the honest in heart, "Get ready! Stay ready!" "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" (1 John 3:3).

Then why has Christ waited? "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:8, 9).

Christ delays because when He appears there will be no time of repentance and preparation, though every unprepared soul will wait for a new chance. All will wish to be ready then. On the side of a church in a large Eastern city I read a sign that said, "Repent now and avoid the rush at doomsday!" Everyone will repent either now or later; it's just a matter of time. Today, all righteousness is by faith in Christ. The tragedy is that when He appears men will seek righteousness by fear. Panic, not faith, will drive them into a brotherhood of hysteria and fear. It will be too late. The decree will have issued from the smoking throne room, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: . . . he that is holy let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11). It will all be settled for eternity at that time. So Christ in mercy and long-suffering waits awhile. The message is urgent but He delays in grace.

Unprecedented immorality characterizes the harvest generation. A creeping rot of moral degeneracy is eating away at the nations like cancer. The very earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof. Men are giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and many are departing from the faith. This is a special warning prophecy to the enlightened. These depart from the faith, being spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit, and byoblinous movements, and indulging the acquired vices of laziness and apathy. These will cry, "My lord delayeth his coming."

The great heavenly signs are past history. The last of them, the falling stars, occurred 140 years ago. Only the spiritually perceptive can now clearly discern the harbingers of the coming end and hear the footsteps of God. Without this spiritual perception, the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai would not arrest the mind infatuated with pleasure and materialism. Besides, there are the "easy, logical explanations." Creation is perverted into "evolution;" the Star of Bethlehem was simply a "conjunction of planets"; Christ was a historical figure, but purely human though an exceptionally good man; and God is just an "idea." These are all explained to the car-
nal mind in easy terms. But there is still one amazing thing in this amazing age, and that is a transformed life. When doctrines, exhortations, laws, and dogmas fail, then God says, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me.”

A harvest is not an intelligent thing. It doesn't even know that it is a harvest. Were there no reapers, a harvest would remain in the field unripe until beaten down by winter's blast; it would rot on the ground. The harvest is saved through the grace, interest, wisdom, and industry of the Lord of the harvest and the reapers. “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matt. 9:37). Oh, there are many church members, many professors, but the laborers are few. A laborer is much more than a baptized member. He is much more than one who teaches or gives studies. A laborer is an effective witness who can turn men to Jesus through a life full of grace and power. His example is sterling. He demonstrates the better life and makes the truth attractive. You can't pretend this. His faith makes him peculiar without making him odd. His very life and appearance evince the dynamics of the Spirit. “The labourers are few.”

A Practical Faith

Christianity is the most practical faith. It leaves nobody alone. It has its humanities and its divinities. There are two commandments in its infinite law, the love of God and the love of man. There is no religion under heaven so hard working, but not in a ceremonial sense. It is the missionary religion, the energetic faith, the revolutionary force. It goes to slums and jungles as well as the suburbs. It graces the ghettos as well as suburbia. It loves to save. It is never satisfied until the last man is home in Christ. It considers its work unfinished until every soul is warned. It doesn't make excuses, though this harvest generation expands by the millions per week. One Christian almost singlehandedly carried the gospel to every creature once. If we believe that Christ is coming soon, then our work ought to be that of getting ourselves and all the others we can ready for that great event.

In Noah's day the people did not really notice any earth-shaking events that would tell them that they were doomed. Even the miraculous procession of beasts into the ark could be attributed to certain explainable phenomena. The deceitfulness of sin is astonishing! If men will not believe God, then they will believe any fantastic thing. There is no philosophy so low to which they will not give hospitality. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (2 Cor. 4:3). So day after day in Noah's time men went their way. The sun was beneficent and kind. There were no thunders except the perversel utterances of men. There was no lightning save for the fire of their incisive rhetoric. There were no violent rumblings except from violent hearts. The music wailed, the laughter was easy. The ark's door slammed shut, scarcely heard above the uproar hilarity. Then seven days more—seven normal, uneventful days of marriages and divorces and parties and orgies of vice and concupiscence. There was business as usual until that final day when the dark battalions of storm clouds rode their black chargers across the heavens to the cadence of thunderclap and bursting earth springs. The lightning made its cosmic debut, flashing a code of wrath, and water spouts were turned on in the fury of the Lord. It was the day of final things. But it began as such an ordinary day.

“So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” God's word is sure. His prophecies are true. They will come to pass. On the final day men will go about business as usual. The great department stores will open. In giant factories parking lots will fill and production lines will roll; new cars will sparkle on showroom floors. Presses will whir out the news and the ads. Arrogant men will boast, politicians will make promises, airplanes will drone in the heavens and great ships will ply the seas, curtain will go up in the theaters, burglars will violate unattended dwellings. Mothers will pack school lunches and send children off. Pampered women will walk pampered dogs, hoods will menace the streets, racists will harangue, the music will blare. Business as usual! Then suddenly probation closes. Christ thrusts in His sickle and before that last event great department stores will open. One Christian almost singlehandedly carried the gospel to every creature once. If we believe that Christ is coming soon, then our work ought to be that of getting ourselves and all the others we can ready for that great event.

In Noah's day the people did not really notice any earth-shaking events that would tell them that they were doomed. Even the miraculous procession of beasts into the ark could be attributed to certain explainable phenomena. The deceitfulness of sin is astonishing! If men will not believe God, then they will believe any fantastic thing. There is no philosophy so low to which they will not give hospitality. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (2 Cor. 4:3). So day after day in Noah's time men went their way. The sun was beneficent and kind. There were no thunders except the perversel utterances of men. There was no lightning save for the fire of their incisive rhetoric. There were no violent rumblings except from violent hearts. The music wailed, the laughter was easy. The ark's door slammed shut, scarcely heard above the uproar hilarity. Then seven days more—seven normal, uneventful days of marriages and divorces and parties and orgies of vice and concupiscence. There was business as usual until that final day when the dark battalions of storm clouds rode their black chargers across the heavens to the cadence of thunderclap and bursting earth springs. The lightning made its cosmic debut, flashing a code of wrath, and water spouts were turned on in the fury of the Lord. It was the day of final things. But it began as such an ordinary day.

“So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” God's word is sure. His prophecies are true. They will come to pass. On the final day men will go about business as usual. The great department stores will open. In giant factories parking lots will fill and production lines will roll; new cars will sparkle on showroom floors. Presses will whir out the news and the ads. Arrogant men will boast, politicians will make promises, airplanes will drone in the heavens and great ships will ply the seas, curtain will go up in the theaters, burglars will violate unattended dwellings. Mothers will pack school lunches and send children off. Pampered women will walk pampered dogs, hoods will menace the streets, racists will harangue, the music will blare. Business as usual! Then suddenly probation closes. Christ thrusts in His sickle and before that last event great department stores will open. In giant factories parking lots will fill and production lines will roll; new cars will sparkle on showroom floors. Presses will whir out the news and the ads. Arrogant men will boast, politicians will make promises, airplanes will drone in the heavens and great ships will ply the seas, curtain will go up in the theaters, burglars will violate unattended dwellings. Mothers will pack school lunches and send children off. Pampered women will walk pampered dogs, hoods will menace the streets, racists will harangue, the music will blare. Business as usual! Then suddenly probation closes. Christ thrusts in His sickle and before that last event.

Tuesday, November 6

Mission of the Harvest

By PAUL H. ELDRIDGE

"TIME FOR THE HARVEST" and "finishing the work" are among the more common expressions in Adventist phraseology. During recent months our imaginations have been stimulated and our energies challenged by MISSION '73. But what we really wish we could say is “Mission accomplished.” When will this be? What is the real meaning of harvest?

Paul H. Eldridge is president of the Far Eastern Division.
Harvest in Two Dimensions

There is remarkable beauty in God's picture of the harvest. He sees it as a fulfillment of Christ's command: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The scope of the picture is as broad as the world itself. It is a harvest of people, from every race and nation. But God sees more than their numbers and the fact that they come from all the world. His picture also has depth. It reveals individual characters and the way in which God views the gospel harvest.

The organization of the church has been designed around the concept of world mission. The gospel to all the world is not an afterthought to cope with the last-day population explosion. God specified it in His original assignment to the disciples. "Ye shall be witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Our own Seventh-day Adventist organization evolved to meet the needs of a growing church. Departmental promotion aims at expanding our program. Publishing houses, schools, and hospitals have been developed to provide trained personnel and to project the image of a world church. Our unique financial system and the plan for individual participation in evangelism have given added impetus to our growth.

In the General Conference sessions and at other great gatherings of the church, missions advance holds the center of interest. It is safe to say that the divine mandate for worldwide mission has been and still is the essence of the Adventist dynamic.

Matthew 24:14 is an intriguing text. It sets the geographical measure for the harvest. Careful attention to statistical reporting makes it possible for us to number the languages and countries in which we work. Unsatisfied because there are still so many frontiers to cross, we call for "the light" to enter every dark village, city, county, island, and nation.

Into all the world is, however, an elusive target. While our present figures indicate that nearly every land has been entered, there are still some notable exceptions. The biggest barrier is isolation. In some cases this is geographical. But ideological isolation is even more formidable. In many countries entered long ago, there is now a whole new generation numbering hundreds of millions, who have had no apparent opportunity to hear our message. Even in some areas that are open to us the population explosion outdistances our most energetic efforts.

Indeed, there are thoughtful care-takers who seriously wonder whether a total world conquest by the gospel is a realistic goal. They suggest a possibility of error in our interpretation of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. I cannot accept their pessimistic view. For more than 35 years I have lived and worked among the masses of millions of the Orient. Progress often seemed painfully slow. Yet I have seen enough of God's marvelous power and providential intervention to give me full confidence in the certainty of final harvest.

