

The Church Officers' Gazette

VOL. IX

MARCH EXTRA

NO. 3½

MISSIONARY VOLUNTEER WEEK

March 17-25, 1922

Including

FAMILY ALTAR DAY

TO BE OBSERVED in all the Churches in the United States and Canada.

Plans, Programs, and Readings for the Use of Church Elders and Conference Workers.

PROGRAM

Friday Evening, March 17	
God's Call to the Youth	M. E. Kern
Sabbath, March 18	
Regular Missionary Readings — The Island Fields	
Statement Concerning Missionary Volunteer Week	
Sunday, March 19	
Prayer — Bible and Testimony Reading	
How to Pray	G. B. Thompson
Monday, March 20	
Bread from Heaven	C. A. Russell
Tuesday, March 21	
Progressive, Developing Christians	U. V. Wilcox
Personal Work of the Early Disciples	S. D. Gordon
Wednesday, March 22	
Our Greatest Work	C. K. Meyers
Character Building	Mrs. E. G. White
Thursday, March 23	
Ideals	Mrs. Harriet Holt
Friday, March 24	
Our Choice	C. A. Russell
Sabbath, March 25	
The Family Altar	J. A. Stevens

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!"—*Education*, p. 271.

Origin and Plans

MISSIONARY VOLUNTEER WEEK has come to be quite generally understood and observed among us. Last year the Missionary Volunteer Department prepared a leaflet setting forth the need, outlining the plan, suggesting methods, and citing helps. This was much appreciated by our workers in the field. From this leaflet we quote briefly, showing how the idea of Missionary Volunteer Week had its beginning.

"It was in a union conference committee meeting. Leaders of long experience were in earnest council, considering the work of the Missionary Volunteer Department. What more could be done to save our children and young people, and to enlist them in the Lord's service?"

"Very diligent efforts had been put forth in this union conference to secure a strong corps of conference Missionary Volunteer secretaries. It was recognized, however, that these secretaries could not alone do the work, for they were only the 'leaders,' that in this, as in every other work in God's cause, the hearty co-operation of all departments and the active assistance of the ministers are required.

"Some one suggested: 'We have had special campaigns to raise money, to promote temperance, to circulate literature, and for many other things; why not a special campaign for the salvation of our youth?'

"The suggestion was heartily received and acted upon. A week was appointed, and all workers in the union, just as far as it was possible, spent the appointed week in a special effort for the young people. The workers were assigned to the various churches and companies, and special meetings were held. The meetings were for the whole church, but special attention was given to the winning of the children and the youth.

"As a result of this special effort, a large number of young people were converted and baptized, great blessings came to the entire membership of the churches, and many of the workers obtained a new interest in young people and young people's problems."

At the Autumn Council of the General Conference held in Indianapolis in 1920, the following resolution was passed:

"We recommend, That each union conference arrange for a Missionary Volunteer Week during the year, during which time all workers shall give special attention to the salvation of our young people; and that it be at the same time as the spring Week of Prayer in the schools."

It seems a very fitting thing that this special week be made to coincide with the spring Week of Prayer. March 18-25 has been selected for this special week in 1922.

It is the plan that the entire force of laborers in each conference, as far as can be consistently arranged, should visit the churches during this week, and that a special effort be made to reach all our children and youth; to bring such as are not in the fold to a decision for Christ; and to lead others to a deeper sense of their responsibilities and to a complete consecration to God.

In carrying out the action of the General Conference Committee, it would be well for the local conference committee to plan with the Missionary Volunteer secretary in the placing of workers in the churches during this week.

Definite calls have come in from the field, asking that material be furnished and a definite program suggested for each day. It is in compliance with these requests that the Missionary Volunteer and Home Missionary Departments submit this program.

In some conferences, no doubt, there is not a sufficient number of laborers to supply each church during the week. It is thought that this matter will prove especially helpful in churches and companies where no worker from the conference is sent.

Do not forget the Juniors. Seek to simplify the talks given so as to make them helpful and interesting to the children. Do not place the manger so high that the lambs cannot reach the food.

It is earnestly desired that this special effort be continued through the week, even in churches where there is no conference laborer present. If much prayer and careful planning be put into the work of preparation, this special Week of Prayer can but result in a real revival. Let this be your prayer: "O Lord, bring a revival into our church, and let it begin in me."

Plans for Evangelistic Work

A series of resolutions were passed by the Missionary Volunteer Department, at its council held in connection with the

1920 Fall Council, along the lines of evangelistic efforts for the young, a part of which follow:

1. "That very careful study be given to presenting the gospel in its simplicity, that the young people may have a thorough understanding of what it means to make a full surrender to God, to exercise faith, and to live the victorious life.

2. "That ordinarily in a series of meetings, a few meetings be devoted to a clear presentation of these great truths before making a call for full surrender, recognizing the fact, however, that it is often helpful to call for definite decisions on special lines, day by day, such as Bible study, and pledging against novels. That when calls for surrender are made, they be very definite.

3. "That when individuals give evidence that such definite decisions have been made, the workers should heartily recognize the fact.

4. "That the organization of prayer and personal workers' bands should always precede a revival effort, to the end of doing thorough work for the unconverted, and training Christian young people in soul-winning.

5. "That very careful plans be made for holding the results of our revival efforts, by having local church workers unite with us in the efforts, so that they can intelligently continue the work; by continuing the prayer and personal workers' bands; by enlisting the co-operation of parents and interested friends of individuals who have surrendered; and by personal correspondence with special cases.

6. "That when young people have been brought to a decision for Christ, the work be followed up by preparing these young people for baptism, and encouraging them to go forward in this sacred ordinance and in uniting with the church.

7. "That while mature women workers can do good work for boys and young men, and likewise men for girls and young women, the greatest care should be exercised to observe strictly a proper degree of reserve toward those of the opposite sex."

The Program

The program suggested for Missionary Volunteer Week is as follows:

Friday evening, March 17

God's Call to the Youth M. E. KERN

Sabbath, March 18

Regular Missionary Readings—The Island Fields
Statement Concerning Missionary Volunteer Week

Sunday, March 19

Prayer—Bible and Testimony Reading

How to Pray G. B. THOMPSON

Monday, March 20

Bread from Heaven C. A. RUSSELL

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Progressive, Developing Christians U. V. WILCOX

Personal Work of the Early Disciples S. D. GORDON

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Our Greatest Work C. K. MEYERS

Character Building MRS. E. G. WHITE

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Ideals MRS. HARRIET HOLT

Friday, March 24

Our Choice C. A. RUSSELL

Sabbath, March 25

The Family Altar J. A. STEVENS

Suggestions

ON account of the regular Third Sabbath Missionary Reading, no program has been arranged for that day. The readings on "The Island Fields" should make a strong plea to our young people to prepare for their part in the closing work. It is suggested that the first meeting for the week be held on Friday evening.

Plan just as strong work for the week as possible, and endeavor to make the second Friday evening service a decision meeting.

Sabbath, March 25, is Family Altar Day. Endeavor at this time to bring all your company to a decision on the important question of family worship. If it seems necessary and best, make further efforts on the Sabbath to lead souls to a decision for Christ.

Most important suggestion of all: *Insist that whoever takes any leading part in these meetings shall be thoroughly prepared.* It is a dishonor to God for a reader to read so poorly that the thought is not presented *clearly and forcefully.* "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently." Jer. 48:10, margin. It would be better in many cases if the leader would use the reading as material for the preparation of a talk.

If others are asked to read, quotations or scriptures, pass them out before the meeting.

Do not feel that you must use all the material given, nor that you must confine yourself to this. Study and pray much, dear leader.

Helps

Prayer bands should be organized at the beginning of the week. A sufficient number of Missionary Volunteer Pledge No. 13 (Prayer Band Pledge Card) should be ordered from the tract society so that one may be placed in the hand of each member of the bands. Price, 70 cents a hundred. It reads as follows:

PRAYER BAND PLEDGE CARD

"Since Christ Himself makes soul-winning work the evidence of true discipleship, I consecrate my life to Him for service, and especially for the sake of those named on the back of this card. God helping me, I agree to pray much in secret, to meet faithfully with my band, and to put forth continuous, definite effort for one or more persons."

On the reverse side are lines for recording the members of the band and also for a prayer list.

Another card, Missionary Volunteer Pledge No. 12, should be ordered for use on Decision Day, price, \$1 a hundred. It reads as follows:

MY DECISION

"Without Christ I Am Lost. He Died to Save Me.

"Not to be wholly Christ's means at last to be wholly lost.

"The Spirit of God tells me: 'Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, numbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God's Holy Spirit.'"—"Steps to Christ," p. 33, pocket edition.

**I MUST DECIDE THIS GREAT QUESTION
IT MAY BE TOO LATE IF I DELAY
MY DECISION IS MADE**

"Lord Jesus, I give myself wholly to Thee. Henceforth, by Thy grace, Thy will shall be my will; Thy life my life."

Other helps suggested are the following:

Missionary Volunteer Camp-Meeting Helps	\$.25
"The Ministry of Healing"	2.00
"Education"	1.25
M. V. Pledge No. 10, Personal Resolutions .....	.01
M. V. Leaflet No. 12, Guiding Principles for the Young, No. 1 .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 50, Lives of Great Men .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 19, Messages to Young People, Testimonies .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 23, The Life-Work .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 35, Marrying Unbelievers .....	.03
M. V. Leaflet No. 49, What God Hath Joined .....	.01

M. V. Leaflet No. 16, Parents' Meetings .....	.03
M. V. Leaflet No. 59, The Christian Home .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 60, Your Mother .....	.01
M. V. Leaflet No. 71, Keep the Home Fires Burning .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 67, God's Remedy for Sin .....	.01
M. V. Leaflet No. 61, Our Young People and Their Work .....	.01½
M. V. Leaflet No. 64, The Secret of Soul-Winning .....	.00½
M. V. Leaflet No. 47, Personal Work .....	.04
M. V. Leaflet No. 68, For Backsliders Only .....	.01
M. V. Leaflet No. 69, Is Jesus Real to You? .....	.02
M. V. Leaflet No. 66, Margaret's Morning Watch .....	.01
M. V. Leaflet No. 72, Others May; You Cannot .....	.00½
M. V. Leaflet No. 74, Living the Life that Wins .....	.01
M. V. Leaflet No. 75, With the Book of Books .....	.01

Special mention should be made of "Missionary Volunteer Camp-Meeting Helps." This is composed largely of illustrative material. We know of no better source book for such matter to be obtained for the small price, 25 cents. It contains nearly 150 pages.

With a prayer that the efforts put forth this week may result in many precious souls saved in the kingdom of God, we submit the following studies as a suggestive outline.

COMMITTEE.

Friday Evening, March 17

God's Call to the Youth

M. E. KERN

God loves young people. When Jesus saw the rich young man, He "loved him." He loved him because he was His child, and He saw in him great possibilities for good,—not so much the possibilities of his riches, but the possibilities of his life. As Sister White says: "Jesus saw in this ruler just the help He needed if the young man would become a colaborer with Him in the work of salvation. If he would place himself under Christ's guidance, he would be a power for good."

And the Lord has sent word to the young people of the Advent Movement that He needs them. "The Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand." He needs us! O, what a precious thought! The Almighty God needs us! He wants to help us, and He wants us to help Him.

