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TIME TO BE READY

By Robert L. Rowe

All over the earth today are those who see current events as heralds of Christ's return. The Church has taught for centuries that Christ will come again. Now we see abundant signs proclaiming that His advent is near.

Seventh-day Adventists have vigorously proclaimed that the second advent of Christ is soon to take place. By thousands of sermons, untold numbers of books, and millions of papers this truth has been broadcast to the world.

But are we living epistles, testifying by our daily actions that we are individually preparing to meet God? Or are we indicating to unbelievers that we are content to make this world our home? Are we laying up treasures on earth while multitudes in darkness wait for the light that we might help to give? Inspired counsel informs us that there are only two places in the world where we can deposit our treasures—in God's storehouse

or in Satan's, and all that is not devoted to Christ's service is counted on Satan's side and goes to strengthen his cause."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, page 448.



The largest baptism ever to take place in North Nigeria was conducted on the 11th February 1956. Forty one souls were buried with the Lord in baptism, Pastors Bulas, Kakwi and J. Olomjobi officiated. This was exceptionally remarkable when we think that in that small field another baptism, nearly as large had taken place late last year. May God grant the harvest of many more souls among the millions of North Nigeria.

The judgment-hour message applies to church members as well as to open sinners. "In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review."—*The Great Controversy*, page 490. Shall some unconfessed and unforsaken sin bar our entrance into the heavenly kingdom? Well might we ask ourselves, "Am I ready for Jesus to come? Does anything stand between me and God?"

Perhaps our habits of reading, looking or listening are stealing from us the time we so greatly need for Bible study and prayer. Or, maybe we love a wife, mother, or other dear one more than we love God. With many people such things as home, career, pleasure, or wealth are hindering spiritual growth. Dare we let any of these temporal considerations prevent us from preparing for eternity?

In the parable of the ten virgins Christ warned that a time is coming when it will be too late to prepare. "Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless."—*Ibid.*, page 620.

Holy Spirit

When Jesus returns, His people will be ready. Every faithful soul would have been gathered in, sealed forever His. God has given numerous blessings to His children through the ages, but in order to prepare us for the end, He gives Himself through the Holy Spirit. This divine agency combines with human effort for the perfecting of His people and the finishing of His work. The fulness of His power in the later-rain experience, however, can be received only by those who have been making steady growth in grace and in overcoming sin. Our hearts are to be the temple of the King. Dare we invite Him to a place unprepared?

"Solemnly there come to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives: 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day comes upon you unawares.' 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.' (Luke 21:34, 36)."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 636.—Reprinted from *Review and Herald*, 9th February, 1956.

Would You Be Happy In Heaven?

By Fredrick Lee

"Would you be happy in heaven?" someone may ask. But do not be too quick to answer this question. It is not so easy to answer as some might think.

"What!" you say, "who would not be happy in heaven? Doesn't the Good Book tell us that in heaven there will be pleasures forevermore?"

Yes, the psalmist states, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." (Ps. 16:11).

But to what kind of joy and pleasure does this refer? Is it the kind of pleasure that interests people most today?

The popular saying is: "All this and heaven too." Nothing is more false than the concept that one can have all the pleasures of earth as well as the future pleasure of heaven. Even if God should open the pearly gates wide enough for unconverted persons to go in, they would not stay long, for not only would heaven be boring for them, it likewise would be a place of torture.

Perhaps some have not thought too much about this; thus they deceive themselves into thinking that one who can enjoy the entertainment prepared especially to suit the tastes of the unconverted masses will also find joy in the pure and holy pleasures of the world to come.

To find out how false this idea is, ask yourself this question: "Would my friend who is now almost wholly absorbed in the latest best-seller fiction, the popular rhythms today called music, the floor shows and the drinking of the night club, the movies that great crowds attend, the worldly dress that the worldly mind loves so much, and all the other wholly worldly interests that are taking men and women by storm today—would this friend enjoy a Sabbath school class, the hour of Sabbath worship, a prayer meeting, a Christian song service, the healthy and wholesome social events of the true Christian?"

Of course the answer is NO. Such a person would not be happy amid the pleasures of the Christian here on earth or in heaven.

We are told by an inspired witness: "The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of the holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. . . . He would be a discordant note in the

melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy."—*Steps to Christ* (Army and Navy ed.), pages 17, 18.

So the startling fact is that if one is to enjoy the pleasure of heaven, he must learn to enjoy some of those pleasures now. This means a severe change in one's habits of life. This cannot be brought about in a day or overnight. It is the work of a lifetime, and all should remember that time is short. Of this we are warned:

"It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity. Death brings dissolution to the body, but makes no change in the character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, page 466.—Reprinted from *Review and Herald*, February 9, 1956.