Impressive Results

The results already reported are impressive. As of June 30, 1972, our world membership stood at 2,191,894. By the close of 1971 we had entered 189 countries. A careful analysis of the statistical report indicates that these countries, which have at least been entered, include approximately 98% of the world population.

Thus the mission of the harvest as measured in scope presents an exciting prospect. With the promises God has given for a special burst of power to finish the reaping, we may say that the end is in sight.

Is it possible that God's other goal, the revelation of the character of Christ in His people, will be even harder to reach?

In a remarkable description of the final work of the church, Ellen White includes this statement: "Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple."—The Desire of Ages, p. 827. Scripture puts it this way: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:3).

The silversmith of Bible times sat before his fire, heating the ore until it became a molten mass. Impurities rose to the top and were skimmed away. Patiently stoking his fire and dipping out the dross, he bent over the refining pot, gazing at the surface. Finally, impurities all removed, the shining liquid silver returned with mirror-clarity his own reflection.

God plans that both phases of the harvest shall proceed together. The closer our characters resemble the character of Christ the more effective our work will be.

Here are the results we can expect:

1. Diversions of sin will be eliminated. It is amazing how much trouble sin causes besides the guilt itself. Anyone who has struggled...
with a burden of remorse knows how seriously it diverts attention from work that must be done. Peace of mind restores our powers of concentration. Furthermore, since sin is a thief of time, when it is eliminated our capacity for good works increases.

2. Personal victory will be visible to others. No one is so attractive as the one whose disfigurements of character have been replaced with the beauty of Christlikeness. This has magnetic appeal. Those we meet in business and social intercourse will want what they see in us. This visible change in character authenticates our message.

3. We will share Christ’s urgency for the harvest. Jesus said: “I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day” (John 9:4). When we have His character we will share His conviction. There will be total integrity in stewardship. Commitment will be without reserve.

Both Dimensions Completed

This is God’s unique provision. As we reflect Christ’s character we become eager to participate in the mission of the harvest. As we participate we come more and more to reflect His character. Just as the harvest is not complete until our characters have been changed, so our change of character is not complete until we have part in the harvest.

Remember the rich young ruler. He was an outstanding young man. His integrity had never been questioned. But he lacked one thing. He had never personally participated in Christ’s mission. “Come,” Jesus said, “take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

Personal participation develops character.

First, it brings humility. We recognize our personal ineffectiveness when we see the task in its immensity. Appalled by the responsibility, we ask, “Why was I selected?” Utter necessity drives us to depend on God.

Next, participation develops fortitude. Success after repeated failure hardens spiritual muscle. Waiting for God develops patience and confidence in divine timing.

Then we discover that harvest is people. People have problems. Problems call for help. This teaches compassion.

Finally, the processes of trial and error, discovering how to reason from cause to effect, build good judgment and make a balanced Christian.

This is the refining process. It is only as we participate in Christ’s program that He finds in us the true reflection of His character.

Ellen White says: “In every one Christ’s long-suffering love, His holiness, meekness, mercy, and truth are to be manifested to the world.”

“The first disciples went forth preaching the word. They revealed Christ in their lives. . . . These disciples prepared themselves for their work. Before the day of Pentecost they met together, and put away all differences. They were of one accord. They believed Christ’s promise that the blessing would be given, and they prayed in faith. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely; they were weighted with the burden for the salvation of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.

“So it may be now. Instead of man’s speculations, let the word of God be preached. Let Christians put away their dissensions, and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them in faith ask for the blessing, and it will come. The out-pouring of the Spirit in apostolic days was the ‘former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the ‘latter rain’ will be more abundant.”—The Desire of Ages, p. 827.

This is the mission of the harvest. It is intensely personal. It is not a church or the world that is saved. It is people, one by one.

You are part of the harvest. Has Christ’s character been reproduced in you?

You have a part in the harvest. Are you doing your part?

Your answers help to determine how quickly Christ can come.

SOME MONTHS ago I attended a meeting of a group of young people who had gathered to study the Scriptures. In the course of our discussion and study, differences of concepts began to surface. Finally, one of the young men said, “Brother, I am in love with my Lord and I don’t need the law. You older people give me the idea that you are not excited nor in love with our Lord. You don’t express your love openly as we youth do. You give the idea that yours is a legal religion. Perhaps you do love God, but we do not see actions that make it apparent.”

Is it possible that those who are older in the faith have been remiss in meditating upon our Lord’s love and goodness until their lives have failed to reflect the sheer joy of knowing Him? Maybe their attention to the details of a law-abiding Christian experience has at times overshadowed their inner love and admiration for the Lord of the harvest. Could it be that their anticipation of the coming of the Lord of the harvest has become dull by the delay, so much so that the demonstration of radiant religion has been dimmed? Has their preoccupation with the “occupy till I come” blurred their vision of the nearness and glory of the coming of the Lord of the harvest and of the great sacrifice He made to redeem them?

It is so easy for earth to blot out heaven. The proclaimers of the harvest and the coming of the Lord of the harvest must not turn aside or linger to talk and converse about the lesser things, while the greater things call him to action.

Those who are acquainted with the Lord of the harvest have a grave responsibility. Someone has said that “responsibility is the other side of privilege.” What a privilege to know the Lord of the harvest! What a responsibility to radiate that knowledge, that love, and that power, that sense of urgency to save!

The proclaimers of the coming of
that he might associate with fallen man that which, by disobedience, Adam had lost for himself and for every divine requirement.

—ELLEN G. WHITE, in Signs of the Times, June 9, 1898.

I readily confess that the mystery of the Incarnation challenges the deepest thought processes. It is a mystery that we will no doubt study a great deal as we inherit the kingdom and sit at the feet of the Master Teacher. Perhaps only then will we vaguely understand not only the mystery of His taking human form but the great love that prompted the sacrifice.

For Christ to meet the challenge of sin He needed to overcome where man failed. Satan charged God with the impossibility of obedience to His law. In His edenic purity man had failed to be obedient to the divine requirements. Satan charged God with expecting the impossible of His created creatures. Christ came to earth as a response to that charge. It was God’s answer to the dilemma of sin. Christ must take up where man failed to vindicate the justice of God’s moral government. The words of the servant of the Lord again: “Christ left His position in the heavenly courts, and came to this earth to live the life of human beings. This sacrifice He made in order to show that Satan’s charge against God is false—that it is possible for man to obey the laws of God’s kingdom.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, on John 1:1-3, p. 1129.

“Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. . . . Clothing His divinity with humanity, that He might associate with fallen humanity, He sought to regain for man that which, by disobedience, Adam had lost for himself and for the world.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, in Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1896.

How wonderful was His love, that He should lay aside His kingly power, His royal robes, His authority over heaven and earth, to step down and clothe His divinity with humanity. He became like one of us that His character and His life might become the redemptive power for all the lost. The human mind this side of heaven can never fully grasp the immensity, nor comprehend the compassion, that prompted this immeasurable gift.

“The only plan that could be devised to save the human race was that which called for the incarnation, humiliation, and crucifixion of the Son of God in the humanity of heaven. After the plan of salvation was devised, Satan could have no ground upon which to found his suggestion that God, because so great, could care nothing for so insignificant a creature as man.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, in Signs of the Times, Jan. 20, 1890.

Divinity and Humanity Blended

It is beyond our understanding and our power to comprehend how divinity and humanity can be so blended and combined as to bring divinity and humanity together in the person of Jesus Christ. This great miracle is expressed in these words:

“In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined. Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place, but humanity by being united to divinity, withstand the fiercest test of temptation in the wilderness. The prince of this world came to Christ after His long fast, when He was an hungered, and suggested to Him to command the stones to become bread. But the plan of God, devised for the salvation of man, provided that Christ should know hunger, and poverty, and every phase of man’s experience.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, in Review and Herald, Feb. 18, 1890.

“Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, He became one with us. In Him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in Him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, in Youth’s Instructor, Nov. 21, 1886.

The Son of God voluntarily accepted the lot of humiliation and death to redeem His creatures. When one contemplates how Christ became man’s representative, he can scarcely comprehend this glorious reality. No human pen can adequately nor comprehensively portray the blessings, the wonders, and the benefits brought to humanity through the Incarnation.

Ellen White declared, “What opposites meet and are revealed in the person of Christ! The mighty God, yet a helpless child! The Creator of all the world, yet, in a world of His creating, often hungry and weary, and without a place to lay His head! The Son of man, yet infinitely higher than the angels! Equal with the Father, yet His divinity clothed with humanity, standing at the head of the fallen race, that human beings might be placed on vantage-ground! Possessing eternal riches, yet living the life of a poor man! One with the Father in dignity and power, yet in His humanity tempted in all points like as we are tempted! In the very moment of His dying agony on the cross, a Conqueror, answering the request of the repentant sinner to be remembered by Him when He came into His kingdom.”—Signs of the Times, April 26, 1905.

There is a tendency on the part of some to minimize the temptations of Christ and the struggles through which He passed in securing man’s redemption. But He verily overcame where man failed: “For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.”—The Desire of Ages, p. 377.

“Christ, who knew not the least taint of sin or defilement, took our nature in its deteriorated condition. This was humiliation greater than finite man can comprehend. God was manifest in the flesh. He humbled Himself. What a subject for thought, for deep, earnest contemplation! So infinitely great that He was the Majesty of heaven, and yet He stooped so low, without losing one atom of His dignity and glory! He stooped to poverty and to the deepest abasement among men.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, in Signs of the Times, June 9, 1898.