In the United States Congress they have pages—boys who sit around the desk of the presiding officer, and run errands for Congressmen, such as carrying documents up to the desk to be read. What schoolboy's blood would not race a little faster if he should receive a letter from the Vice-President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or from his Congressman asking him to come to Washington and serve as a page in the Senate or the House of Representatives? It would be an honor, would it not, to have such an invitation?

But every boy and girl has an invitation from the King of the universe to help Him in doing a very important work in this world, a work that not even the angels are permitted to do.

Does the Lord have a special interest in young people?

The Lord is interested in every living soul, and He wants every individual to fulfill the divine purpose in his life. He wants every human being to do His will, and enjoy the fruits of righteousness forever.

But the Lord does take special note of young people. He says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." And why? Because if we do not, the years will draw nigh when we shall say, "I have no pleasure in them."

There is a decisive time in life, a deciding time. This is the period of youth. When we were babies, we were perfectly helpless; we had to be moved and fed. By and by we became able to help ourselves; our bodies had developed. If we are normal, we become more and more capable of performing all the functions of life; we do for ourselves what was formerly done for us.

Likewise with the mind. While we are children, our parents must choose for us. As we grow older, the reason and judgment develop. The wise parent will do everything possible to train the mind of the child to choose aright. We become responsible for our choices, and choices are made in youth, that determine the whole course of life. How important that we choose aright!

"A young life freely given to its God in the dew of its early hours, with its strength and unbroken vigor, its energy, its hope and enthusiasm, and with its generous and untarnished affection, is a spectacle equally touching and elevating."

God wants the whole span of our lives, so He asks us to surrender to Him while we are young. We may, if we will, come to Him after years have been wasted in sin, and God will save us; but it will be harder then to decide to come, and if we do, the fact will ever remain that we have deprived our heavenly Father and the world of the service and influence we might have given. If we do not yield ourselves to God in the morning of life, we also do great injustice to ourselves. It is the noblest thing a young person can do to give his heart to God. "Youth, beautiful always, never looks so divine as when it beams with the favor of God."

The Lord not only wants us to surrender to Him, but He has earnest work for us to do. He says, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." The Lord is looking to every boy and girl, and to every young man and young woman of the Advent Movement, to do valiant service for Him. "The glory of young men is their strength." "Young men and young women, cannot you form companies, and as soldiers of Christ enlist in the work, putting all your tact and skill and talent into the Master's service, that you may save souls from ruin?"

This, then, dear young people, is our great calling. "Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children." Don't be content to exercise just a little influence in this world when God wants you to do a great work. Let your motto be, "*The highest for the farthest.*" Reach up as high as possible for power, and reach out as far as possible with influence. If you do, this life will be interesting and wonderful. It will be a joy to live and serve. If you reach up and out in this way, God will crown your life with success, and you will begin to live here that higher life which will never end.

Reach up, young people. Do not be content with small things. Reach up to God and obtain from Him all that He wants you to have. It is a sad day for any of us when we become satisfied with the thoughts we are thinking, and the things we are doing, when there is not always heating in our breasts the desire for something higher and better, which we know God meant for us. The spirit of prophecy has said, "God does not bid the youth to be less aspiring." No, indeed, God wants us to aim high. Let us not be satisfied with anything less than the highest.

What do we mean by the highest? We mean the highest thoughts in our thinking, the purest motives in our actions, the noblest expressions in our speech, the keenest delights in our enjoyment, the sweetest rest in our slumber, the most wholesome comradeship in our friendships, the loftiest aspirations in our worship. "Nothing less than the highest is good enough for any man made in the image of the Highest."

And we want the highest, not for ourselves, but for others. "The highest for the farthest." We want the highest good in order that we may send its influence the farthest. And just as our highest is constantly changing, so our farthest may be different tomorrow than it is today. It may be your little brother or sister today, it may be your schoolmate tomorrow, and soon it may mean some one in your neighborhood. It may be some one who is sick and in need of help. It may be some one at a distance to whom you may send the message of God by mail. By and by it may be across the ocean to our needy brothers and sisters in China or Africa.

The Lord said to Abraham, "I will bless thee, . . . and thou shalt be a blessing." God gives to us that we may give to others; and the more we give the more we gain. "The law of all progress is that sharing shall follow gaining." The more we reach out, the higher we can reach up.

This, then, is the great calling to which our youth are called, — to reach up to God for the higher, purer life, and to reach out to bring God's love and purity to other hearts. It is a mighty challenge.

May God help us to enter heartily into this special week of study and prayer, that we may reach up for all the Lord wants

to give us, and in order that we may reach out to bring His blessings to other hearts.

"Tis not for man to trife,
Life is brief and sin is here.
This age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours,
All must be earnest in a world like ours.

"Not many lives, but only one have we;
One, only one.
How sacred should that one life ever be!
That narrow span!
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil."

NOTE.—It would be very fitting to have a testimony service at the close of the talk or reading. Encourage all to enter heartily into the purposes of this Missionary Volunteer Week.

Sunday, March 19

Prayer

NOTE.—These scriptures and quotations may be assigned to various ones to read. The leader should seek to make these few facts about prayer stand out clearly.

1. *Face-to-Face Communion Broken.* Gen. 3:9, 10.

"Adam, in his innocence, had enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but sin brought separation between God and man, and the atonement of Christ alone could span the abyss, and make possible the communication of blessing or salvation from heaven to earth. Man was still cut off from direct approach to his Creator, but God would communicate with him through Christ and angels."—"*Patriarchs and Prophets*," p. 67.

2. *Prayer Commanded.*

a. Pray unto Me. Jer. 29:12.

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary, in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."—"*Steps to Christ*," p. 97.

b. The Lord's Prayer. Matt. 6:9-13.

"The Lord's Prayer was twice given by our Saviour, first to the multitude in the Sermon on the Mount, and again, some months later, to the disciples alone."—"*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*," p. 151.

"The Saviour does not, however, restrict us to the use of these exact words. As one with humanity, He presents His own ideal of prayer,— words so simple that they may be adopted by the little child, yet so comprehensive that their significance can never be fully grasped by the greatest minds. We are taught to come to God with our tribute of thanksgiving, to make known our wants, to confess our sins, and to claim His mercy in accordance with His promise."—*Id.*, pp. 152, 153.

c. Ask, seek, knock. Matt. 7:7.

"Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always, if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be 'instant in prayer,' to 'continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.' Peter exhorts believers to be 'sober, and watch unto prayer.' Paul directs, 'In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.' 'But ye, beloved,' says Jude, 'praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.' Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God."—"*Steps to Christ*," pp. 101, 102.

d. Pray always. Eph. 6:18.

"There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God, and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open con-

tinually, and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul."—*Id.*, p. 103.

3. God Hears and Answers Prayer.

a. Thou that hearest. Ps. 65: 2.

b. I will answer. Isa. 65: 24; Matt. 7: 11.

"The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we ask for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears, and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and shortsighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good,—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'"—*Id.*, pp. 100, 101.

c. Sometimes He answers No. 2 Cor. 12: 8, 9.

How to Pray

G. B. THOMPSON

Our Saviour has left us a very strong example of secret prayer.

1. Early in the morning He prayed in a solitary place. Mark 1: 35.

2. He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5: 16.

3. "He was alone praying." Luke 9: 18.

4. He "continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6: 12. No one can live the life of a Christian who neglects secret prayer. "The darkness of the evil one incloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 118.

"We should pray in the family circle; and above all we must not neglect secret prayer; for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected."—*Id.*, p. 123.

Here is another beautiful promise to those who pray:

"Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock Heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"—*Id.*, p. 118.

Think of it! Prayer unlocks to us the treasures of heaven. Suppose some great banker should place in your hands the key to his bank, and to the combination of his safe where millions of dollars were stored, and should tell you if you would be there some morning you could help yourself to all that his bank contained. You would be there, would you not? You would not forget it, or be too busy to get to the bank, or neglect being there because you did not feel like going. But the treasures opened to us by the key of prayer are of far greater value than the perishable treasures of earth. Prayer enables us to lay hold of eternal, imperishable things.

Great assurance is given to those who pray. Jesus said when on earth, " whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14: 13.

It is related by the Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman that during the Civil War in the United States of America, a young man passing over a battlefield saw a young friend lying among the wounded, shot almost to pieces. It was evident that he had only a short time to live. The young man stooped down and straightened out the shattered limbs of his friend, took water from his canteen and gave him a drink, then wiped the blood from his face. Then he said, "Charlie, is there anything more I can do for you?"

The suffering, dying boy, knowing his end was at hand and thinking of loved ones at home said, "Yes, there is. If you

have a piece of paper in your pocket and will write a letter to my father, I think I have strength enough to sign it. My father is a prominent judge in a Northern State, and if you take him this letter he will help you." This was the letter: "Dear Father: I am dying on the battlefield, and one of my friends is helping me. If he ever comes to you, be kind to him for Charlie's sake." Then with stiffening fingers he signed his name, and was dead.

The Civil War, with all its horror and suffering, came to an end, and the soldiers returned to their homes. One of them, in tattered uniform, made his way to the home of this judge. The soldier looked like a tramp, and the servants would not admit him. He waited till the judge returned, then stepped before him and held up the soiled piece of paper. The judge, thinking it was a plea for assistance, pushed him to one side; but the soldier stepped back again, and called the gentleman's attention to the signature. Then the great judge threw his arms around the soldier, took him into his home, and with tears streaming from his eyes, said, "You can have anything that my money and influence can buy." *The name did it.*

Great indeed is the name of Jesus. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." This name stands for all that our blessed Redeemer is—the I AM.

"O the precious name of Jesus!
How it thrills our souls with joy,
When His loving arms receive us,
And His songs our tongues employ!"

Monday, March 20

Bread from Heaven

C. A. RUSSELL

WHAT food is to the body, the bread of life is to the soul. Without plenty of wholesome, nourishing food, we become physically weak. Loss of food means starvation. And we take two or three meals a day.

Without eating of the bread of life every day, we become spiritually weak and unable to resist temptation. Loss of spiritual food means spiritual starvation.

Conduct the following as a Bible reading:

What does the word of God bring to the believer? Jer. 15: 16.

How does it affect the Christian pathway? Ps. 119: 105.

What is a good antidote for sin? Ps. 119: 11.

What counsel did Jesus give? John 5: 39.

How much of the Bible is inspired, and what is its value? 2 Tim. 3: 16.

What counsel is given concerning the study of the prophecies? 2 Peter 1: 19.

What is the source of prophecy? 2 Peter 1: 20, 21.

What was the early instruction of Timothy? 2 Tim. 3: 15.

How did Job esteem the words of God? Job 23: 12.

What effect will the Word of Truth have upon those who read it and practise its teachings? John 17: 17.

The Bible has stood the test of the ages. Written by about forty different authors, covering a period of 1600 years, it has the same golden thread of faith and hope and salvation from sin running from Genesis to Revelation.

Its enemies have sought to discredit its teachings and destroy its influence, but the old book stands.

"The Bible is an exploded book," said the French infidel, Voltaire.