Shepherd's Rod

I have noted that some of our workers are from time to time getting literature from the "Shepherd's Rod." This group known as the Seventh-day Adventists Davidian have their headquarters in Waco, Texas, U.S.A. Inasmuch as their literature bears the name Seventh-day Adventists Davidian and quotes a great deal from the Spirit of Prophecy it is a very careful deception.

The General Conference have had Pastor W. E. Read study this very carefully and two leaflets have been prepared, one "The Story of the Shepherd's Rod" (some copies of this were distributed to the field sometime ago) and a new tract which has just come out entitled, "Some of the Teachings of the Shepherd's Rod Examined." If you have been getting any of this literature I would suggest that you ask your Mission President for copies of the two above mentioned leaflets as these will help you to be enlightened and not to be led astray by false teachings.

J.O.G.

A Terrible Parable

Fact Not Fiction

There dwelleth in a busy little city a highly esteemed worker commonly known as Brother Busy Pastor. As he speaketh in his church from one Sabbath to another and from one new moon to another, he charmeth his listeners of whom there are many.

One Sabbath, Brother Busy Pastor did lift up his voice like a trumpet and earnestly intrigued his members to enroll their friends in the V.O.P. Bible Correspondence Course, whereupon they did immediately go into action with great zeal and spirited persuasion. They did convince many that they should take the course. Among those who then began their study of the Bible were Mr. and Mrs. O. So. Earnest who lived on Back Street. With great joy and lightheartedness did they examine the Holy Scriptures to discover the will of God. Upon finding the truth of the Sabbath and being thereby much perplexed and in need of encouragement, they straightway did request that the representative of the school visit them. With beaming expectancy the Prospect Department did dispatch post-haste the request to the Union and Local Secretaries who in turn forwarded this request on to Brother Busy Pastor.

Now, Brother Busy Pastor was especially busy at this time, so he thinketh in his heart and because Back Street was off the beaten path, he did delay in making the contact. Before he realized it, many weeks had slipped by. Meanwhile Brother Union Secretary, a man much interested in following up as well as discovering interests, took it upon himself to write at length to Mr. and Mrs. O. So. Earnest thereby seeking to encourage them. Not many days thereafter a note cometh with an answer to his letter. His faith becometh like ashes and he did shake and tremble all over as he read:

"Listen, fellow, we don't know who you are, but when we were struggling with the Sabbath problem, none of your representatives came to us as we urgently requested. If that's the kind of pastors and people you have in your church, we don't want anything to do with them. Good-bye."

As Brother Union Secretary did stare at the letter in heart-rending amazement, he thought upon the good work that Brother Busy Pastor had done in getting people en-

(Continued on page 6.)

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GOSSIP

By H. M. S. Richards

By "GOSSIP" we mean the wrong kind of gossip, the wrong kind of talking about others, false human judgment on the lives and motives of others. What does Jesus say about gossip? What does the Holy Book say about backbiting and destructive criticism?

Let us appeal at once to the Ten Commandments. Here are the tremendous words of God Himself:

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."—Exodus 20:16.

It is clearly the object of this important commandment of God to guard the rights, the interests, the reputation of our neighbour by guarding our conversation and confining our words to that which is strictly true. How often is our judgment of others false!

This is illustrated by an experience in the life of Professor Blake, who is known for innumerable legends and stories about his high minded conduct. In his classroom one day, a student arose to read, holding his book in his right hand. Professor Blake told him to take the book in his other hand. Still the student read on with the book in his right hand. Again the angry professor thundered at him to hold the book in his left hand. "I cannot, sir," answered the young man, as he brought an empty sleeve from behind his back. The students hissed, but the next moment they cheered as the famous professor of Greek made his earnest apology.

About us everywhere are lips that move, but do not speak; sleeves that have no arm within them. This is life. Yet we continue to pronounce our rash judgments, the falsity of which would fill us with humiliation and sorrow, if we only knew the facts. Our knowledge is so limited, and our judgment of others is usually so biased and incomplete.

On beautiful Grassmere Lake in Cumberland County, England, in the midst of the haunts of the English poets, is a promontory called Point Rash Judgment. One day the poet Wordsworth, his sister, and Coleridge were walking along the shore. In a boat some distance from land, they saw a man fishing. It was right at the height of the harvest season when all able-bodied men were needed in the harvest fields. They said one to another, "How improvident of this man to be spending his time fishing when he ought to be at work with the harvesters!"

But, when they looked more closely, they saw that he was an aged and decrepit man, unable to work in the fields. He was doing his best to help where he could. Struck with the unkindness and injustice of their judgment, they named the promontory Point Rash Judgment, and well named it was!