For many centuries Satan has been trying to destroy the very heart of the incarnation! Ever since the Saviour voluntarily accepted the cross, the great enemy of souls has been endeavoring to annihilate the basic truth underlying the process of redemption. He has invented many theories designed to nullify the power of the incarnation. “The power of the Saviour’s Godhead was hidden, He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, in The Youth’s Instructor, April 25, 1901.

“The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity!
He would place His feet in Adam’s steps. He would take man’s fallen nature, and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam. He would overcome Satan, and in thus doing He would open the way for the redemption from the disgrace of Adam’s failure and fall, of all those who would believe on Him.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, on Gen. 3:15, p. 1085.

As man’s substitute Christ did not manifest His power as the Son of God:

No Miracle on His Account

“It was not any part of the mission of Christ to exercise His divine power for His own benefit, to relieve Himself from suffering. This He had volunteered to take upon Himself. He had condescended to take man’s nature, and He was to suffer the inconveniences, and ills, and afflictions of the human family. He was not to perform miracles on His own account. He came to save others.”—Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 276, 277.

“The Saviour of the world became sin for the race. In becoming man’s substitute, Christ did not manifest His power as the Son of God. He ranked Himself among the sons of men. He was to bear the trial of temptation as a man, in man’s behalf, under the most trying circumstances, and leave an example of faith and perfect trust in His heavenly Father.”—Ibid., p. 279.

Note the words of inspiration again:

“Because man fallen could not overcome Satan with his human strength, Christ came from the royal courts of heaven to help him with His own human and divine strength combined. Christ knew that Adam in Eden, with his superior advantages, might have withstood the temptations of Satan, and conquered him. He also knew that it was not possible for man, out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the Fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. In order to bring hope to man, and save him from complete ruin, He humbled Himself to take man’s nature, that, with His divine power combined with the human, He might reach man where he is. He obtains for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that strength which it is impossible for them to gain for themselves, that in His name they may overcome the temptations of Satan.”—Ibid., p. 279.

“Entire justice was done in the atonement. In the place of the sinner, the spotless Son of God received the penalty, and the sinner goes free as long as he receives and holds Christ as his personal Saviour. Though guilty, he is looked upon as innocent. Christ fulfilled every requirement demanded by justice.”—Ellen G. White, in The Youth’s Instructor, April 25, 1901.

O what a wonderful Redeemer! What a Saviour! Dwight L. Moody attempted to describe Christ in these beautiful words:

“To many, Jesus Christ is only a grand subject for a painting, a heroic theme for a pen, a beautiful form for a statue, or a thought for a song. But to those who have heard His voice, who have felt His pardon, who have received His benediction, He is music, warmth, light, joy, hope, and salvation, a friend who never forsakes, who lifts us when others try to push us down. We cannot wear Him out; we pile on Him all our griefs and troubles. He is always ready to help us; He is always ready to lift us. He addresses us with the same love; He beams upon us with the same smile; He pities us with the same compassion. There is no name like His. It is more inspiring than Caesar’s, more musical than Beethoven’s, more conquering than Napoleon’s, more eloquent than Demosthenes’, more patient than Lincoln’s. The name of Jesus throbs with all life, weeps with all pathos, groans with all pains, stoops with all love. His breath is laden with perfume. Who like Jesus can pity a homeless orphan? Who like Jesus can welcome a prodigal back home? Who like Jesus can make a drunkard sober? Who like Jesus can illuminate a cemetery plowed with graves? Who like Jesus can make a queen unto God out of a lost woman of the street? Who like Jesus can kiss away our sorrows?”

Let us prepare for the return of the Lord of the harvest by accepting the offer of His sinless life. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad for the provision that has been made for us, and so reflect a radiant love to the world about us.

The Life That Hastens the Harvest

By GEOFFREY E. GARNE

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Peter 3:11).

THIS QUESTION is most effectively considered in the first person singular: “What manner of person ought I to be?” Let us each apply the question to himself in this way:

What manner of person ought a man or woman to be who has been a Seventh-day Adventist for 20, ten, five, or two years?

What manner of person ought a Seventh-day Adventist youth to be who has had all the privileges of Sabbath school, the MV Society, a Christian education, Christian literature, and a Christian home?

What manner of person ought a Seventh-day Adventist leader to be, whether a minister, church elder, deacon, deaconess, Sabbath school superintendent, or MV leader?

What manner of person does God have a right to expect him to be? What manner of person does the church have a right to expect him to be? What manner of person does the world have a right to expect him to be?

To make the question even more searching, let us think of the adjectives one could supply in answer to the question—Holy, Christlike, dedicated, kind, loving, gentle, honest, pure, just, sincere, earnest, Spirit-filled! You could supply a dozen others!

Am I that kind of person?

“What manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” The word conversation as used in the New Testament is not confined to the narrow usage applied to it today—namely “spoken communication.” The word thus translated means, “manner of life,” or “way of life.” Christianity is not merely a creed—it is a way of life!
Especially is this true of the brand of Christianity that must be exhibited to the world at a time when everything around us is going to be dissolved.

The question indicates that our way of life is very important to God. (For let us not overlook the fact that it is God and not Peter who is asking us the question! The Bible is full of God's questions to man. The first is recorded in Genesis 3:9 when He asked Adam and Eve, “Where art thou?” And one of God's last questions to man is this one in 2 Peter 3:11. It is a question addressed by God to kind of personal listers—to those who live in anticipation of the fact that soon, very soon, everything around us is going to be dissolved.

Surely God has a right to expect that our way of life shall correspond to the urgency of the hour in which we live!

It is customary nowadays to hear people say, “My private life is my own affair.” It is a type of attitude that divorces a person's professional, public life from his personal, inner life. In other words, the man I am as a politician, attorney, doctor, college professor, businessman, artist, is all that concerns the outside world. The kind of life I lead when I'm off duty is nobody else's business. But this can never be true of a Christian! God's question reaches down into the most intimate details of our private lives. When He asks, “What kind of life should a person live who is living on the brink of eternity?” He is asking,

What kind of home life should such a person live?
What kind of thought life?
What kind of social life?
What kind of recreational life?
What kind of business life?
What kind of professional life?
What kind of community life?
What kind of personal life?
What kind of prayer life?
What kind of reading life?
What kind of music-listening life?
What kind of TV-screen-watching life?
What kind of eating and drinking life?
What kind of love life?
What kind of money-spending life?
What kind of witnessing life?
What kind of giving life?
What kind of "total" life?

God's question, as it relates itself to every sphere of my life, challenges me as to what kind of husband or wife I ought to be; what kind of father or mother; what kind of son or daughter; what kind of teacher or student; what kind of preacher or parishioner; what kind of craftsman or farmer; what kind of neighbor and citizen; what kind of employer or employee; what kind of driver on the highway; what kind of customer or supplier; what kind of tax payer, tithepayer, or steward; what kind of Sabbathkeeper; what kind of missionary-worker?

The question, “What manner of persons ought ye to be?” follows us to church, to school, to work; onto the playground, the golf course; to our homes, into our living rooms, our dining rooms, our bedrooms, our studies, our recreation rooms, our TV rooms, our garages. It follows us onto the highway. It goes with us on our travels, and it even goes with us on our dates and outings. To haunt us? To spoil our fun? No! To elevate us! If it challenges what we are doing, thinking, saying, it is in order to awaken within us the disposition to live on the highest possible level of thought, communication, and action. In answer to its challenge, it seeks constantly to call from within our souls the response, "The highest, the very highest way of life, is the way of life for me!"

An Impossible Attainment?

Is such a standard of high and holy living impossible to attain? Satan would have us believe that it is! But God has not called us to dwarfdom. He has called us to the fullest measure of spiritual stature. He has chosen us. It is us this in His Word —"As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15, R.S.V.). "Attain . . . to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13, R.S.V.).

It is not in ourselves to attain to this standard, but we need not rely on our own resources. All the inexhaustible resources of omnipotence have been placed at our disposal in Jesus Christ, through whom we may experience the fulfillment of our high calling. "Him we proclaim . . . teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ," the intrepid apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:28, and in the next verse he continues, "For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he mightily inspires within me" (R.S.V.). "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph. 1:4, R.S.V.).

Holy and blameless! How is this humanly possible? It isn't! But it is divinely possible as we submit ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit and permit Him to do His work in our lives.

A railroad freight car has no power to move itself so much as an inch along the track. Neither by shaking itself nor by straining every one of its steel muscles would it be able to get itself mobile. The only hope it has of moving is in becoming coupled to the mighty locomotive, which possesses all the power the freight car needs to do for it what it cannot do for itself. As long as it remains linked up, it can travel at whatever speed the locomotive travels, and scale whatever gradient it scales. Through the coupling, the power of the locomotive is actually transferred to the car. Uncouple it, and it immediately becomes as motionless and dormant as it was before. Thus it is that we receive power to live the Christian life by becoming linked to God, the source of all power, through Jesus Christ.

"Christ came in human form to show the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds and of the fallen world that ample provision has been made to enable human beings to live in loyalty to their Creator."—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 227.

"He [Christ] withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command . . . There is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. . . . Not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the source of His power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities. . . . Men may have a power to resist evil—a power . . . that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame."—Ibid., p. 409.

"The law requires righteousness, —a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them . . . Christ imparts men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ."—The Desire of Ages, p. 762.

"Christ came to this world and lived the law of God, that man might have perfect mastery over the natural inclinations which corrupt the soul. The Physician of soul and body, He gives victory over warring lusts. He has provided every facility, that man may possess completeness of character."—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 130, 131.