About thirty years ago Colonel Robert Ingersoll said: "In ten years the Bible will not be read." Mr. Ingersoll lived to regret some of the attacks he had made in earlier life upon the Bible and the Christian religion, as will be seen from the following quotation from M. D. Landon, in the *Homiletic Review*, Vol. 38, No. 5:

"When I was writing my 'Kings of Platform and Pulpit,' Robert Ingersoll kindly sent me what he called his greatest lecture, 'Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child.' He wrote:

"In using my speeches do not use any assault I may have made on Christ, which I foolishly made in my early life. With

Renan, I believe Christ was the one perfect man. "Do unto others" is the perfection of religion and morality."

Mr. H. L. Hastings, that stalwart champion of the Bible, says:

"The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this book; and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other; and when you have upset it, it is right side up; and when you overturn it again, it is right side up still. Every little while somebody blows up the Bible; but when it comes down, it always lights on its feet, and runs faster than ever through the world."

In speaking of the so-called "Mistakes of Moses," Mr. Hastings says:

"For a book that has been exploded so many times, this book still shows signs of considerable life. I have heard of a man traveling around the country exploding this book, and showing up 'the mistakes of Moses,' at about two hundred dollars a night. It is easy work to abuse Moses at two hundred dollars a night, especially as Moses is dead, and cannot talk back. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on 'the mistakes of Moses,' to hear Moses on 'the mistakes of the infidel.' When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it, and met with poor success. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and, it is said, found a grave in the Red Sea. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back. But now Moses is dead, and it is easy to abuse him. It does not take a very brave beast to kick a dead lion."—*The Inspiration of the Bible,* p. 7.

A man who for years stood at the head of one of our great universities, was stricken with an incurable malady. Just before the end came, one of his friends said, "How does it look to you?" The dying man in agony of heart replied, "It looks like taking a leap into the dark."

A leap into the dark! You stand at the brink of the awful, yawning precipice. Below you are great whirling cloud forms and unfathomable depths and impenetrable darkness. You lift your foot for the next step. It treads air, and—over! How pitiful for a soul to be left, through his own choice, to walk the "valley of the shadow" alone, with no gospel light to illumine the dark journey!

How much brighter the picture of that other great educator, one to whom nature revealed more of her secrets, perhaps, than to any other man, who, when asked the question, "What has been the greatest thing that you have ever discovered?" said without a moment's hesitation, "The greatest thing I have discovered is that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is my own personal Saviour."

A member of the royal family in England was critically ill. A message was dispatched to the Continent in the endeavor to secure the services of a nurse. When asked if she would go to England to care for the sick man, she asked, "Is he a Christian?"

"What difference does that make to you? Come, and come quickly. We will pay you your price."

The nurse repeated the question, "Is he a Christian?"

"He is, and has been an earnest follower of Christ for many years."

"Very well, then, I will go."

His curiosity aroused, the messenger asked, "But why did you ask this question?"

"I am the nurse who cared for Voltaire during his last sickness; and no money could tempt me to again witness the death of an infidel."

A beautiful daughter, an only child, was just blossoming into young womanhood. Her mother, an earnest Christian, had sought to implant in her heart high ideals of Christian living. The father was a pronounced infidel. During her earlier life she responded to the teachings of the mother, but as she grew older, becoming as she did the cherished idol of her father's heart, her feet began to waver. The father decked her out in the finest clothing, and introduced her into fashionable society.

The husband and father was away in a distant State when he was handed a telegram. It read, "Come home at once. Daughter is very ill."

It seemed as if the car wheels failed to revolve; but no, at last he reached the home town, and the bedside of his child.

After the first greetings were over, she looked into her father's face, wistfully, for a moment, and then said, "Papa, tell me, whom shall I believe? Shall I believe what mamma has taught me of God and the Bible? or shall I believe what you have said?"

With agony in his heart, the father cried out, "For God's sake, child, believe your mother!"

The time was when the Bible, chained and denied to the common people, was more deeply appreciated than it seems to be now. And yet there are those even today who esteem the words of His mouth as more than their necessary food. Elder L. H. Christian, in speaking of conditions in Russia, relates this incident:

"One Adventist family in Russia—a man with a wife and six children—had a very hard time. They had been obliged to sell their two or three cows, their goats and sheep; they sold their farm, sold all their furniture but one old wooden bedstead, sold all their clothing but just a very little. For several months they had one poor meal a day, and the children were so nearly starved they could scarcely walk. They had to stay in bed all winter for two or three winters in succession, in order to keep warm, and because there was not food enough to give them strength to be up and around.

"This Adventist brother had a chance to buy a Bible—a worn, second-hand Bible. All his books had been taken away from him three years before, and they were without the Bible and the Testimonies in the house. The man was told that he could buy the Bible for a thousand rubles.

"Brother Will told me that this brother called in his wife and children and said to them, 'What shall we do? We have just sold such and such articles of furniture, and all our clothing except the very little that we have on, and we have this money. Shall we buy the Bible, or shall we buy bread?'

"He turned to the children first, and they said, 'Father, we know by heart all the texts that you know. Let us have the Bible. We should like to see you read the Bible at morning and evening worship again.'

"The mother said, 'Father, we know the children need bread; but we also know that at this time, at the end of the world, they need the word of God more than they need bread.'

"The children again said, 'Father we need the Bible, for then you can read out of the Bible some different texts from those which you have taught us.'

"Those poor people bought the Bible. They were true to the message. They suffered for it."

Sir Walter Scott, during his last illness, called to his bedside his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, and asked him to read from "the Book."

"From what book?"

"There is but one Book," answered the man whose life was ebbing away.

When one is brought to the last few moments of life, he does not care to have some one read to him a scene from the latest novel. He wants the Book.

I was standing by the deathbed of a student in one of our colleges. As I watched the breath come shorter and shorter, with an anxious look, and yet the trace of a smile playing about her lips, she whispered, "Won't—you—read—to—me—a—little—?"

I did not seek for a passage from the latest novel. I knew what the dying girl meant, and taking up the Book, I said, "Where do you want me to read?"

"The—ninety-first—psalm—"

A lump came into my throat as I thought of the beautiful words, and by the time I had found the place I could scarcely articulate a sound. With a little prayer in my heart I summoned courage, and read those beautiful verses along with several other precious promises in the Word.

Kneeling by the bedside of the young woman, I prayed earnestly to God that He would receive as His own this beautiful life. The trained nurse with me offered another earnest prayer, and then the lips of the dying girl moved in prayer to God. It was a touching scene.

A few moments later, without a struggle, the eyelids closed, and the life slipped away.

The following quotations will prove helpful:

"The reason why the youth, and even those of mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin, is that they do not study the word of God, and meditate upon it, as they should.

The lack of firm, decided will power, which is manifested in life and character, results from neglect of the sacred instruction of God's word."—*Mrs. E. G. White.*

"In the early years of the third angel's message, many of the believers were young in years; but they learned to study God's word with prayerful earnestness, and as they grew older they became a mighty power for good. Their knowledge of the Scriptures enabled them to labor for souls in the days of their youth and early manhood. They did not think that because they were young, they could not understand God's word. As they wrestled with difficult passages, and sought God for understanding, light shone forth from the sacred page, and the foundation of our faith was established in their hearts. Later, when these young men met every species of error, nothing could shake their confidence. They were anchored within the veil. Their faith in the Bible was substantiated by a personal knowledge of the One who inspired the Word."—*Mrs. E. G. White.*

"This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practise it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's way, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents."

"THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON,
July 23, 1917.

"The Bible is the word of life. I beg that you will read it and find this out for yourselves—read, not little snatches here and there, but long passages that will really be the road to the heart of it. You will find it full of real men and women not only, but also of the things you have wondered about and been troubled about all your life, as men have been always; and the more you read the more it will become plain to you what things are worth while and what are not, what things make men happy—loyalty, right dealing, speaking the truth, readiness to give everything for what they think their duty, and most of all, the wish that they may have the real approval of the Christ, who gave everything for them—and the things that are guaranteed to make men unhappy—selfishness, cowardice, greed, and everything that is low and mean. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty.

"(Signed) WOODROW WILSON."

"I have known ninety-five great men of the world in my time, and of these, eighty-seven were all followers of the Bible. . . .

"Talk about questions of the day, there is but one question, and that is the gospel. It can and will correct anything that needs correction. My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind into contact with divine revelation.

"Though assailed by camp, by battery, and by mine, the Holy Scriptures are nevertheless a house builded upon a rock, and that rock impregnable."—*William E. Gladstone, England's "Grand Old Man."*

Why not join the hundreds of Missionary Volunteers who are reading the Bible through in 1922? We have a record of 1,686 who did so in 1920. How else will you ever find out what is in the Bible? How many in this congregation will strive by God's help to read His book through during this year?

NOTE.—For further helpful material see "Camp-Meeting Helps," pp. 37-41; "The Bible Year," price, 65 cents; *Present Truth*, No. 1.

Tuesday, March 21

Progressive, Developing Christians

UTHAI V. WILCOX

NOTE.—If we are to be growing Christians, alive and capable of accomplishing much good in the world, we must develop our spiritual faculties through study and prayer and work. Just as the body will become stunted and dwarfed and diseased without exercise, so the spiritual nature will become one-sided, oftentimes intolerant and narrow, through lack of exercise and nonuse of the religious faculties. There is a close analogy be-

tween the physical being and the spiritual being. In each must be the overwhelming desire and determination to attain perfection.

The study given is based on Hebrews 5:12; 6:1, and 2 Peter 1:1,11.

The Will to Improve

One of the main reasons for the difference among people whereby one succeeds and another fails, is the presence or absence of the will to improve. Take it in the matter of intellectual progress. Why is it that some students get so little profit from their privileges? It is rarely by reason of the incompetence of their instructors. It is chiefly because of the lack of any strong desire to profit. The student is satisfied with the completion of the assigned task. He reads diligently whatever is assigned in the textbook, and having got that well into his mind, is content.

But the task is only a detail. It is related to the subject as a battle is related to a war. The student who succeeds is interested in the subject; he would master, not the Spanish lesson only, but the Spanish language; not the chapter only, but the situation.

Very similar is the matter of spiritual progress and development. Why is it that we are no better than we were a year ago? Our imperfections are still with us, our temper and dispositions are unchanged, our temptations still get the better of us. The one big reason, generally speaking, is that we lack the will to improve.

The Ladder of Progress

The early Hebrew Christians were found to be lacking in that very quality—they lacked the persistent will to succeed in the Christian life. They had accepted the gospel, but whatever their experience may have been at first, they had failed to grow strong. Doubtless they had even to a degree "let slip" (Heb. 2:1) the great truths of salvation which they had at first accepted. They stopped growing. They had the same kind of dispositions, the same kind of prejudices, as before. They did not progress.

Paul had an utter contempt for such spiritual stagnation. I imagine that when he was dictating those words to the Hebrews, "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food" (Heb. 5:12), he must have felt sorry for them, inasmuch as they had not developed in their Christian living. They had stagnated.

These Hebrews, like many of us, should have passed the stage where they must be shown every step of the way. They should have passed the stage where they were children in Christ. That belongs only to the time just after one is converted.

When a person first comes into the knowledge of Christ's love; when the overwhelming revelation is his which we call conversion, he is like a child. He then needs much teaching. He must be shown the way forward. But he should begin to develop and to grow. A Christian must soon pass the stage of exultation which comes first, and must become an active worker, must press on, as Paul says in the next chapter, to perfection. The state of repentance is not final, it is merely the first state of the Christian life. From repentance one must progress to greater and higher things.