Just think a moment, friend—have you ever made a rash judgment about somebody? Possibly some events in our lives should be named Point Rash Judgment. We might then make fewer such judgments.

It was John the Baptist, the cousin of the Lord Jesus, who gave this advice:

"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."—Luke 3:14.

This advice was given to soldiers, but the principle certainly should apply to us all—accuse no one falsely.

But now, to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. What did He say about gossip; about unkind, unprofitable, unjust words? We turn to Mathew 12:36, 37 and find His divine statement:

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

You see, words are real things, and what we do with them will decide our eternal destiny. Does that surprise you? Well, that's what the Book says. That's what Jesus said—God knows our words.

H. M. S.
Richards,
World
Director of the
Voice
of Prophecy
Bible School



"For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (said the psalmist)—Psalm 139:4.

It is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," declared the Lord Jesus in Mathew 12:34.

The word "talebearer" is a name that none of us likes, but the Scripture uses it in Leviticus 19:16:

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."

For—

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds."—Proverbs 26:22.

"He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends."—Proverbs 17:9.

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."—Proverbs 26:20.

Now, let us turn to the words of the great apostle Paul. We find them in perfect harmony with the Ten Commandments, with the writings of the wise man of old, with the authoritative pronouncement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Writing to the Corinthians, the apostle says in 2 Corinthians 12:20:

"For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envying, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults."

Notice, if the people in the church at Corinth were guilty of backbiting, they would be what the apostle desired them not to be. Backbiting, gossip, misjudging, will finally bring destruction. They are the antithesis of love; the revelation of innate hatred, pride, and unbelief. In Galatians 5:14, 15 the apostle tells us—

"All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

George Meredith says that a gossip is "a beast of prey. He does not even wait for the death of the victim he devours."

It was Heywood Brown who once related the story of a mother who told her children to divide all people into two classes: friends and strangers. We love our friends too well to gossip about them, and strangers we know too little. Isn't that true?

The Lord promises to sustain and bless those who refuse to have any part in backbiting gossip. Listen to these words in Psalm 15:2, 3, 5:

"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."

He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. . . . He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

None of us should carry a sword in our tongue to wound the reputation of any man. Noah Webster laid down this rule: "We should say nothing of a person in his absence that we would be unwilling to say if he were present." How few govern their conversation according to this rule!

Of the ideal wife pictured in the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, verse 26, we read that the law of kindness is in her tongue. How much we need this law of kindness—all of us! It was Ella Wheeler Wilcox who wrote:

"So many gods, so many creeds,

So many paths that wind and wind,
When just the art of being kind

Is all this sad world needs."

If this includes the kindness of God in Jesus Christ for man's redemption, then these words are true in their fullness.

There is an old saying that runs like this:

"There is so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,

That it hardly behoves any of us,

To talk about the rest of us."

Much gossip bears no evil intent, but is simply a matter of careless habit. There may be no malicious intentions, but words are spoken carelessly, which in the end may bring results far beyond our belief. For example, take this matter of criticizing those who preach the gospel. We should be careful in our remarks about the servants of God. They are all human, and in preaching the message of Christ they may make many mistakes. We should emphasize not the mistakes, but the good. Here is a caution from the apostle himself in 1 Timothy 5:19:

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."

Accusations should not be made unless they are very, very serious indeed, and then there must be witnesses. I found a very important and wonderful statement along this line in an excellent book by E. G. White entitled *Christ's Object Lessons*, a book of the parables of Jesus:

"Many who listen to the preaching of the Word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or

a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister's character, motives, and actions and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God's messengers and reverence for their message."—pages 45, 46.

Some who do this wonder why their children lose interest in gospel preaching, lose faith in the church and its ministers. How well we know that there is enough failure in all the servants of God, but should it be emphasized and scattered broadcast in the hearing of children and unbelievers? How can we ever hope to convert them or bring them to Christ when we show such unlovely, un-Christlike characteristics in our own lives?

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;

You can't do that way when you're flying words."

—Will Carleton.

There is a legend of a peasant with a troubled conscience who went to the village priest for advice. He had repeated some slander about a friend and latter found that the words were untrue. So he wanted to know what he could do to make amends. The priest said: "If you want to make peace with your conscience, you must fill a bag with goose feathers. Then go to every door in the village and drop a feather on each porch."

The man took the bag, filled it with feathers, and did as he was told. Then he went back to the priest and asked, "Is this all I need to do?"

"No, that's not all," was the answer. "There is one thing more. Take your bag now and gather up every feather that you left."

After a long time the peasant returned saying, "I couldn't find them all; the wind has blown them away."

Then he was told: "So it is with gossip. Unkind words are so easily dropped but we can never, never take them back again."