"None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian
character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through cooperation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory.

"Of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God's word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord, and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help."—The Ministry of Healing, p. 182.

This then, dear fellow pilgrim, is the high calling wherewith we are called. God has not called us to mock us! He loves us and designs to make of us exhibits to the universe of His power to save such as you and me, and to make us fit to dwell in His presence. The greater the degradation from which He has saved us, the greater will be the glory that will redound to His name for the exceeding riches of His grace. Let us take Him at His word! Trust Him to do what He has promised! "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

WHAT WE ALL would like to see is a church that is made up of genuine Christians who are spotless and who bear the perfect image of Christ. We would like to see the ministers stand as God's mouthpieces to the people, men who in thought, word, and action represent their Lord. We would like to see every minister sense his responsibility as God's appointed guardian of the church and as a watchman on the walls of Zion, ever ready to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy; ministers whose spiritual senses are not hemmed in but who are always able, because of their constant connection with Christ, to discern any danger and in love, patience, and holy boldness to warn the people of any peril.

We would like to see every lay member in the church ringing true and honest, possessing a character that is without one spot or stain. We would not like to see in the church any member who is impure, ambitious, world-loving, proud, self-sufficient, false-tongued, faithless, critical of the brethren and of the leadership, selfish, not cheerful in giving, or uncharitable to the weak. If this is what we would want to see in the church, this is wonderful. God likes to see the church like that too. But if the church were to be made up of people who are spotless would you as a lay member and I as the minister be in it? If all the unsanctified ministers and lay members were sifted out and only those whose characters are without one spot or wrinkle remain, where would you and I be? Would we be among the noble few who have surrendered self to the will of God, and have yielded their hearts to the sovereignty of love?

A Sifting Coming

There is a shaking and a sifting coming. Concerning Israel God declared: "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos 9:9). God's people today also will be sifted. Indeed the sifting is in progress. It will increase in intensity.

"Shaking" and "sifting" are figurative expressions that designate a particular experience of separation. Every child of God individually, and the church as a whole, will undergo a special trial of faith. The figure of sifting likens the purifying of the church to the work of the farmer who, after cutting the grain and threshing it to separate the kernels from the stalk (usually by beating it out with a stick, see Judges 6:11 and Ruth 2:17), undertakes the work of winnowing. This is generally accomplished by tossing up the grain against the wind with a fork (see Jer. 4:11, 12). Thus the broken straw and chaff are dispersed, and the grain falls to the ground. After the winnowing, one process remains: that of sifting. Since in the winnowing process not all the foreign material is carried away, a sieve is used (see Amos 9:9). In it the grain is tossed about to separate the bits of earth and other impurities from the grain. As the sieve is shaken, the good wheat is retained while the dust and other impurities pass through the mesh. This sifting process separates the good from the bad, the wholesome from the impure.

A similar sifting will take place in the church in a more specific way than is now taking place. It will affect...
every person. This sifting, while it will purify and strengthen some, will purge and destroy many.

In the parable of the ten virgins Jesus describes the sifting that will take place in the church at the end of time (Matt. 25:1-13). The experience of the virgins illustrates “the experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 406). In that parable “all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet Him,’ many are unready. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit.”—Ibid., p. 408.

This is a tragic picture. And who composes the “many” who are described as “unready”? They are all church members who today attend our churches and participate in their different activities. The parable refers to them as “foolish virgins.” They are in the bridal party but are not really part of it. And what makes their case so utterly pathetic is that they “are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up.”—Ibid., p. 411.

They are so close and yet so far. They are with the winners but they themselves are losers. When a crisis comes their real character is revealed. They have been building superficially. They refused to dig deep and exercise their faculties to the limit. They forget that the Bible instruction is: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27). They love God only with part of their heart and part of their soul and part of their strength and part of their mind. These are the members that use their mind and study the Bible but never dig deeply for its hidden treasures. These are the members that forget that “life is too short to be trifled away” (ibid., p. 342). They waste precious moments and yet feel they have no time to witness for Christ or speak of the precious chapters in their experience.

They disregard the rules of health and eat and drink as they please, thus willfully wasting their “strength” instead of using it to the glory of God. These are the members who think that donations of money can take the place of labor to win souls for Christ. Or the members who hoard their money, forgetting that “money is of no more value than sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life, in blessing others, and advancing the cause of Christ.”—Ibid., p. 351.

These are the members who give money to the church, seeking prestige in the church more than God’s blessing. These are the members who pray that God will forgive them but refuse to forgive their brethren. These are the members who listen to the sermons Sabbath after Sabbath but their lives remain the same. They do not know what it means that “conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies” (ibid., p. 331). They are willing to criticize others but never think of criticizing themselves so as not to allow “one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected” (ibid.).

The trouble with these members is that they never surrendered their wills to Christ. They pray “Thy will be done” but follow their own will. They are poor soldiers that weaken the army of God. They fight poorly because they refuse to realize that “the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love.”—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 141.

In the church of God today there are many such members. “This is why the church is here and why the standard is lowered,” states Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 340. There are too many members with a will of their own. They claim to be part of the body of Christ but do not want to be guided by Christ its Head (see Col. 1:18), who has “purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being” (ibid., p. 326). It is for this reason that God will permit a special shaking and sifting to take place. The church must be purified. And oh, how many will be sifted out! Listen to this:

“Soon God’s people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers.”—Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 136.

“The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church.”—Ibid., vol. 4, p. 89.

“Ministers and people are unprepared for the time in which they live, and nearly all who profess to believe present truth are unprepared to understand the work of preparation for this time. In their present state of worldly ambition, with their lack of consecration to God, their devotion to self, they are wholly unfit to receive the latter rain.”—Ibid., vol. p. 81.

Many Shaken Out

“From what was shown me, but a small number of those now professing . . . the truth would . . . be saved.”—Ibid., vol. 2, p. 445.

“Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-Keeping people of God.”—Ibid., vol. 8, p. 41.

“When the law of God is made void the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate, will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.”—Selected Messages, book 2, p. 368.

What a sad picture it is to see so many cowardly ones leave their Master and turn to the world. Indeed, “wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13, 14).

“The sieve is moving. Let us not say: Stay Thy hand, O God. The church must be purified, and it will be.”—Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 100.

Three important events among others bring about the sifting of the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad. First, the crisis of the mark of the beast. “The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield up the powers that be,
Conscience is God's great watchdog. Safe and secure is the home where each one has committed his heart to Christ. When the world's worst influences are beating on the doors or are prying at the windows that guard your family's innocency and integrity, our magazines offer PROTECTION!

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rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.”

—Ibid., vol. 5, p. 81.

Second, the preaching of the straight testimony will divide the true from the false. “The shaking . . . would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. . . . Some will not bear this straight testimony, they will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.”—Early Writings, p. 270.

Introduction of False Theories

Third, the introduction of false theories. “When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand. They slide into any position to suit the tenor of their feelings of bitterness.”—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 112.

When that test comes to us, where will we choose to stand? In the church—or outside of it? “If you indulge stubbornness of heart, and through pride and self-righteousness do not confess your faults, you will be left subject to Satan’s temptations . . . . The multitude of deceivings that will prevail in these last days will encircle you, and you will change leaders and not know that you have done so.”—Ellen White, in Review and Herald, Dec. 16, 1890. “There is a class . . . who cherish secret feelings of dissatisfaction against those who bear the burden in this work . . . . The great sifting time is just before us. The jealous and the faultfinding, who are watching for evil, will be shaken out.”—Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 281.

“Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive.”—The Great Controversy, p. 625. “Those who are true to principle will not be shaken.”—Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, p. 93.

There is one glorious note about this sifting. It is the fact that the church stands immovable amid its storm. Indeed, “The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat.”—Selected Messages, book 2, p. 380.

Let us never think for one moment that the church will fall. This will never happen. All that the shaking and the sifting does is to shake out the unfaithful members, who may go out one after another, and “company” after “company,” but the church itself will continue on. In fact, it will grow and receive “tribe” after “tribe” from the loyal multitudes who are now outside.

God loves His church. It “is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, and He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church.”—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 15.

The Lord is yearning for the souls of all. He has no desire that any should perish but that all may come to Him and be saved. He is able to save you if you are willing. Surrender to God your will. Surrender it now and be at peace. “Put your trust in the Lord” (Ps. 4:5). Those who put their trust in Him will not be ashamed.

Remember that fiery trials will come but you need not be shaken out. Jesus is praying for you. He says to you as He said to Peter: “Sa-tan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31, 32). What an assurance to those who put their trust in Jesus! With Jesus on our side, victory is assured. He is our strength and our surety.

Sabbath, November 10

Harvest Home

By ROBERT H. PIERSON

KING RUDAHIGWA of Rwanda had made an appointment to pay a brief visit to our Central African Union constituency meeting in Gitwe. He was due to arrive at three o'clock in the afternoon. Long before the appointed hour the large church building was packed to capacity with eager members and friends waiting in keen anticipation the arrival of their sovereign. The welcome was planned. The choir and the speakers were in readiness.

Three o'clock came and passed. Three-thirty. Four o'clock. Four-thirty passed. The clock struck five. His Majesty still had not arrived. By five-thirty we concluded that the king had been forced by circumstances to change his plans and he would not be coming. We dismissed the meeting, and most of the disappointed people left for their homes in the nearby hills.

About six o'clock several large new cars roared onto the mission property. The cry went up, “The king is here! The king is here!” Word spread quickly. Running from all directions the people hurried back to the church to meet their king. Many, however, who had grown tired of waiting and gone to their homes were not present for the occasion. They missed greeting the king because they had given up and gone about their own work.