To what higher things? Peter tells us: Virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love—these are the attributes which a Christian must cultivate, cultivate by practice and hard work. When a man becomes converted, he does not immediately become perfect, he progresses toward perfection.

"Heaven is not reached by a single bound;
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.

"We rise by the things that are under our feet,
By what we have mastered of good or gain,
By the pride deposed and the passion slain.
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet."

Peter and Paul Progressive Christians

Peter and Paul were progressive Christians. They put into practice and into effort their religion. George Matheson said of the great apostle Paul: "He advanced from the desire of

personal reconciler, from the gazing on Christ's image to the participation in that image, from the justification by faith to the sanctification by love."

What a progressive Christian was Peter! There was a long time that he was slipping up and down the ladder. He climbed the rungs of repentance and conversion easily. But those rungs of patience and self-control and brotherly kindness and love—what trouble he had climbing them!

There came a day when Peter had a vision of a progressive Christianity. There came a day when his Lord's saying, "Simon Peter, lovest thou Me? . . . Feed My sheep," put a new ideal into his heart, and then Peter began his real progress. The Peter of the Acts, fearless, strong, and true; the Peter of the Epistles, uncompromisingly sounding his warning to Christians; the Peter of the martyrdom, gladly giving his life for his Lord,—this Peter had learned the way up the ladder—self-control, patience, brotherly kindness, love; he knew every rung.

"There was a class of small girls who were without a teacher, and I was asked to take them," said R. S. Scatterfield. "After introducing myself and asking their names, and finding that none of them had studied their lesson, I asked: 'How many of you find it easy to be good?' One little girl with a soiled face and uncombed hair and bare feet, wearing a patched dress that was too small, said she found it easy to be good. The others said that it was hard. I tried to get the one girl to admit that it was hard to be good, but she would not.

"I was surprised, and asked her to tell us how to find it easy to be good. Her answer surprised me still more. Since then I have asked many Sabbath school classes, young people's meetings, large congregations, individual men and women, boys and girls, the question, 'Tell how to find it easy to be good.' No one else has ever given me so good an answer as that little girl from the slums. If any one can give a better answer than she gave, please send it to me. She said, 'Pray and try.'"

Do you want to be a progressive, a developing, Christian? Study the Christ life, and then, praying God to help you, try to pattern your progression after His.

Personal Work of the Early Disciples

S. D. GORDON

Read John 1: 35-51

THIS narrative from the first chapter of John tells a wonderful story of personal work. Christians should never get away from the simplicity of this method of the early disciple in finding and introducing men to Jesus. S. D. Gordon, in commenting on this story, says:

"About a quarter of four one afternoon, three young men were standing together on a road leading down to a swift-running river. It was an old road, beaten down hard by thousands of feet through hundreds of years. It led down to the river, and then along its bank through a village scatteringly nestled by the fords of the river. The young men were intently absorbed in conversation.

"One of them was a man to attract attention anywhere. He was clearly the leader of the three. His clothing was very plain, even to severeness. His face was spare, suggesting a diet as severely plain as his garments. The abundance of dark hair on head and face brought out sharply the spare, thoughtful, earnest look of his face. His eyes glowed like coals of living fire beneath the thick, bushy eyebrows. He talked quietly but intensely. There was a subdued vigor and force about his very person.

"One of the others was a very different type of man. He was intense, too, like the leader, but there was a fineness and a far-looking depth about his eye such as suggests a gray eye rather than a black. His hair was softer and finer, and his skin too. In him intensity seemed to blend with a fine grain in his whole make-up. The third man was a quiet, matter-of-fact looking fellow. He did not talk much, except to ask an occasional question. The three men were engaged in earnest conversation, when a fourth man, a stranger, came down the road and, passing the three by, went on ahead.

"The leader of the three called the attention of his companions to the stranger. At once they leave his side and go after the stranger. As they nearly catch up to him, he unexpectedly turns and in a kindly voice asks, 'Whom are you looking for?' Taken aback by the unexpected question, they do not answer, but ask where he is going. Quickly noticing the point of their question, he cordially says, 'Come over and take tea with me.'

"They gladly accepted the invitation, and spent the evening with him. And the friendship begun that day continued to the end of their lives. Both became his dear friends. And one, the fine-grained, intense man, became his closest bosom friend. He never forgot that day. When he came years after to write about his hospitable friend, found that afternoon, he could remember every particular of their first meeting. We must always be grateful to John for his simple, full account of his first meeting with Jesus. . . .

"These two men went away from Jesus that evening only to come back with some others. They went from talking with Him to talking with others for Him. Their personal contact was the beginning of their service. This is one of the famous personal-work chapters. There are three 'findeths' in it. Andrew findeth his brother Peter. That was a great find. John in his modesty doesn't speak of it, but in all likelihood he findeth James, his brother. Jesus findeth Philip, and Philip in turn findeth Nathanael, the guileless man. That word 'findeth' is very suggestive, even to being picturesque. It tells the absence of these other men. Their whereabouts might be guessed, but were not known. There was in the searchers a purpose, and a warmth in the heart under that purpose. As Andrew looked and listened he said to himself, 'Peter must hear this; Peter must see this Man.' And perhaps he asked to be excused and, reaching for his hat, hastens out to get his brother and bring him back to the house. He wants more himself, but he'll get it with Peter in too. And so it would be with John, likely.

"Peter had to be searched for. Most men do. He was probably absorbed with all his impulsive intensity in some matter on hand. Maybe Andrew had to pull quite a bit to get him started. But he got him. Andrew was a good sticker; hard to shake him off. . . . And when Peter once got started he never quit going. He stumbled some, but he got up, and got up only to go on. Most men need some one to get them started. There's need of more starters, more of us starting people moving Jesus' way.

"I think the memory of this evening's work with Peter must have come back very vividly to Andrew one morning a few years afterward. It's up on the hills of Judea, in Jerusalem. There's a great crowd of people standing in the streets, filling the space for a great distance. There are some thousands of them. They are listening, spellbound, to a man talking. It is Peter. And down there near by, maybe holding Peter's hat while he talks, is Andrew. His eyes are glowing. And if you might listen to his heart talking, I think you would hear it saying softly, 'I'm so glad I brought Peter that evening I met Jesus.' Peter's talk that day swung three thousand men and women over to Jesus. Somebody has said that if Peter were their spiritual father, certainly Andrew was their spiritual grandfather. And I think God reckons the thing that way, too." —"Quiet Talks on Service," pp 9-11, 22-24.

Growing Christians must engage in daily prayer, study the Bible, and work for the salvation of souls. Our young people are called to do personal work. "Who of our youth will give themselves to God for the purpose of laboring for the salvation of their fellow youth?"

Wednesday, March 22

Our Greatest Work

CECIL K. MEYERS

"MAKE thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Gen. 6: 14. This was God's instruction to the patriarchs of old. Like Noah, we're building an ark of safety.

1. *Character Building Is Our Life-Work.* Heb. 12: 1.

There's trouble ahead; somebody is going down in a flood of destruction. Heaven's provision for us is to ride safely through on a character that is true and tried.

2. *We Must Build to Specifications.*

a. Foundation is Christ. 1 Cor. 3: 11; Col. 2: 6, 7; Eph. 2: 20.

b. Framework is to make a fit dwelling for God. Eph. 2: 21, 22.

Noah built to specification. Within and without the boat was made water tight. It made provision for every need. It stood the test, he and his family came through. Not only were there general specifications deciding the style of vessel, dimensions, and apartments, but the material used in the construction was specified. Nobody can afford to take chances. Character doesn't come by chance. It's the growing up of principles, motives, actions, into a life that stands the test.

3. Character Alone Will Stand the Test. 1 Cor. 3: 13.

Only the boat builder came through. Others didn't build. They didn't care to or didn't see the need. O yes! they saw the need too late. You can get the right vision and learn the facts too late.

What is character? Before we proceed to a definition, let us write some things not on our list:

Character is not life—many living things do not have character. It is broader than life.

Character is not talent—talent seeks a stage setting for display. It is simpler than talent.

Character is not work—many persons work eight hours a day, and positively have no character. It is less irksome than work.

Character is not beauty—it is less self-conscious.

What is it then?

It is the soul of life. Life is a quantity. Character gives it quality. Talent needs a steering wheel; that's how character serves talent. Work is a vehicle, character does the driving. Character is the sweet effulgence of beauty.

Character does things. It gets to the top, but it is satisfied to begin at the bottom. Phil. 2: 5-9.

Character lives in service, but dies willingly at duty. Acts 21: 13.

Character is courageous in the day of battle, but it is afraid of its own shadow of self. Phil. 2: 12.

Character is strong in decision, but it is willing to be guided by counsel. Prov. 11: 14.

It is a complete mastery of self.

"The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle. . . . Character building is the most important work ever intrusted to human beings. . . . Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today."—*Education*, p. 225.

What are some of the perils confronting the youth today? One great peril is the reading of unworthy literature.

"What are the works on which, throughout the most susceptible years of life, the minds of the youth are led to dwell? In the study of language and literature, from what fountains are the youth taught to drink?—From the wells of paganism; from springs fed by the corruptions of ancient heathendom. They are bidden to study authors, of whom, without dispute, it is declared that they have no regard for the principles of morality. . . . With how many [authors] are grace and beauty of language but a disguise for principles that in their real deformity would repel the reader! Besides these, there is a multitude of fiction writers, luring to pleasant dreams in palaces of ease. These writers may not be open to the charge of immorality, yet their work is no less really fraught with evil. It is robbing thousands upon thousands of the time and energy and self-discipline demanded by the stern problems of life."—*Id.*, pp. 226, 227.

An even greater peril today is the moving-picture theater; for there for only a few cents and with no personal effort one can see the novel acted out with intense and exciting vividness. The world, as the spirit of prophecy has said, is "engaged in festivity and amusement, in theatrical shows, in indulgence of the base passions."

Another peril is the neglect of God's word. Character is built upon the daily study of God's word and a prayerful dependence upon Jesus.

"The reason why the youth, and even those of mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin, is that they do not study the word of God, and meditate upon it as they should. The lack of firm, decided will power, which is manifest in life and character, results from neglect of the sacred instruction of God's word. Being pure minded will make men strong minded."

Everything affects character. Association, recreation, amusement, and dress reveal character. These things need to be governed by an application of right principle.

"A good character must be built up brick by brick. . . . In the life of the Saviour they have a perfect pattern. Let the divine precepts be brought into the daily life; let the life be fashioned after God's great standard of righteousness, and the whole character will be strengthened and ennobled."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 69, 76.

Closely allied to character is reputation. Character is what a man really is. Reputation is what others repute him to be.

Character is in a man's own hands. Reputation is in the hands of others. We must be careful, then, about criticism or anything calculated to undermine the reputation of another. Let us not rob our fellow of his hard-earned reputation.

Character is the right exercise of the power of choice. Man is a being of choice. This is a heavenly heritage. Let's not sell our birthright for a mess of pottage.

Cannot we place a serious estimate on life? Let nothing light or cheap have place in our program. The religious life is a real thing, not a sentiment.

"The way of return [to God] can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, hour by hour. In one moment, by a hasty, unguarded act, we place ourselves in the power of evil; but it requires more than a moment to break the fetters and attain to a higher life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, perseverance, patience, and sacrifice."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 452.