Another King Is Coming

Another King is coming—coming soon. Your King and my King—King Jesus Himself! On every hand events proclaim in stentorian tones the imminence of His return for His people. In fact, He might have been here before now.

The Lord’s plans and preparation for the great family reunion at His second advent could have been brought to fruition decades ago! His service in the heavenly sanctuary as our mediator and judge could have been finished. The warning of a world in sin could “ere this” have been given. This truth Ellen White makes clear.

But we are still here. The work is not finished. Jesus is continuing His work in the courtroom above. He has not yet returned in power and glory as He promised. His chosen ones are still earth-bound.

What is wrong? Just God’s people—you and I—still delay the Master’s
return! Listen to these words of our Saviour: “When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puttheth in the sicken, because the harvest is come” (Mark 4:29).

“When the fruit is brought forth,” Jesus says, there will be no further delays. The sicken will be thrust in. The harvest will come.

“The harvest is the end of the world” (Matt. 13:39), Jesus Himself said. The Master tells us, “When the fruit is brought forth”—when your characters are perfected, when the church has made the needed preparations—“the harvest will come. I will fulfill the promise of My second advent.”

Of course this does not mean that God is going to wait until every one of His children is ready. In the parable of the ten virgins, the bridegroom did not wait for the five foolish virgins to rouse themselves and replenish their supply of oil. At midnight he arrived, and the unready, foolish virgins were left outside. As a warning to those presuming on the long-suffering of God, Jesus added, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (chap. 25:13).

Again, in the parable of the talents the lord of the servants did not wait until the servant with the one talent decided to trade with his talent. He came while the one-talent man was unready.

Although it is true that in His mercy God has postponed the day of Jesus’ return, this does not mean He will postpone it indefinitely. According to Bible prophecy a series of events will be initiated that will quickly precipitate the end. “The final movements will be rapid ones.” Those who put off their preparation until the crisis comes may find suddenly they have no opportunity for salvation is forever past. This is why Jesus warned, “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (chap. 25:13).

Whether or not individually we are ready, when God, in whose power are the times and seasons, decides to bring the end, it will come. Many at that time will be unready. The five foolish virgins pleaded, “Lord, Lord, open to us” (chap. 25:11), but they were denied. The man who was ready received the kingdom of heaven. “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10:37).

“Let the remnant of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message.”—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 406.

**We May Hasten His Return**

“It is the privilege of every Christian,” Ellen White writes, “not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 69.

Seventh-day Adventists are looking for Jesus’ return. We say we are. For more than a century we have been devising plans and programs to preach God’s last-day message “in all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14).

Plans and programs are good and necessary. The Lord expects us to do our part in finishing His work. Plans and programs there will be, but human machinery must not confuse the true message—character development—producing human lives that reveal the attributes of Jesus Christ to an unbelieving world. This is our first and most important work.

The glory of Adventism is not in our organization. It is not in our glistening institutions, in our modern medical units, nor in our representative centers of learning, as important as these are. The glory of Adventism is not in our mercy clinics, nor in our house-to-house preaching, nor in our spired sanctuaries. The glory of Adventism is in the living Christ shining forth in the lives of those who have chosen this message as their way of life. “He shall come to be glorified in his saints” (2 Thess. 1:10). Kenneth Taylor paraphrases verses 11, 12, “Our God will make you the kind of children he wants to have. . . . Your greatest glory will be that you belong to him.”

If we, with His help, will get ready—develop characters like His, with the fruits of the Spirit present in our lives—we will be doing a work in our lives that will hasten His return.

In this closing generation of earth’s history God desires a church made up of Christlike men and women who will vindicate His word and His will. He will present to His Father and to the unfallen beings of other worlds a people who measure up on every point. They must appear “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27). Only such will be “called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9).

“The supreme vindication of Christ’s ways will take place when the whole family of His saints is gathered together. Then the universe will see the value of His sacrifice and the success of the course He pursued. Thus the Saviour will be glorified. . . . As the artist is glorified in his masterpiece, so Christ is glorified before the heavenly throng by His handiwork—the miracles of His grace.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, on 2 Thess. 1:10.

Heaven must be a safe place. After God cleanses this sinful world, rebellion will not rise up the second time. “An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it” (Isa. 35:8).

Never again will there be war in heaven. Never again will the seeds of sin be sown among the ransomed of the Lord. The traits of character that cost Lucifer his place in heaven must never be found in the glory land. Those whose feet walk “the way of holiness” will be men and women who have gained full and final victory over sin. Their characters will resemble that of their great Exemplar, who made their presence in His prepared place possible. “The unclean shall not pass over it.” Heaven will be a safe place because it will be inhabited by safe people who are like Jesus. None other will enter the gates of God.

**Begin Heaven Here and Now**

Walking with Jesus today prepares us to walk with Him in eternity. We may begin heaven here and now. “To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 421.

Heaven will be a safe place because those who “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” in the earth made new will be those who fol-
lowed Him during their earth-bound lifetime, those who caught the beauty of His character and by His grace became like Him!

If character development on the part of God’s people is the delaying factor in Christ’s return, if heaven would not be safe inhabited by people with unperfected characters, if we may hasten our Saviour’s advent by the development of Christlike characters, we must understand what is involved.

Centuries ago Christ came in the likeness of human flesh: He “was in all points tempted like as we are” (Heb. 4:15). “Christ, the outshining factor in Christ’s return, if heaven would not be safe inhabited by people with unperfected characters, if part of God’s people is the delaying sent God to have part in the harvest and in all points tempted like as we are” world as its light. He came to represent God to men.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 416. God sent Him that He might reveal what character the redeemed must possess if they are to have part in the harvest and inherit the place Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Christ came the first time to reveal to the world the kind of people He would take back to heaven with Him when He returns the second time. You and I must know more about this needful preparation. When we do we will know much more about revival and reformation, which the Lord tells us must and will come among God’s people before Jesus returns.

Ellen White beautifully sums up what God expects of His people in Christlikeness: “The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. Evil thoughts and acts will be put away, for “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, are “works of the flesh” (verse 19). When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin.” “Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like” will all be overcome through the grace of Christ, for “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (verses 20, 21).

There Is a Life of Unselfish Service, Too!

The character developed after the example of Christ will constrain the child of God to follow Him who “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Of His life of service and ministry Jesus declared: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19).

In the dark world in which we live the active service of Christ, as well as the more passive attributes of the Master, will shine through to those with whom we come in contact. “All around us are heard the wails of a world’s sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life’s hardships and misery. “Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do

more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 417.

“There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.”—Ibid., p. 418.

How Such a Character Is Perfected

Often we rebel against the very instruments God uses to enable us to develop the attributes that will vindicate the character and justice of God—that will make us safe to place in heaven. For He frequently employs the crucible of trial and suffering to bring forth a soul fit for His kingdom.

“This proving of your faith is planned to result in praise and honor and glory in the day when Jesus Christ reveals himself” (1 Peter 1:7, New Testament) “The years of self-denial, of privation, of trial, affliction, and persecution that Paul endured, he called a moment. The things of the present time were not considered worth mentioning when compared with the eternal weight of glory that awaited them when the warfare should be over. These very afflictions were God’s workmen, ordained for the perfection of Christian character.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, on 2 Cor. 4:17, 18, p. 1099.

The Lord has made every provision for His people to develop characters that will stand now and for eternity. Through the blood of Christ and the grace of God we have both hope and help! Now is the time for us to cast our lot fully on God’s side and to accept the provision of help He has made so that we may live for Him in this life and that we may live with Him throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

The choice, dear brother or sister, is yours to make now! “Everything is ready to go as soon as you are ready!”

Annual Sacrifice Offering To Be Taken at This Time.

20 R&H, October 4, 1973
Children's Lessons for the Week of Prayer

The Allegory of Arnion

By BEATRICE M. NEALL

To the Leader:

Since all children love a story, this series of Week of Prayer talks has been prepared as an allegory. As in any parable, not every detail corresponds to reality, but certain basic truths are presented, including the plans of salvation, with emphasis on the final scene. The main ideas stressed are that we must have a Christlike character and we must win souls in order to be ready for Jesus to come.

Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy references are included in the story for the benefit of the leader, though these should not be read. After the story is told, the teacher can guide the children in a discussion of the meanings hidden in the story. Suggested questions and answers are supplied.

FIRST DAY

OUTSIDE THE GATE

ONE DAY, as I was traveling along a country road I came to a scenic spot where there was a viewing glass. When I put my eyes to the glass, I found that I could see not only this world but the worlds above and below.

I looked and saw a great mountain on which were beautiful palace grounds surrounded by a wall. I also saw a throne, high and lifted up, where Great King sat with his son, Arnion (Ar-N’ion), at his right hand. From the throne there gushed a river of water, brilliant as fire (Rev. 22:1; Dan. 7:10), which flowed through the palace grounds, down the mountainside, to lands far away, all ruled over by Great King. I noticed that one valley, called Polluted Land, was covered with a heavy smog. But up on Great Mountain the air was clear and the sun shone brightly.

Inside the palace grounds were thousands of servants who did Great King's business, keeping in touch with the many lands over which he ruled. I also saw two children, Yeled (YE-L’ed), a boy, and his sister, Yalda (Yal-DA), playing inside the palace grounds with special servants, Kerub and Saraf, to take care of them. But though the children loved Kerub and Saraf, they loved Arnion, Great King's son, best of all. In the morning, as soon as they woke up, they ran to find him. They were allowed to enter the throne room, where they worked beside Great King, to see him anytime they wanted to. And in the late afternoon there was a special time when he took them for a walk in the garden. (Gen. 3:8.) They liked that time best of all.