"Bible religion is not one influence among many others; its influence is to be supreme, pervading and controlling every other. It is not to be like a dash of color brushed here and there upon the canvas, but it is to pervade the whole life, as if the canvas were dipped into the color, until every thread of the fabric were dyed a deep, unfading hue. . . .

"Worldly policy and undeviating principles of righteousness do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of the rainbow. Between the two a broad, clear line is drawn by the eternal God. The likeness of Christ stands out as distinct from that of Satan as midday in contrast with midnight."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 312, 313.

Thank God for the line of distinction! Let us seek to know in clearer outline these lines of separation. Dear young people, during the spring Week of Prayer, cannot we make sure of our footing? Character is developed by knowing the right and doing it. Let us earnestly seek God to know His will for us personally, and then let us just as earnestly seek for grace that will enable us to do His will.

Character-Building

MRS. E. G. WHITE

Read Matt. 7: 24-27

"THE formation of character is the work of a lifetime, and it is for eternity. If all could realize this, and would awake to the fact that we are individually deciding our own destiny and the destinies of our children for eternal life or eternal ruin, what a change would take place! . . .

"The question that should come home to each of us is, Upon what foundation am I building? We have the privilege of striving for immortal life; and it is of the greatest importance that we dig deep, removing all the rubbish, and build on the solid rock, Christ Jesus. He is the sure foundation. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' 1 Cor. 3: 11. In Him alone is our salvation. 'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' Acts 4: 12.

"The foundation firmly laid, we need wisdom that we may know how to build. When Moses was about to erect the sanctuary in the wilderness, he was cautioned, 'See . . . that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.' Heb. 8: 5. In His law, God has given us the pattern. Our character building is to be after 'the pattern showed to thee in the mount.' The law is the great standard of righteousness. It represents the character of God, and is the test of our loyalty to His government. And it is revealed to us, in all its beauty and excellence, in the life of Christ. . . .

"Thoroughness is necessary to success in the work of character-building. There must be an earnest purpose to carry out the plan of the Master Builder. The timbers must be solid. No careless, unreliable work can be accepted, for this would ruin the building. The powers of the whole being are to be put into the work. . . .

"There must be no idleness. Life is an important thing, a sacred trust; and every moment should be wisely improved, for its results will be seen in eternity. . . .

"Remember that you are building for eternity. See that your foundation is sure; then build firmly, and with persistent effort, but in gentleness, meekness, love. So shall your house

stand unshaken, not only when the storms of temptation come, but when the overwhelming flood of God's wrath shall sweep over the world."—*Counsels to Teachers*, pp. 61-63.

"All are given an opportunity to develop character. All may fill their appointed places in God's great plan. The Lord accepted Samuel from his very childhood, because his heart was pure. He was given to God, a consecrated offering, and the Lord made him a channel of light. If the youth of today will consecrate themselves as did Samuel, the Lord will accept them and use them in His work. Of their life they may be able to say with the psalmist, 'O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works.' Ps. 71: 17."—*Id.*, p. 537.

Thursday, March 23

Ideals

HARRIET HOLT

Two girls were examining some neckwear. One piece hung in folds of lace and net, daintily fussy. The other was elegantly simple, with just a touch of handwork.

"Of course there's no question as to whom you will send each," said a young lady who was examining the prospective gifts. "This one," she held up the lace and net, "belongs to Elizabeth. It's just hers. And this one is just as truly Lois's," she continued, pointing to the other, "so simple and neat, and yet so tasteful."

She was right. The two pieces of neckwear bespoke those to whom they should be sent.

What an axiom! Dress, words, friends, all the relationships of the day, bespeak character, do not make it; on the contrary, character molds and shapes all those relationships. And so the things we say, the places we go, the company we keep, become an index of our inmost selves.

God's first message to every sinner is, "A new heart also will I give you." And what is in the heart will be revealed by our outward acts. Then, Christian, God expects us to guard those outward acts well. A world is looking on while Satan is proclaiming that God and His plans are a failure. The Master of the universe is depending upon His people to prove before the universe that His power transforms lives, makes them over to the smallest detail done in secret by His children. That is why the dress, manner, language, of a Christian count mightily for or against the cause of God. They are the only means by which many a stranger may judge. It is in these terms that God often translates His message into a language that the unbeliever reads. Is it any wonder, then, that God's ideals in these matters are "higher than the highest human thought can reach"?

"I don't see any harm in going there," said a young woman, speaking of a questionable pleasure resort. That is only a sample of many other statements made by young people of specific practices. "I don't see that this book hurts me;" or, "Why is it wrong to wear this or that?" There would be less questioning of such acts if the young people studied and claimed God's ideal as their own. There is little instruction as to specific acts in God's word, but many fundamental principles are put forth. It is the purpose of this lesson to study some of those principles, and to see how they become an anchor in the life of every young Christian.

Dress

Perhaps that which gives the first and often most lasting impression to the stranger is the appearance of the Christian.

"They say that Mrs. M—— has recently been converted and joined the church," said one girl to another as a very handsomely and showily dressed woman passed them. "All I have to say," answered the other, "is that she doesn't look like it." Somehow these girls, neither of whom was a Christian, found in their minds an ideal of a Christian's dress, and the woman who passed did not reach the standard. In other words, she was not confessing her Saviour before the world.

And that, perhaps, is the first principle to be accepted by every Christian in regard to dress. God says: "Let us not be

that outward adorning, . . . but let it be the hidden man of the heart." Any article of clothing that does not proclaim a Saviour dwelling within, is wrong. As Charles G. Finney, the great evangelist, put it, "Every step you take, you tread on chords that will vibrate to all eternity. . . . Are you going to walk in the street? Take care how you dress. What is that on your head? What does that gaudy ribbon, and those ornaments upon your dress, say to every one that meets you? They make the impression that you wish to be thought pretty. Take care! You might just as well write on your clothes, 'No truth in religion.' They say, 'Give me dress, give me fashion, give me flattery, and I am happy.' The world understands this testimony as you walk the streets. You are 'living epistles, known and read of all men.'"

Not only does God want the Christian to reveal Him to others in appearance, but in the Sermon on the Mount He has told us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Matt. 6: 33. We usually spend the most time seeking those things which are of most importance to us.

The servant of God has given us some very definite instruction. She says: "Satan invented the fashions in order to keep the minds of women so engrossed with the subject of dress that they could think of but little else."—*Testimonies*, Vol. IV, p. 629.

How often do professed Christians put the time they should spend in prayer and Bible study, into adorning the dress with lace or handwork!

A woman of wealth and refinement writes to young girls: "Every woman of brains studies herself, the color most becoming to her, the lines best suited to her, and uses what she has learned to dress becomingly. The brainless girls follow fashion's whim."

Again the spirit of prophecy puts the matter simply: "A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. . . . A refined, cultured mind will be revealed in the choice of simple, appropriate attire. . . . Study the fashions less and the character of Jesus more."—*Christian Temperance*, p. 93.

That last sentence is the key-word of the situation. Every Christian should be willing to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. Questions as to this hat or that ornament would then vanish into nothingness. And after the test has been applied, if the Christian finds that he or she is unwilling to change the mode of dress to meet those ideals so clearly set forth, then should there be an earnest cry from the heart, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"

Language

After dress, that which to the world marks a Christian, is good language. By cursing and swearing Peter tried to prove that he did not know the Saviour. Matt. 26: 74. The disciples were unlearned and unlettered men. They were chosen from the humblest walks of life; and yet it was said of two of them who had preached on the day of Pentecost, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4: 13. They had used beautiful and pure language that day; it was the only kind that Jesus used. Purity of language marks those who know Jesus.

John Bunyan was a poor, ignorant lad, having no educational advantages, and yet he gave to the world one of its greatest classics. Few books surpass "Pilgrim's Progress" in style or purity of diction. His only teacher was the Bible. He read and lived the word until its language was his own. In the introduction of one of his masterpieces, he writes, "I could have stepped into a style much higher than this in which I have here discoursed, . . . but I dare not. God did not play in convincing of me. Wherefore, I may not play in my relating of these experiences, but be plain and simple and lay down the thing as it was." Thus did Bunyan hold to God's way of relating an incident.

Not only does God expect of us that our language shall be pure, but He wants it to accomplish something. "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matt. 12: 36. We would have no difficulty in knowing what is meant by an idle

person; why stumble and wonder over what an idle word might mean?

Some long-faced persons have the idea that idle words mean every kind of jesting or merriment. God put into the human heart the desire for mirth. When it is clean and wholesome, its effect on the body is good. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Idle words do not necessarily mean, then, the funny word, but that which accomplishes nothing, the unnecessary word, the word that brings needless pain to the heart of another, that word which draws the mind from what Paul sets up as a criterion of thought,—“Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things,”—if any word draw the mind from the thought of such, it is a useless one. Two tests, then, should the Christian give his speech,—is it pure in form, is it pure in thought?

Recreation

Recreation has been defined as any exercise in which pleasure is taken. Pleasure has in it the element of choice. When we do a thing because we find pleasure in it, we choose that thing above all else. That is why our recreations reveal our desires as nothing else can. The call for recreation is a legitimate one, and one which should be heeded. Rightly chosen, recreation becomes a safeguard to body, mind, and soul. And yet Satan uses this legitimate demand as he does no other, perhaps because it is so closely connected with choice.

When it comes to recreation, we are apt to think the time is ours for the gratification of our whims. That is what the world thinks. It figures that such time is its own, to be spent just as it wishes. But the Christian has an indwelling Christ who chooses for him, even in those movements that he claims his own. That is the fundamental difference between right and wrong reaction. Jesus chose to spend the hours He took from His work among people, in a way that brought Him nearer to the source of all power, and sent Him back to His work with the freshness and enthusiasm which only rest and a cleared vision can bring. Just so God asks His children to choose those pastimes that not only relax body and mind, but keep the soul in touch with the Infinite.

In the matter of pleasure, as perhaps in no other, young people question the harm of this or the wrong of that. It is impossible to answer these questions for others. Again we must put forth only the broad principles, and each one must apply the test to his or her peculiar question. These tests have been given by the Lord through His servant for these days.

“The true followers of Christ will have sacrifices to make. They will shun worldly amusements because they find no Jesus there, no influence which will make them heavenly minded and increase their growth in grace.”

“Any amusement in which they can engage, asking the blessing of God upon it in faith, will not be dangerous. But any amusement which disqualifies them for secret prayer, for devotion at the altar of prayer, or for taking part in the prayer meeting, is not safe, but dangerous.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. III, pp. 222, 223.

“If they [Christians] can take Jesus with them and maintain a prayerful spirit, they are perfectly safe.”—*Review and Herald*, Vol. 61, No. 34, 1884.

There are two other tests linked closely with these, which I believe every true Christian should be willing to apply to his recreation. The first is the matter of time. When Elder James White was asked by a number of young people if certain games were right, his only answer was, “Time is short.” To every Christian who is looking for the Lord’s near return, time should be an important consideration. God expects much from the young people of this generation to whom He has intrusted His truth. And what can one say if the Lord returns and finds him playing with tinsel, no matter how perfect the strand may be, if God has placed him in a field of diamonds?

The other test is, “Will it hurt my brother, lower his ideals in any way?” A young boy made an excuse of a certain questionable pastime. “O well, Mr. So-and-so did that, and he’s a Bible worker. If he could do that, why shouldn’t I do this?”