One day during their afternoon walk, Arnion's voice grew serious. "Yeled and Yalda," he said, "there is something very important you must know. Down in Polluted Land there is an enemy who hates us all. His name is Ophis (AH-fees). He was once the highest servant in the palace, but he rebelled against me. You are safe from him as long as you stay inside the palace grounds. But if you go outside, he will surely find you and catch you.

"Don't worry, Arnion, we will not go outside," said Yeled. "I'm glad the palace has a high wall around it so we can't get out."

Yeled followed Yalda.

Just then the two of them heard Arnion's voice. It was time for their afternoon walk in the garden. "Yeled! Yalda!" the prince called.

The stranger spoke. "Come with me, children. Don't listen to him." They obeyed. "I will take you to my palace. I have mirrors on all the walls. You can look at yourselves all you want to."

Down, down the hill went the children with the stranger. "What is your name?" they asked. "Ophis," he answered. Yeled and Yalda looked at each other. "I suppose Arnion has told you many bad things about me," he continued, "but you mustn't believe what he says. He is a tyrant. I am your friend."

It was nighttime when the children reached the palace of Ophis, aglow with a thousand lights. Inside, the walls were covered with magic beauty. Then Ophis brought them each a glass of drink. "This will take you to my palace," he said. "I will open your eyes to see the most beautiful colors. Your ears will be opened to hear the most exciting music. Your minds will be opened to understand great mysteries."

Yalda sipped the drink. How delicious it tasted! Her whole body tingled with excitement. Yeled drank too. Soon the room seemed to shine with color. The children saw themselves in the mirrors and were enchanted. After a while they fell into a sleep of wonderful dreams.

How long they slept they did not know. Then Arnion woke up shivering. "Yeled, wake up!" she called.

"Where are we?" asked Yeled. Both of them were terrified to find that they were in a dark room with a cold, hard floor, surrounded by high walls. The air seemed heavy and burned their throat and eyes. After many hours the dim light of morning shone through a high window. The children noticed a mirror on the wall. But when they looked at it, they were horrified to discover that their white robes were gone, and they were clothed in rags.

Then they heard footsteps, and a loud voice—"ha, ha, ha!—the same mocking sound they had ever heard. Ophis was laughing at them.

"Arnion! Come and save us!" they cried.

"This made Ophis very angry. "Arnion can't get you here!" he shouted. "You are mine! Mine! MINE!"

After a long time Ophis came in with more of his drink. "Take this!" he commanded. The children drank and saw more bright colors and heard thrumming music. But the effect soon wore off, and they felt more miserable than ever.

Days went by. They became thin and weak, with eyes sunken in and ribs sticking out. Every day they begged Ophis for more of the drink to make them forget their troubles. But after a while it only made their troubles more horrible. As they drank they saw devils and snakes dancing around them. And when they called to Arnion, they heard only the mocking "Ha, ha, ha!" of Ophis.

Then one day the children heard a roar of anger. "Oh, what a shame," said Ophis. "Go down! You can't come here!" he kept shouting. The children could tell that the enemy, whoever he was, was coming closer.

Then the battle began. Oh, what a struggle it was! What shouts from Ophis, what groans from his attacker. Suddenly the children recognized that it was the voice of Arnion. They listened in horror as he cried out in pain. For
hours the battle raged. Then all was quiet, and night came on. In the darkness Yeled and Yalda sobbed and sobbed. Where was Arnion? Had Ophis killed him? Would they always be his prisoners?

Early the next morning the door to the prison opened. The children's heads ached so from crying that they hardly knew what they saw. But through the door a voice said, "Yeled, come with me. Arnion has come for you. The door is open. You may come out."

Looking more closely, they saw Arnion. They hardly knew him, his face was so bruised. He held out his hands to them, and they were torn and bleeding.

"The children wanted to go to him. But the poison of Ophis had made theirs wither. "Come and get me, Arnion. You take me out," begged Yeled.

"No, Yeled. You must make the effort."

Neither Yeled nor Yalda moved. It was time for another drink from Ophis. They both felt a strong desire for it. How could they give it up? Then Yeled remembered the snakes, the devils, the pain. This was his only hope. "Yes, Arnion, I will come," he said. In an instant, strength came into his thin body. He stood up and stepped out the door into Arnion's arms.

Then he turned back to Yalda. "Yalda, you must come. Get up, Yalda. You can do it! I did it!"

Yalda lifted her head, and with that motion came strength. She got up and went to Arnion. He put his arms around both children and led them out of the prison and through the gates of Ophis.

The children looked into Arnion's face and wept at the bruises they saw. "Oh, Arnion, how you suffered to rescue us! We're so glad that you came and got us! Take us back to the palace of Ophis."

"I'm going to give each of you a life line. I will also send Kerub and Saraf to be with you."

"Oh, wonderful, Arnion! I want to see them too badly!" exclaimed Yeled.

"Do you want to put them on now?"

"Yes, I have new robes for both of you. Do you want to put them on now?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Arnion.

Then Arnion took off their rags and clothed them with robes lovelier than the ones they had before. "This looks just like your robe, Arnion!" she exclaimed.

"It is my robe. Yalda. It's cut from the same fabric. It's all the same kind of clothes in this land, but I want you always to wear my robe. When my father sees you wearing this robe, he will accept you as his beloved child. And when the people of the land see this robe, they will know that you belong to Great King. If you keep your robes white, you will wear them back to the palace."

"What if we make them dirty?"

"There's only one cleaning agent—my blood." (Rev. 7:14).

"Your blood? Oh, Arnion!"

"Yes, my blood. When you soil your robe, you must come here to the fountain. It will run red with my blood. Here you may wash it clean."

I saw that when Arnion and the children passed by the house, some of the king's family saw them go by. They called the others together and went up the hillside to meet him. Arnion greeted them all most lovingly. Then he brought the two children to the father of the family, whose name was Pastor. "Take care of these children for me," he said. Pastor put his arms around them.

Then Arnion stood before the whole company and said, "Children, I want you to love one another like this. (John 13:12.) And remember that I have many other children not of this family. (John 10:16.) You must go through all of Polluted Land and invite them into the family. You have the love of a father above. Many will not believe you—they will hate and persecute you. But others will receive you gladly. There are thirty-ones—you may bring them in. (Mark 10:33.) There are hungry ones—you must bring them living manna. There are orphans—you must bring them home. You have given the invitation to every one in Polluted Land, I will come back to get you all and bring you to the palace. (Matt. 24:14.)"

"Know my children, it is time for me to go. Remember to come to the fountain every morning. Remember to keep your robes white and your life lines open. Remember that I will
be standing by the throne listening for messages from you. Good-by.

Yeled and Yalda bided to Pastor as Arnion turned and began to walk up the hill. Higher and higher he climbed, as the family stood gazing after him. Finally they could see him no more through the smog and through their tears. (Acts 1:9)

He was gone.

But they were not alone!

**Discussion:**

1. What is the house of the king's family? (The church.)
2. Who is Helper, whom Arnion promised to send? John 14:16. (The Holy Spirit.)
3. What is the life line? (Prayer.)
4. What is the life line? (Prayer.)

**Discussion:**

1. What is the manna? John 6:31, 33, 35. (Jesus.)
2. Who is Yeled? (A great red dragon.)
3. How long he lay there he could not tell. But then he felt cool air on his face, and heard the voice of Arnion. "Yeled, do you love me?"

Toward evening he went outside for a breath of fresh air. His heart was gone. He hadn't asked for an answer. There was no answer from the throne. Yeled hadn't asked for an answer. He wasn't using his life line. He was just talking to himself. After pacing the floor a while, he threw his face down on the bed, kicked his feet in the air, and dropped off into an unhappy sleep.

Next morning at the first gray light of dawn, the birds began to sing their wake-up songs. Yeled was indignant. "Stop! What are you doing there?" He was dead. How long it had been.

Tough swore angerly. "Let's mess up his robe."

Yeled's back. "You've got it on underneath!"

Yeled's eyes got used to the dark, he could see boys and girls sitting around in the room. The air was heavy with smoke.

"Who've ya got there?" asked Tough. "Well, if you're our white-preacher Listen, Preach, ain't gonna tell us what to do, ya hear? Say, yer lookin' better, though. What happened to yer white robe?" Tough rubbed his hair over some lump on Yeled's back. "You've got it on underneath" he bellowed. The rest of the crowd roared with laughter.

Yeled's face got red. "No, I don't," he screamed.

"Leave him alone, you guys!" said Turncoat. "'Lay off, will ya?"

"O.K. let's see whether he's still a saint or not. Let's have him try some of our special brew and see how he likes it. Gabby-girl, go get him a drink from above, or he will die."

"Stop calling me 'Preach!'" demanded Yeled.

"That's what you are, aren't you?" asked Gabby. "Go get her way to the get the drink. "Always talking about Arnion!"

Yeled swore. "Who cares about Arnion?"

"Say, that's quite some language for a saint," said Tough. "O.K., Yellow."

"My name's not Yellow!

"If you're not yellow, drink this down and we'll believe you!" Tough took a glass from Gabby and thrust it into Yeled's hand.

Yeled lifted it to his mouth, and smelled a familiar smell. One whiff brought back all the horror of another dark room with cold cement walls and floor. His heart stopped when he heard an awful, "Ha! Ha! Ha!" He didn't know it was Tough laughing at him for holding the glass motionless in front of his face. He thought it was Ophis. He thought he was back in the dungeon. Then he thought he saw something else—there at the door stood Arnion with blood on his face and hands. Yeled looked into his eyes. He saw pity and sorrow but no anger.

The glass slipped from Yeled's fingers and crashed on the floor. He jumped, turned for the door, and ran up the stairs three at a time. It was night outside. He ran and ran, not caring what last he did before going up a hill. He heard the sound of rushing water. He stripped off the belt and jeans and sank down on the grass. Even in the moonlight he could see that his robe was wrinkled and dirty. He looked at his life line. It was dead. How long it had been that way, he did not know.

"Arnion, I failed you," he moaned. "I was ashamed of you and your robe. I'm a yellow coward. Oh, Arnion, can you ever forgive me?"

Yeled dropped his face into the grass and sobbed.

How long he lay there he could not tell. But then he felt cool air on his face, and heard the voice of Arnion. "Yeled, do you love me?"

"Arnion, you know that I love you," he whispered back. His line to the throne was alive. "I'm a good friend. Your sins are forgiven," came back the voice. "Now go and find Yalda. She is in danger."

**Discussion:**

1. Do you remember someone else who cursed and swore and said he did not know Jesus? (Peter.)
2. What mistakes did Yeled make that led him into some trouble? a. When he got discouraged (after the boys beat him up), he did not talk to Arnion. b. He slept late instead of going up the hill
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as was his custom for his morning mass.

c. He hid his robe. Should we ever hide the fact that we are Christians?
d. He thought he could help the other tel-

d. He was ashamed of Arnion. He cursed

3. Is prayer a two-way conversation? When we talk to God, does He talk back to us? (Acts 1:22, 24; 1 Corinthians 12:3). He is our Helper to come upon you, and then you can be witnesses for Him (Acts 1:8), said Prophet.

"Now, brothers and sisters," he continued, "I have always looked forward to seeing Arnion getting married. Great King has prepared a great marriage feast for him and his bride. I even saw a great supper table, many miles long, all set for the feast! There are places for a great number of guests. All of you are invited to the wedding feast! The Spirit and the Bride say: 'Come! The marriage supper of the Lamb is ready. The bride is ready. (Rev. 21:2). The supper is ready. (Luke 14:23). But, oh, what a shame—the guests aren’t ready! How long are we going to keep them waiting?"

A murmur of surprise went through the assembly. "What a disgrace that we should hold up the greatest wedding in history!" exclaimed Pastor.

Prophet continued. "There is something you can do about it. Great King wants you to go out and invite everybody you can to the great feast, so that his house can be filled. (Luke 14:23). Say to the people, ‘Everything is ready; come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And then, as you give the invitation to everyone in Poluted Land, Arnion will come and bring us to the Holy City to his marriage supper."

Discussion

1. What are the clothes of Arnion, and the clothes of this world? (The character of Christ, and the character of this world. We are talking about more than the dress issue here, though dress is an indication of charac-

ter.)

2. What two things is Arnion waiting for before he comes to take his people home?
   a. He is waiting until people wear the robes he gives them. "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—Christ’s Object Les-

3. Who is Prophet? (God has given a prophet to His people in these last days—Ellen G. White. He is the one who came to us through the prophecies of the Bible.)

4. Who is Arnion’s bride? Rev. 21:9, 10. (The Holy City, New Jerusalem.) It is also possi-

5. What is the wedding feast? (In this story, it refers to the time when God will gather His people to eat with Him in His kingdom. Matt. 22:19; Early Writings, p. 19.)

FIFTH DAY

COME TO THE BANQUET!

THE KING’S FAMILY was electrified by the news that Prophet brought. Arnion had built them a city! He had prepared a great banquet! He had prepared a great wedding feast for them and invited them home! Now they had to get themselves and the whole country ready for the great feast. "How shall we begin?" they asked Prophet.

"You must first make sure that your robes are not worn. You must give them to your neighbors and let them wear them too."

The king’s family began meeting every day in the upper room to plead for the blessing. But
Vanity and Pride and their friends were an-
noyed by these earnest meetings. "Why all the 
excitement?" they said. "Why do we have to be so different from other people?" They set out to chẳng through several services, and then finally packed their things and left. Yalda and Pastor pleaded with them to stay, but they would not listen. Sadly the two of them went back to their families. "Our hearts are sick and weary, our lives are an empty thing. Come as fire, and warm our hearts with love for souls. Come as tongues, and give us words to speak to stir the hearts of men!" Suddenly they felt a blazing fire as they entered the room. There came the sound of a rushing mighty wind that filled all the house where they were sitting. (Acts 2:2). And there appeared tongues of fire, resting on each of them. The fire lighted the darkness. The wind brought life to their souls. The fire warmed their hearts with love. The tongues gave them power to speak to the hearts of men.

Right away some of the brothers went to work printing thousands of invitations to the wed-
ding. "You are the guests that the leaves of autumn," counseled Prophet. "Here is a work that even the children can do. Wherever you go, carry with you invitations to open doors. Armed with invitations, food, and water, the brothers and sisters paired off to twos to do their work. As they were leaving the house, Prophet held them back. "Before you go, proclaim liberty to the captives. Open the prison to those who are bound. (Isa. 58:6, 7.) Remember that even the children must wear the white wedding garment." (Matt. 22:21.)

After that, I saw the king's children going from door to door, their faces lighted with the glory of God. They ran out invitations. Some people dropped them to the ground, some tore them up, some stuffed them into their pockets.

"His mouth is dry," said Yalda. "Let's give him a drink." While Yeled held up his head, she eased a little water down his throat. After a little while he could speak. "I'm so hungry!" he said in a weak voice. The children fed him some manna, and then he began to revive.

"What is your name?" Yeled asked.

"Victim," the man said.

"Well, Victim, we have good news for you. Great King has sent us to tell you that he loves you. He wants you to belong to his family. He wants you to want the invitations, and many threw them out. Some people dropped them to the ground, some tore them up, some stuffed them into their pockets.

"It's really true," said Victim.

"But you must wear the white wedding garment," explained Yeled. "He says, 'Buy from me white garments to clothe you.' " (Rev. 3:18.)

"But I have no money to buy anything."

"He doesn't want money. The price is far higher than you can pay."

"Then I could never pay."

"You can if you really want to. Arion wants—you—all of you—your heart, your strength, your courage. You are offered a high price. He will give you the white robe."

"I would gladly give all that. But how can I find Arion?"

"He is in Great King, standing by the throne of Great King."

"Then he is far away."

"Not really. You can come before the throne by speaking to him through the life line. He has told us to come boldly to the throne to get the help we need. (Heb. 4:16.) Here," said Yeled, putting his life line to Victim's lips; "just speak, and he hears you."

"King of Great King, thank you for sending these children to save my life," said Victim. "Thank you for inviting me to the wedding feast of Arion. I want to go, but I have no wedding robe to wear. I have no money to pay for it."

"Now listen," said Yeled as he held the life line to Victim's ear.

"Victim hears a voice, clear and comforting:

"Remove the filthy garments from him."

"That's Arion talking to his servants," explained Yalda.

"Come, Victim," said Yeled. "Now you belong to the king's family. Now you must come to his house in the upper room to tell them your experiences, and introduce the new members of the family."

Two little girls named Timid and Tiny were among the first to get up and tell their story. "Perhaps they are not so polite as other people," added Victim. "But they gave me invitations to go out and free the slaves of Ophis."

"And we had a hard time. The first man I in
dicated said, 'I don't want to take the chance.'

"And the third man said that he had no money, so I must go look at it. Tell Great King to excuse me!"

"Then Timid spoke up. 'And at the second house, the man said, 'I've just bought a tractor and I want to try it out. Please excuse me.'"

"But I didn't even have clothes for a banquet," said Victim.

"He really is true," said Yeled. "And me to tell you that there is still room for many more at his table. Go out into the highways and cry, 'Whoever is hungry, come and eat!'"

"Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; come, you that have no money. Come, buy and eat!" (Rev. 22:17.)

"When Victor was strong enough, he went out on the streets of Sin City and cried: 'He who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!'" (Isa. 58:1, 2.) "Let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires the water of life without price." (Rev. 22:17.)

Said the Pastor, "I saw that Ophis and his hosts are very angry at the work we are doing," he said. "But still we must fight the battle against him. There is a section of Sin City where he keeps his most wretched slaves. We must rescue all who want to go to the wedding feast. We must break every iron gate. When we do this, we will surely suffer persecution. But Arnion says, 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.' " (Rev. 2:10.)

**Discussion:**

1. Who is Healer? "Help me, Jesus." (Rev. 4:11.)

2. Of what does the story of the upper room remind you? Acts 2:1-4. (Pentecost.) Can we expect to receive the Holy Spirit today? Yes. (The Spirit was poured out when the church first began its work, and it is expected to pour out again in greater measure as the church finishes its work.)

3. Can you guess what the wedding invitations are? (Literature) We need to scatter Christian literature like the leaves of autumn.

4. Does Victim remind you of someone Jesus told about? (The man who was attacked by thieves in the story of the good Samaritan.)

5. What can juniors do to tell people about Jesus' soon coming? (Give out literature. Enroll people in the Bible course, invite people to evangelistic meetings or Sin City School, etcetera. Get the juniors to supply all the ideas they can.)

**SIXTH DAY**

**FREEING THE SLAVES; OPHIS FIGHTS BACK**

*ONLY THE strongest and bravest of the men went out to free the slaves of Ophis, while the others watched them go with many prayers and tears. Those who went were Evangelist, Teacher, Steward, Physician, Healer, Shepherd, Rescuer, Temperance, and Self-control. Yeled wanted to go too, so Evangelist took him along as a partner; but Pastor decided to stay with the family.*

I watched the group go to a section of Sin City called Liberation Land, which really was a strange name, because all the people there lived in cages. I learned that Ophis had named the place himself to make all his slaves think they were free. Now as the men looked over the cages, they decided to attack all the cages once and for all. "I have no money," said Victim. "I must go look at it. Tell Great King to excuse me!"