True, it was but an excuse to cover up a stinging conscience, but then, God warns us to be careful of that weaker brother. Every true Christian will ask himself in all seriousness, “What will my influence be on the weakest of the weak?”

Associations

And then there is the matter of the choice of friends. Our own destiny is shaped by our friends as by no other one factor, especially when it comes to the choice of that friend who links with yours his or her way for life.

The wise man says, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.” Prov. 13: 20.

Two rivers come together, one carrying the water of the pure springs of the mountains, the other yellow with the soil of the lowlands. They flow unmixed perhaps a few yards, but gradually the line between the two becomes blurred, a little farther on the waters are one, all yellow, muddy, and dull. Just so does the life of a Christian lose its freshness and purity if seeking always the company of those whose ideals are drawn from lower levels. As has been said: “A man is largely what his friends are. It is almost impossible to retain purity of character if your friends are vile, and quite impossible to live an evil life if your friends are all noble.”

Another puts it as strongly as this: “A bad friend is a calamity.”

Speaking of friends, let us remember that we are also choosing our friends when we choose a book. Livingstone, Lincoln, Carnegie, were all inspired to their lives of usefulness by the books they read in early youth. On the other hand, a youth upon the scaffold, with the last words permitted him, exhorted his hearers to refuse to read cheap literature. He traced his downfall to the influence of his depraved book friends. Yes, it pays to choose our friends carefully and wisely. Life and death is in the choice.

Marriage

Just a word now about that lifetime choice. “I have yet to see,” writes a worker with large acquaintance among young people, “the first Christian who wilfully disobeys God’s command in linking life with an unbeliever—I have yet to see such a one happy or remaining true to God.”

A Christian young man married a light-hearted, frivolous girl. He thought he could help her. A year passed, and he had drifted into the pleasure-loving ways of his wife. It is so easy to drift with those we love. Suddenly death loomed before him, and with anguish of soul, he cried, “O Rebecca! Rebecca! you are the cause of my eternal damnation!” In his fearful remorse and with eternity before him, he forgot that a short year before he had held in his hand the priceless gem of choosing a helpmeet from among those who loved and served God.

“My sister, unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God,” wrote the servant of God to one who was contemplating such a step.

Yes, starvation, spiritual starvation, perhaps the keensst of the life, for it comes in neglect of a heart hunger, is the lot of those who choose a companion who knows not God. On the other hand, what joy, peace, and satisfaction come from the companionship of two lives united in the love of God! May our young people hold their ideal of marriage so high that it will be answered only by a companionship that can be complete in the sight of God.

And so ideals are a potent factor in the life of every young person. They are the strings which, when tuned in accordance with divine harmony, will echo throughout eternity. This life is but a little span. We are placed here to form that character which will make us at home in the atmosphere of heaven. Then let us shape our ideals in accordance with God’s. Only thus can we be in tune with the Infinite.

Friday, March 24

Our Choice

C. A. RUSSELL

Text: 1 Kings 18: 21

ALL will readily recall the test on Mt. Carmel. The prophets of Baal and the prophets of the groves, 850 in number on the one hand, and Elijah alone on the other! Elijah puts forth the vital question: “How long halt ye between two opinions?”

It is just as important and just as vital today. How long halt ye between two opinions? If God be God, serve Him; if Satan, serve him. In the very nature of the case we must do one or the other.

God never compels obedience. There is no forcing of the will, no coercion. Governments draft; God never. There's no conscription with Him.

There is just one thing which every individual *must* do, and that is, choose. We come into this life through no choice of our own, but when we reach the years of responsibility, we must choose whom we will serve, for there are but two masters. Jesus says, "He that is not with Me is against me." Who would deliberately choose Satan and be against Christ?

Two masters to serve!

Two roads to travel!

Two destinations to reach!

Every soul is serving one or the other, traveling one road or the other, headed for heaven or destruction. And the one thing which every soul is obliged to do is to choose. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

The vital question is strikingly put in Matthew 27: 22: "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" You say, "I'll have nothing to do with Him." No, but you must. You must either choose Him or reject Him. Every soul is living a surrendered life — to Christ or to Satan. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

How many have sinned? "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." So says the Book. What says the book of human experience?—"All." When we are sinning, whom are we serving?—Satan. Is he a good paymaster? Not, is he *good*, but a good *paymaster*? Will he pay you your wages if you work for him? To the uttermost farthing. And the wages of sin is death. Who would prefer death in the lake of fire to life everlasting in the earth made new?

An evangelist prepared a card for use in his services. On one side he had printed the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Following were such Bible answers as, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. . . . And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." On the reverse side of the card appeared the question, "What must I do to be lost?" The answer, printed in large letters, was simply the one word, "Nothing." And it's true. We are lost already, without a Saviour.

Does it pay to be a Christian? Quietly sit down and count the cost. Solve your problem in profit and loss. What have you to subtract from your life, and what to add? Does God ask you to give up anything that is really worth while after all? If so, what is it? The Christian may enjoy the best there is of everything good in life. He may choose as his associates the purest, the truest, the best. He may enjoy the best there is in the realm of literature, and at the same time he is saved from the poison of printed trash. He may enjoy the best there is in music, and be spared the nerve-racking "rag" and the rasping "jazz." He may develop the social side through pleasurable associations, and at the same time be saved from the cheap party, the demoralizing dance, and everything that savors of worldly ideals. The prodigal thought to obtain enjoyment out in the world, and he plunged in. After running the gamut of worldly pleasure, at last "he came to himself." It was then he found that he must give up something, and what was it?—Hogs, husks, hunger. His sanity and sensible reasoning dethroned the insanity of lust and worldly pleasure, and he said in his heart, "I will arise and go to my father." Thus will every one of God's wandering children speak within his heart when at last he comes to himself.

The evangelist was right. The sentence of death hangs over every unrepentant sinner. He is lost without a Saviour. Christ is the way. He is the only way. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is court, week; court is in session. It is the Supreme Court of the Universe. From its decisions there can be granted

no appeal; they are final. Soon will fall from the lips of Jehovah the fiat: "He that is holy, let him be holy still," and every saint of God will be sealed for eternity; "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still," and every sinner's doom will be fixed. This is the most solemn hour that ever struck. *What then will ye do with Jesus?* "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." And remember, you are *obliged* to choose.

"Many are inquiring, 'How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?' You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision or of choice. *Everything depends on the right action of the will.* The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can *choose* to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

"Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not *choose* to be Christians."—"Steps to Christ," pp. 47, 48, pocket edition.

"Choose to be Christians," that is our part. Then God can do His part and make us Christians. God Himself cannot make us Christians unless we first choose to be such.

A young man was greatly troubled over his spiritual condition. He was trying to be a Christian, and yet somehow there seemed to be more defeat than victory in his life. At last he grasped the fact that nothing he could *do* would recommend him to God, that no amount of struggling on his part could bring victory over sin. He could but choose to be a Christian, then God would make him such. Happy in this new-found light, and fearing lest the force of it might slip from him, he bought a large piece of red cardboard, and out of it cut the letters to form the motto, "Let God." This he pinned on the wall of his bedroom, just at the foot of his bed, where his eyes before closing in slumber would rest upon it at night, and again with the first gray streaks of dawn would come to him the consciousness that he must just "Let God."

All went well for a time, but again it seemed as if after all there must be something he should do to sort of help God out, and he began struggling again, and of course was thrown into discouragement. During his absence one day, a gentle zephyr stole through the open window of his bedroom, and taught him the lesson which he needed to learn. One of the letters was blown back and forth until at last it dropped to the floor, and upon his return his motto did not read as before. The "d" had fallen, and the lesson which the child of God must learn sooner or later was thus forcibly impressed upon his heart, "Let go!" Just that and no more. We are helpless to do more. Just "let go," and "let God."

A man has been arrested for a heinous crime. Twelve men listen to evidence. They file out. They return. The judge addresses the foreman of the jury. "Has the jury reached a verdict?" He replies, "Your Honor, we have. We find the respondent guilty as charged in the indictment."

"Guilty!" It strikes as a barbed arrow in the heart of the accused man. He is marched back into the death cell. The next morning, looking out between the bars of his window he sees some workmen beginning to build something in the jail yard. With a shudder he realizes what they are erecting. He hears the sawing and hammering as the gallows upon which he is to be hanged is being built. At last all is in readiness, and the evening before the day set for the execution, some friends present themselves to the warden, and visit his cell. They bring with them a pardon from the governor of the

State. What should you think of this man if he should say something like this:

"Well, friends, I certainly appreciate what you have done for me. I did not know I had such good friends, and I trust you will convey to the governor my heartiest and most sincere appreciation of what he has done. But, really, friends, I think I would rather hang. You see the gallows is all made, and since this is to be a public hanging, the people will be quite disappointed if I fail to carry out my part of the performance. So, friends, I thank you and the governor also; but I have decided that I will not disappoint the people, but permit the hanging to go on as scheduled."

What would you think of a man who would talk like this? You would say at once, "He is insane. Sitting alone in the death cell, brooding over his fate, and listening to the sound of the gallows being erected just outside his grated window, he has become unbalanced in mind, and it would be a crime to execute him."

What do you think of the one who would say to the blessed Christ who shed His own blood for us on Calvary and purchased our pardon, "Well, Jesus, I surely appreciate what you have done for me, but after all, I think I would rather go to hell."

A similar circumstance actually occurred some years ago. Reuben Johnson was a "lifer" in the State penitentiary of Ohio. He had already served so many long years—twenty—that he had become a fixture, so to speak, behind the massive walls. He had almost forgotten his own identity. His life was like one of the ponderous prison doors as it swung upon its hinges—to the workshop, to the cell; to the workshop, to the cell. Some friends of Reuben's, all unknown to him, at last secured some evidence which was not obtainable at the time of his trial. This evidence was placed before the board of pardons, who recommended to the governor of the State a pardon for Reuben Johnson. It was granted.

One Sunday the chaplain, at the close of his address to the prisoners, made the statement that the governor of Ohio had pardoned three of their number. The last name he read was that of Reuben Johnson. Now Reuben sat in the seat occupied by him in that chapel for the last twenty years, and when he heard his own name, he half arose to his feet. It sounded like an echo out of the past. He had heard that name somewhere before. But he sank back again. Once again the chaplain called out, "Reuben Johnson." This time the fellow staggered to his feet, but the eyes of his fellow prisoners were upon him, and in sheer embarrassment he again sank into his seat. For the third time the chaplain called out, "Reuben Johnson, you, No. 636, come forward and get your pardon!" A gleam of intelligence shot over his face at the sound of the number 636. He knew whom that meant, and timidly walking up the aisle, he reached out a trembling hand and got in his own possession the pardon from the governor of the commonwealth of Ohio. Just at that moment the prison gong sounded, and Reuben Johnson swung into line to be marched back into that old prison cell! Had I been Reuben Johnson, I should have gone out of that old prison like a shot out of a gun, and breathed God's free air once more—a free American citizen.

Nineteen hundred years ago, on Calvary's cross, your pardon was purchased. Will you accept, or reject? You are compelled to do one or the other.