"He really is true," said Yeled. "And me to tell you that there is still room for many more at his table. Go out into the highways and cry, 'Whoever is hungry, come and eat!'"

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bars of this cage, and I know someone is trying to steal my gold. This cage around me is no protection from thieves. So I have to sit up all night, keeping watch over my treasure. I know of a safe place,” said Steward. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break in and steal. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21, R.S.V.). Now while these two were talking to Money Lover, Evangelist and Yeled came upon a man with both eyes gouged out, walking around and around in a circle, as if he were at ground level. He had been locked in the ground ( Judges 16:21). In spite of his bulging arm and shoulder muscles, he had to strain with all his might to turn the heavy millstone. “Sir, why are you doing such heavy work?” asked Evangelist. “I’m trying to get ahead,” droned the man, without stopping his tread. “It’s no wonder Arnion said, ‘How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of heaven’” (Luke 16:22, R.S.V.).

“Watch out for your life! Body and soul will be saved (Verse 25.)” explained Healer. “Arnion has already suffered for your crimes. You know where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21, R.S.V.).

Yeled could hardly hold back his anger as he saw the wife, named Spendthrift, sitting in one corner of the cage, burning the green paper as fast as her husband turned it over to her. “Stop a minute!” begged Evangelist. “Listen to me! Why do you spend your strength for that which does not satisfy? (Isa. 55:2.) You were not made to be an ox or a machine. You were made to love and be loved! You are a child of Great King!”

The man lifted his head, but his mind seemed as blank as his empty eyes. “You can have eternal life!” continued Evangelist. “I don’t want to live forever!” groaned the man as he continued grinding. At this, Evangelist prayed softly, “O Arnion, open this man’s inner eyes, that he may see. The man answered, “You don’t know what life is, because you are not really living. Great King wants to give you life right now—a life of love, joy, and peace.”

For the first time the man stopped grinding. “What is love?” he asked. Then Evangelist and Yeled told him about the wonderful love of all—the love of Arnion for his children who ran away from him. And as the man listened, tears began to roll out of his empty eyes, showing that his inner eyes had been opened. Yeled left Evangelist release him from the millstone and lead him out of the cage. But when Spendthrift saw what had happened, she was furious. “I’ll report you to his partner,” she shrieked as she ran away. A roar and a scream brought Shephard and Rescue to another cage, where they saw a girl of eighteen clinging to the branch of a tree while a lion, flicking its tail, watched her with greedy eyes from beneath. “Help! I can’t hang on much longer!” she screamed. “Hold on!” called Shephard, while he drew out his sling and fired off a stone that struck the lion on the head. As the great beast rolled over stunned, the girl dropped from the tree and was just a few months time he grew so big and strong that they had to be careful with him. Time after time he would spring on me from behind and knock me down. But even when I was quite badly, I thought he was just being playful. I never dreamed he wanted to hurt me. Then one day he killed a man and tasted blood, and from that time on I could not trust him anymore.”

“You are lucky to be alive,” exclaimed Rescue, “How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 6:19-21, R.S.V.).

“Where is your heart?” asked Shephard. “It’s right here with my treasure, and I know of a safe place,” said Steward. “Listen to this advice from the greatest Banker there is: ‘Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break in and steal. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also’ (Matt. 6:19-21, R.S.V.).”

Physician and Healer, meanwhile, had run to help a man who was crying out in pain. As they came up to him, he turned to see a horrid sight that they could hardly get up close. The sight they saw was even worse. A man had a dead body tied to his body. People with money worried about how to keep from losing it and how to get more. The best place to keep our money is in God’s bank. How do we put it there?

3. Does the man who was grinding at the mill remind you of someone in the Bible? (Samson?) Did you know there are people like him today? They work hard just to “get ahead” that they have no time to enjoy life with God and with their families and friends. What is the meaning of the blind eyes? (They are blind to the real joys of life.)

4. Who is the lion that wanted to eat the girl? 1 Peter 5:8. (Satan.) First Satan comes to us in the form of some pet sin that we think is harmless. Then it gets too strong for us. Even one sin that we love and refuse to give up has power to destroy us.

5. Did you know there are people like him today? They work hard just to “get ahead” that they have no time to enjoy life with God and with their families and friends. What is the meaning of the blind eyes? (They are blind to the real joys of life.)

6. Do you know any of Satan’s slaves whom you can set free? Jesus has promised to send His angels to help you in this work.

SEVENTH DAY

RESCUED!

Now AS I continued to look through the viewing glass, I saw the king’s family run out the back door of the house to flee to the mountain. The older ones and the children could not run very fast, and the way was steep and rough. Desperately they scrambled over rocks and roots, frightened by the shouts of the mob getting closer and closer. Pastor stayed with the slowest ones, who were so bruised and bleeding and out of breath that they finally had to rest. Suddenly a group of armed men rushed upon the gate with raised swords to strike them. But as I watched, Pastor raised his arm and they dropped their swords and fell helpless to the ground. (Early Writings, pp. 15, 284, 285.) Then Pastor turned to the mob and a great uproar awoke. But in the confusion I could not tell who they were except that Evangelist was among them. Others were seized by the guards and thrust into the dens and caves of the rocks. And at the same time the alarm went off, bringing a great number of guards running to see what had happened. On finding many of the cage doors opened, and the slaves escaped, the guards shouted: “Catch those men! Don’t let one of them escape!”

At the sound of all the noise, a great mob from that section of the city gathered together to join in the excitement. “Away with these fellows! They’re not worthy to live!” they shouted. Then I heard shouts and shouts and cries, and saw some of the king’s men fall to the ground. But in the confusion I could not tell who they were except that Evangelist was among them. Others were seized by the guards and thrust into the dens and caves of the rocks. And at the same time the alarm went off, bringing a great number of guards running to see what had happened. On finding many of the cage doors opened, and the slaves escaped, the guards shouted: “Catch those men! Don’t let one of them escape!”

Now I saw that Rescue was able to escape, and by running through side streets, managed to reach the house before the mob got there. As he ran into the house, he opened the door and said, “Flee for your lives! The mob is coming!”

Discussion:
1. What is the meaning of Liberation Land? Did you know that Satan always promises you freedom while making a slave out of you? (Free from taxes, in the test, go shoplifting, smoke very charity, and never brings freedom, only slavery.)

2. Did you ever think it would be fun to have a lot of money? Well, isn’t it? People worry about how to keep from losing it and how to get more. The best place to keep our money is in God’s bank. How do we put it there?

3. Does the man who was grinding at the mill remind you of someone in the Bible? (Samson?) Did you know there are people like him today? They work hard just to “get ahead” that they have no time to enjoy life with God and with their families and friends. What is the meaning of the blind eyes? (They are blind to the real joys of life.)

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for the blood of the king's children. One day all the rulers of Polluted Land gathered together and cried out: "Oh, will you not remove us from under the earth!" they cried. (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5.)

When Arnion led the tremendous sacrifice of his great army into companies and assembled them in the caves of the mountain and cried to the mountain and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the king on his throne, and from the Child of his breast, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17.)

And as I watched I saw the army of Ophis fall to the ground in the prison house of death, come forth! Suddenly the rumbling inside the earth swelled to a roar. The earth was rent, and the thick walls of a great underground prison split open. A host of prisoners held by Ophis from the time of faithful Abel down to the time of fearless Evangelist came forth in the glory of everlasting life. Then Arnion appeared to gather his children together and escort them back up to the throne.

Oh, what a gathering that was, as the servants of God and the holy city lifted the king's children up to meet Arnion. What rejoicing there was in heaven and among the stars of heaven! And as they looked into the face of their father, the answer came back, "Stand and circle each little group of the king's family. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage of Arnion; And his bride has made herself ready." (Rev. 19:14.)

Then Great King himself said with a loud voice, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of Arnion!" (Rev. 22:16.) And as the answer came back, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage of Arnion; And his bride has made herself ready." (Rev. 19:14.)

Now when I stepped away from the viewing glass, I was surprised to discover that it was night already. And as I hurried on my way, this world seemed, oh, so dark and gloomy! I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better country.

Discussion:
1. Would you like to have a viewing glass so that you could see the worlds above and below? You have one already! Guess what it is? (The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. If the children liked this story, encourage them to read Ellen G. White's first vision in Early Writings, pages 13-20, and then direct them to other readings.)
2. What do you think is the greatest joy of being with Jesus? (The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. If the children liked this story, encourage them to read Ellen G. White's first vision in Early Writings, pages 13-20, and then direct them to other readings.)
3. What comfort will they have during this time? (Angels are guarding them and supplying their needs. They can still talk to Jesus. They have the promises of the Bible that He will never leave them nor forsake them.)
4. What is the death decree? (A law that all people be slain! And the answer came back, "Stand fast! Help is coming!" (The Great Controversy, p. 633.) Then I saw that Saraf and other seraphim standing guard over them. The evil men could not get through that mighty guard.)

As darkness fell that evening, bands of evil men surrounded the prison ready to burst in on the prisoners. Other bands climbed the mountain and waited stealthily outside the caves and dens, so none could escape. Suddenly all the bells in Polluted Land began to ring, and a great shout rent the air as the evil men prepared to enter the territory. As soon as it gets dark," he commanded, "sneak up on the foe and wait. Then at midnight, when you hear the bells in the city, be ready and keep them!"

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Robert H. Pierson