"But it is so hard to be a Christian." Is it? Yes, if you don't want to be. It is hard to do anything you don't want to do. But if you really desire to be a Christian, and this desire leads you to the point of making your decision for Christ, there will come into your life such a happiness and peace as never before came to your sin-tossed soul. Said Christ, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." But "the way of the transgressor is hard."

I was in the waiting-room of the Union Station in one of our large cities. Suddenly I was startled by some one touching me on the shoulder, and turning about I looked into the face of a young soldier boy. As he smiled and greeted me, I said, "I know you, you're the boy I talked with on the camp-ground a year ago. Well, how is it going with you? Were you baptized, as you partly promised me you would be?"

He hung his head for a moment, then he said, "No, I was not. I will tell you about it. When I went home, I continued

in sin. Presently I got sick, then I grew worse, and they took me to a sanitarium. They told me I had to die. I had plenty of time for reflection as I lay there on my back gazing up at the ceiling. My wasted, and worse than wasted, life passed before me with awful vividness. At last I told the Lord if He would spare my life, I would serve Him. I got better. Then I became well again, and returned home. I did not keep my promise, and now," dropping his voice to a hoarse whisper, "I am a fugitive."

"A fugitive, man!" I said. "What do you mean?"

"I mean they are after me."

"Why don't you go home?" I said.

"I do not dare to go home."

"Where are you going?"

"God only knows. I am on the way. I shall take the first train out of this town, bound somewhere."

As he talked he kept glancing around furtively, evidently on the lookout for large men with blue coats and brass buttons. Think you this young man was happy, or enjoying peace of mind? Verily, "the way of the transgressor is hard."

No matter what may be the storm and stress from without, the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The roar and confusion of battle had ceased, and the stretcher bearers were silently performing their gruesome tasks. At the bottom of one of the trenches, still and cold and white, lay the form of a young soldier boy. The stiff fingers of one hand had closed over the little book, a red-letter New Testament, such as were furnished in large numbers to our soldier boys in the Great War. One finger of the other hand was pointing to that beautiful text, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." Alone in the trenches, as life slowly slipped away and the light in the eyes was growing dim, our boy was slowly tracing with his finger the beautiful words, "Let not your heart be troubled."

"Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

Let all who are on the Lord's side, or who today choose Christ as their personal Saviour, stand.

NOTE.—Let there be a closing prayer of consecration. Give time for definite requests for prayer to be made. Secure the names of those who make their decision for the first time, and arrange studies with them on baptism. May this special work result in a precious ingathering of blood-bought souls.

Sabbath, March 25

The Family Altar

J. A. STEVENS

THE dedication of this last Sabbath of Missionary Volunteer Week to a consideration of the tremendous importance of the family in the finishing of God's work, is a matter of serious import. Much depends on the influence of the home life. In the earlier days of the Advent Movement the family altar was not an exceptional thing; the tide of spiritual life ran strong in Seventh-day Adventist homes in those days. But there has crept into our homes a carelessness in regard to family worship that prompts the question in the text for this service (2 Kings 20: 15), "What have they seen in thine house?"

What has the world seen in your house, your family? What have your children seen in your home? What has been the influence of your home life on those within its sacred confines, as well as on those without? It will be well for us to ponder the answer. One day, not far from now, we must answer at the bar of the great Judge. The foundation for the final Pentecost must be laid in our homes. Mal. 4: 5, 6.

"God designs that the families of earth shall be a symbol of the family in heaven. Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God's plan, are among His most ef-

fective agencies for the formation of Christian character and for the advancement of His work."—*Testimonies*, Vol. VI, p. 430.

Abundance of needed counsel has been provided whereby parents may reach the standard God has set for Christian homes through the testimonies of His Spirit. He says: (Read "Testimonies," Vol. VI, p. 119, first paragraph.)

What important work must be done in the home? (Read "Education," p. 225, paragraph 3.) What great essential in this work is neglected? (Read "Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 143, last paragraph.) What is the mother's part? ("Ministry of Healing," p. 377, last paragraph, and continuing to the end of paragraph on p. 378.) What is the father's responsibility? (Read "Ministry of Healing," p. 392, last paragraph.) What will come upon families that neglect prayer? Jer. 10:25. What promise is based upon faithfulness of parents in Christian home life? Prov. 22:6; Ps. 144:11-15.

The following interesting story of a little Japanese girl is an unconscious rebuke to many an altarless Christian home: She had come to live in a Christian home in America. Entering heartily into the life and customs so strange to her, she became a happy member of the family. "But there is one thing I miss," she said, "which makes your home seem so queer to me. You know I have been with you to your church, and I have seen you worship your God there. But I have missed the god in your home. You know, in Japan we have a god shelf in every house, with the gods right there in our homes. Do not any Americans worship their God in their homes?"

Let us note the following

"Ten Reasons Why Every Christian Home Should Have a Family Altar"

I

"Because it will send you forth to the daily task with cheerful heart, truer to your duty, strengthened to meet the discouragements, disappointments, perchance adversity and even blighted hopes that may fall to your lot, and enable you to glorify God in it all.

II

"Because it will make you conscious all through the day of the attending presence of an unseen, divine One, who will bring you through more than conqueror over every unholy thought or thing that rises up against you.

III

"Because it will sweeten the home life and enrich the home relationship as nothing else can do, resolve all the misunderstandings, and relieve all the friction that sometimes intrudes into the sacred precincts of family life.

IV

"Because it will exert a saving power on your children as they grow up surrounded with its hallowed influence, and will hold them as nothing else can when they have gone from beneath the parental roof-tree.

V

"Because 'in every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and ask Him for His help and guidance and watchcare during the day.'—*Testimonies*, Vol. VII, p. 43.

VI

"Because 'if ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Infidelity and skepticism prevail. Iniquity abounds. . . . The soul is made the sport of his [Satan's] temptations, and unless some mighty arm is stretched out to rescue him, man goes where the archrebel leads the way.'—*Id.*, p. 42.

VII

"Because 'in this time of fearful peril, some who profess to be Christians have no family worship. They do not honor God in the home; they do not teach their children to love and fear Him.'—*Id.*, p. 42.

VIII

"Because 'the homes of Christians should be lights in the world. From them, morning and evening, prayer should ascend to God as sweet incense. And as the morning dew, His mercies and blessings will descend upon the suppliants.'—*Id.*, p. 44.

IX

"Because it will exert a helpful, hallowed influence over those who may at any time be guests within the home, and will furnish an example and an encouragement to other homes for the same kind of life, service, and devotion to God.

X

"Because God has spoken through His word and by the testimony of His Spirit, that an altar should be erected in every Christian home, and thus obeying Him do we honor the Giver of all good and the Source of all blessing, and place ourselves within the shelter of His mighty, keeping power."

How wonderful and far-reaching are the possibilities wrapped up in the influence of this simple devotional hour. (Quote, "Education," p. 262, 2d par., to sentence ending, "King of Kings.")

Illustrative of the influence of a home where the family altar is an inseparable part of the daily life of the family, is the following story:

The Starting of a Missionary Career

Had it not been for the leading of Providence in bringing a homeless boy from a foreign land in contact with a Christian home, humble and meager though it was, the cause of God would not have intermingled with its history the long years of valiant service by Elder L. R. Conradi, who is now vice-president of the General Conference for Europe, and who for the past thirty-five years served unceasingly in that great field.

Here is the story of his boyhood experience, as related by himself at an informal experience meeting in the United States on one of his visits to this country:

"As a boy of only sixteen and a half years I came to this country all alone. After six weeks in the East, I went to Iowa and asked a merchant if he had work I could do for him. 'Sure,' said he, 'out on my farm.' While riding out to the farm, he said to me, 'Now, my young man, you will find the renters a peculiar people. Be on your guard, because they keep Saturday for the Sabbath.' I had never heard of such people, and I said, 'Do you think that I will ever be a Jew?'

"We came to that lonely farmhouse. It was a small house, — only two rooms, and the kitchen was one of them. And the family — I'll never forget it — the father, and mother, the baby, and four other children. I asked them if I could board and room with them. They asked, 'Where will you find board and room here?' The father and mother and baby slept in one room, and the children in the other. I left, but came back again, and when I appeared the man said to me, 'My wife and I have talked the matter over, and if you are satisfied to sleep in that room with the children, you may stay.' Toward the end of the week, the man said to me, 'Now we are a peculiar people. When the Sabbath comes, we all go to church.'

"When evening came, I went to the house, and there I saw a sight that I had never seen in any other family in America during the six and a half years I had spent in the country. And what was it? The father read a short chapter from his Bible, and then they all knelt down, and I knelt with them. The father prayed a short prayer, then the mother, then the children, down to the smallest; and O, they prayed for that stranger within their gates! My heart was hard and my mind was stubborn; it was a new experience to my soul. There were nights when I was free, and then the good brother gave me 'Daniel and the Revelation,' and he asked me to read it whenever I had time. And I did read it.

"The Sabbath came. The man said to me, 'You may go with us, if you wish; but do just as you think best.' Well, I went with them, but did not go into that little church. I went down town to see what was going on. That arrangement just suited me. Another week passed. Again the children prayed, and that hard heart of mine became softer, the mind became more enlightened; and that Sabbath I dared step into that little Sabbath school. The third Sabbath came, and I stayed to the social meeting, and by the time the fourth Sabbath came, I learned to say, 'Abba, Father; my Father.' I had found my heavenly Father for the first time in my life."

It is the old, old story of the influence of a quiet Christian home with its family altar! Who can estimate the value and extent of the influence of the Christian home to the cause of

God, and what Christian parent will peril the destinies of his family by failure to bind the family circle with the hedge of prayer?

As we close the services of this week that has been dedicated to our children and young people and their part in the world-wide work, let us, parents and children, determine that henceforth the family altar shall stand in our homes as an index to a deeper devotional life.

(Read the following covenant and ask for a standing expression by all who will endeavor to faithfully observe family worship.)

"Believing myself responsible to God for a true home, and realizing the need of God's grace for my own Christian life, I covenant with God to make it a rule of my life to gather my family together each day, so far as possible, and read some portion of God's word and pray for His blessing upon my home."

(Then suggest the following:) It would be a misfortune to close this blessed week's services with any soul still halting over the all-important decision to serve Christ. A great host of young people have decided to make this week the starting-point for a deeper spiritual life. For the encouragement of us all, let those who have made this decision, stand.

If there are any here who have not definitely settled this matter, won't you stand with those who have decided? (Wait a few moments for a response, if some still hold back. A word spoken personally by a friend or loved one may help some to surrender.)

The families of earth that are saved are to be reunited in the family of heaven. As fathers and mothers, let us all re-consecrate our lives together with our children today. Let us prove faithful in the discharge of every responsibility that a knowledge of the truth involves.

Notes and Illustrations for Young People's Workers

A Purpose in Life

"I ALWAYS wanted to react on the world about me to my utmost ounce of power. Lying on the prairie grass and lifting my hand toward the sky, I used to say in my inmost spirit 'What is it? What is the aim to be, O God?'"—*Frances Willard*.

"To feel that you have a divine mission that no one else can perform, that you came here with a sacred message from mankind, and that it is up to you to deliver it, will add a wonderful motive for effectiveness in your life-work. The consciousness that you are keeping faith with your Creator, and with yourself, that you are keeping faith with your fellow men and earning their respect and love, that you are keeping faith with a splendid life purpose, with your holiest vision, gives a satisfaction which nothing else can afford."—*Marden*.

Real Heroism

On a monument in Belfast to twenty-two men who went down with the "Titanic," April 15, 1912, is this inscription:

"Their devotion to duty and heroic conduct, through which the lives of many on board were saved, have left a record of calm fortitude and self-sacrifice which will ever remain an inspiring example to succeeding generations." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"We can have no knowledge of that God, no fellowship with His life, if what we are living is the smooth, easy, indulgent life, everything bought for us by others, nothing done by us for others, no blood of sacrifice coloring our life red with the glow of God and His incarnate Son. The New Testament despises the smooth life that makes it impossible for men and women to have any part in the deepest life of their father."—*Selected*.

"Young men who feel stirred with the appeals that have been made for help in this great work of advancing the cause of God, make some advance moves, but do not get the burden of the work upon them sufficiently to accomplish what they might. They are willing to do a small work, which does not require special effort. Therefore, they do not learn to place their whole dependence upon God, and by living faith draw from the great Fountain and Source of light and strength, in order that their efforts should prove wholly successful."—*Testimonies to the B. C. Church*, p. 98.

"The Only Sin"

A young person who had received great blessing at camp-meeting, wrote:

"There is so much joy and richness in a surrendered life! I wish somehow you could make it the point of your message to the young people that after all is said and done, the only

sin is the sin of not surrendering the life to Jesus. We can drop off this, and that, and the other, and become one-sided and dwarfed and bent, but only abiding in the vine will make us fruitful branches."

Faith

"You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that His death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood."—*Mrs. E. G. White, in Review and Herald, July 24, 1888*.

Results of Surrender

"I wish to thank you for the personal work you did for me while at the camp-meeting. You made me feel that my case was not entirely hopeless. I kept the promise I made you, and before I left the camp-ground I gave my heart to God. He has come into my life and has given me such wonderful peace. The very moment I surrendered fully to Him, the struggle that has been going on in my heart for so many years was ended; and my only regret is that I did not make the surrender years ago when you pleaded with me to do so.

"I am sure the great reason for my failure in life is the lack of food, breath, and exercise—the three great daily essentials you mentioned in your letter. I can hardly understand why I was so blind, and did not see this before; it is all so beautiful, and Jesus is so real to me now."—*Extract from a Letter*.

Character Building

"All the scenes of this life in which we must act a part, are to be carefully studied, for they are a part of our education. We should bring solid timbers into our character building, for we are working both for this life and eternal life. And as we near the close of this earth's history, we advance more rapidly in Christian growth, or we retrograde just as decidedly."—*Mrs. E. G. White, in "Special Testimonies to Ministers," No. 1, p. 43*.

"The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity, she will have to do in a terrible crisis. . . . The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain."—*Testimonies, Vol. V, p. 463*.

"When Judas was bargaining for thirty pieces of silver for his Lord, Jesus was promising His disciples golden mansions."

Happiness, Pleasure, Amusement

"Some people dream of happiness as something they will come to by and by, at the end of a course of toil and struggle. But the true way to find happiness is as we go on in our work. Every day has its own cup of sweetness. In every duty is a pot of hidden manna. In every sorrow is a blessing of comfort. In every burden is rolled up a gift of God."—*Selected*.

"The primal motive of most forms of sin is the desire to make a short cut to happiness. We yield to temptation because it promises pleasure without the effort of earning it. This promise is one which has never been fulfilled in all the history of all the ages, and it is time that men were coming to realize that fact."—*Selected*.

"The young generally conduct themselves as though the precious hours of probation, while mercy lingers, were one grand holiday, and they were placed in this world merely for their own amusement, to be gratified with a continued round of excitement. Satan has been making special efforts to lead them to find happiness in worldly amusements, and to justify themselves by endeavoring to show that these amusements are harmless, innocent, and even important for health."—*Testimonies, Vol. I, p. 501*.

A Personal Saviour

The story is told of a wee Scotch lad, Jamie. He was visited by the minister, who found him, like many a boy, quite reticent. "Jamie," said the minister, "I am going away for a fortnight, but I am going to give you a verse of Scripture to think about, and when I come back I want you to tell me what is the most important word." He took Jamie's wasted hand—for the laddie was "no lang" for here—and spelled out on the fingers of his left hand, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Returning to his parish, the minister went to the house of Jamie's mother, who met him, bravely bearing her sorrow, and said, "O minister, Jamie is no here. He is gone, but he told me to tell you he dee'd with his right hand holding the fourth finger of his left hand, 'The—Lord—is—MY—Shepherd.'"

And so wee Scotch Jamie had gotten to the heart of the gospel of Jesus.

Music

"Jazz expresses hysteria and incites to idleness, revelry, dissipation, destruction, discord, and chaos. It accords with the

devastating, volcanic spirit that has burst forth over the world in the last six years. Rhythm and musical vibrations swayed the half-savags voodooists like a powerful intoxicant."

"Jazz is compounded after the same formula as the voodoo chants. Typifying the unbalanced state of humanity's mind, it tends to unhinge it more and more.

"Seldom do you hear 'Home Sweet Home' sung now. Formerly it dropped in upon us in concert encores and quiet social and family gatherings. And every rendition of it reacted on the cerebral tissue of those who sang, and to a lesser extent on those who listened. With 'Home Sweet Home' silenced, home itself tends to disappear. With home swallowed up in the cabaret, the great stabilizing center of society is lost.

"Make music virile. Put red blood into it.

"Keep away from the jazz abominations.

"Bring back 'Home Sweet Home.'"—*Frank E. Morton.*

"Angels are hovering around yonder dwelling. The young are there assembled; there is the sound of vocal and instrumental music. Christians are gathered there, but what is that you hear? It is a song, a frivolous ditty, fit for the dance hall. Behold the pure angels gather their light closer around them, and darkness envelops those in that dwelling. The angels are moving from the scene. Sadness is upon their countenances. Behold, they are weeping. . . . When turned to good account, music is a blessing, but it is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls. When abused, it leads the unconsecrated to pride, vanity, and folly. When allowed to take the place of devotion and prayer, it is a terrible curse."—*"Testimonies," Vol. I, p. 506.*

The Theater

God "hath no pleasure in fools." Eccl. 5: 4.

"Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom." Prov. 15: 21.

"Fools make a mock at sin." Prov. 14: 9.

"This drama of the hour is artificial; it panders to the passions, to nervous greed for excitement, to eroticism. Instead of teaching a moral, it mocks our tested notions of morality. Instead of teaching humanity that good is preferable to evil, it makes light of virtue, and places vice in an alluring light of epigrammatic railery."—*"Popular Amusements," p. 121.*

"Wickedness is made to give amusement. Crimes that would call down the wrath of God upon the perpetrators, are systematically made to provoke laughter."—*Id., p. 45.*

"This chief and all-pervading objection to the theater is that the profession of an actor is in and of itself unnatural, baleful, and radically and universally wrong; and that because this is so, no change of controlling influences can make the institution which depends on and represents that profession, an agency of substantial good or worthy of Christian countenance and support. On the face of it, the profession of an actor stands all by itself in demanding of its votary that his main purpose and endeavor shall be to seem what he is not, to appear something else than his real self; and herein lies the essential and irremediable evil of his profession."—*"Borderlines in the Field of Doubtful Practice," pp. 114-117.*

"Hannah More was a friend of the actor Garrick, and in her earlier days a writer for the theater and one of its patrons. As her judgment, forced upon her by her own observation, she wrote,—though she says she had read none of the writings against the stage,—'The fruits of the Spirit and the fruits of the stage perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as the human imagination can conceive.'"—*"Across the Dead-Line of Amusements," pp. 18, 19.*

"Commercialized amusements supply for the most part only a tantalizing appeal to the sensations."—*"Christianity and Amusements," pp. 42, 43.*

Dress

"Do not dress showily, or extravagantly, or beyond your means. Do not dress in such a way as to call attention to any part of your figure, or to distort or alter it. Do not dress so that people will notice your dress more than yourselves. There is no reason why the general style of your dress should not be like that of others. To be totally out of the fashion would make you needlessly singular, and attract as much attention as if you were dressed in the height of fashion; and whatever makes others think of us, or us think of ourselves, turns our thoughts away from Jesus and from better things. I think that there is no higher art for a Christian girl than to dress simply, quietly, and tastefully; as one who is careful of the body which Christ has given, but who is mindful also of the apostle's words, 'Let the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.'"—*F. B. Meyer.*

"What we must not forget is that there is a distinct point of morals in this question of how a woman dresses. . . . When girls are permitted to buy and wear . . . the waist so thin and transparent as to be absolutely indecent, with sleeves so short

and neck so low as to transcend the line of decency, and a skirt so tight that the figure is displayed at every step, with stockings of the thinnest transparent silk, there is a question of morals involved that is, to say the least, important."

Good Dressing

"The vulgar crowd likes finery.

"The more real culture a woman has, the less she fancies fine feathers. She abhors any hat or gown that renders her conspicuous."—*Dr. Frank Crane.*

"Gaudy apparel betrays vanity and weakness. A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire."—*"Testimonies," Vol. IV, p. 643.*

Marriage with Unbelievers

A young woman wrote the following to one of our ministers:

"I'm coming to you with my heart full of trouble, for advice. I've always had confidence in you, and always enjoyed listening to your sermons.

"Six months ago I was married to an unbeliever, and I've never had any peace since that day. I do not have the privilege of worshipping God as I want to. I've had nothing but heartaches since my marriage. I've wondered many times why it was that God allowed me to marry him. I thought I loved him, and I thought he would soon be a Christian; but instead he has abused me, whipped me, and deprived me of living a Christian life. I married him against the will of my parents; I ran away from home to marry. We kept house for a while, but now he has gone away to work, and I'm living with my parents. They have persuaded with me to get a divorce from him, and they would take me back and treat me just as well as they ever did.

"I still love my husband and would die to save him, but it seems that I've done everything in my power to change his life, and all in vain. Would you please advise me what to do?

"I know my life is not what it should be, and I'm praying daily for the Lord to open my eyes that I may see the way I should take. I believe God has forgiven me for the great mistake I made in marrying whom I did, and I'm willing to do what the Lord directs me from this on."

Through Much Affliction

"In the meeting at Ismid in Turkey, a young girl was present and gave a splendid testimony. Before the war she was somewhat worldly. She refused to accept the Adventist religion to which her parents belonged. When the massacres began, the Turks began to carry off the Christian women. It was better to sell the girls to the Turks, as they were treated better when sold. This girl's mother, though an Adventist, sold her for \$2.35. She was carried inland, and suffered untold misery and distress. She wanted to pray and become a Christian. The devil tempted her and tried to make her believe it was too late, as she had not given her heart to God in times of peace.

"One evening she was told she would be sold at public auction the next morning. She spent the night in prayer, and gave her heart to God. In the morning she was brought to the market place and set on a small block, and being large and good-looking, several men bid earnestly for her. Soon an old Arabian came along and began to bid. He kept on raising his bid while the young men swore and threatened him. She was afraid to be sold, and began to weep. Finally the auctioneer declared her sold to the old Arabian. His wife was with him. They said to the girl: 'We don't need you, but we will take you home and care for you as a daughter. We felt this morning that we should go to the market place.' After the war, a party of Armenians came that way and took her home. She is now a good Adventist."—*L. H. Christian.*

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