Only a person who has been born again by the grace of God can control his tongue. The apostle James tells us in James 3:7, 8:

"For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

And true it is! Then what are we to do? We can find help from above as we pray with David—

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."—Psalm 141:3.

God must set the watch. He must keep the door of our lips, and He will if we seek Him in prayer and recognize our need of His help. Then may we take the vow that David, God's servant took:

"I will take heed of my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."—Psalm 39:1.

The cure for gossip is love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." That's what Jesus said in Matthew 22:39. And—

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—Matthew 7:12.

This Golden Rule should be the rule of our heart and lips.

The Holy Bible has wonderful examples of the power of speech, the blessedness of a word in due season, the right kind of word, the beautiful word, the encouraging word, the kind word. Here is God's evaluation of the matter—we can almost see it:

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."—Proverbs 25:11.

Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. (Luke 6:45.) May God give us that fullness of heart, that converted heart, which comes only by the grace of God, the fruitage of prayer, and full surrender. And may we speak only those words that will make the world better because we have lived in it.

"Lord help me say the word today

That blesses all, where'er it fall.

Blot from my mind the word unkind,

Unthought, unsaid, forever dead.

O Thou above, my lips in love

Guide, guard, or seal, I do appeal.

Make all I say each passing day

Good, kind, and fair; this is my prayer."

A Terrible Parable

(Continued from page 3)

rolled in the Bible Course and also on his slothfulness and failure to follow up the interest because it was on Back Street. Where-upon he groaneth within himself and saith: "This ought we to have done, but not to have left the other undone."

—CUES, October, 1954 issue.

Which Do You Prefer—

A Hindleg or a Tenth Part?

By Evangelist B. C. B. Debra,
District Leader, Accra

Every nation in this world has got its own laws and customs. In the Gold Coast, especially in Ashanti and among the Twi speaking people, there is a well known custom that requests a hunter to present the hindleg of a large animal he kills to the Chief of that land. Failure of which the hunter might get into trouble with the Chief. The reason is that the Chief claims ownership of that land and must therefore share in the increase of the land.

But God only can rightly claim ownership of the land because "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. . . ." Ps. 24:1. God even claims ownership of the beasts of the forest. . . . Ps. 50:10, 11. Even the Silver and Gold are the Lord's (Hag. 2:8,) and he could rain them from Heaven if he chose; but instead, He has made man His steward and has given man the power to get wealth (Deut. 8:18)—not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others.

Like the hunter's hindleg, the Lord God is also requesting us to return to Him the tenth part of our income to assist in furthering the cause of His great work. A hindleg or a tenth part—which do you prefer.

A New Leaf

*He came to my desk with a quivering lip—
The lesson was done—*

*"Dear teacher, I want a new leaf," he said;
"I have spoiled this one."*

*"In place of the leaf so stained and blotted,
I gave him a new one all unspotted,
And into his sad eyes smiled—
"Do better now, my child."*

*I went to the throne with a quivering soul—
The old year was done—*

*"Dear Father, hast thou a new leaf for me?
I have spoiled this one."*

*He took the old leaf, stained and blotted,
And gave me a new one all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled—
"Do better now, my child."*

—Kathleen R. Wheeler

Bekwai Week of Prayer

By Teacher G. A. Ashun

Pastor S. B. Essien, one of the Senior African Pastors of the Gold Coast Adventist Mission and the chaplain of the Kwahu-Mpraeso Hospital, conducted a Week of Prayer at the Bekwai Seminary from 26th to 30th March, 1956.

The Pastor's theme which was Our Lord's Prayer, was expounded in a way which brought home to all its deep spiritual significance, while indicating also the process, the bearing that the topic has on our day to day practical experiences.

Each daily exposition and exhortation was followed by short prayer meetings organised in bands. The overall result of the Week of Prayer activities has been a great rejuvenation of the spiritual life of the Seminary which is a composite educational institution comprising of a Training College, a Secondary School and an Evangelistic Training branch.

Duty

Yesterday I passed a building undergoing repairs. On one side workmen were removing large quantities of bricks which had crumbled away. Why I mused, had some bricks disintegrated and not others?

"Fifty years ago, when the building was erected," said the foreman, "there came a day when the labourers at the brickyard had trouble with one another. And now, long years after the failure of those men to work together for a single day, a moral is written in crumbling brick."

How like the untold story of human life that is! For life is not built as a solid mass; it is built of individual days cemented by motives, hates, and loves. How important it is that we live nobly, creatively, cheerfully, forgivingly, each day, lest the time come when we discover that the house of our habitation has begun to crumble because we imagined, "O, This day does not count." Evermore write in the heart; "Today is the best day of the year."—*Sunshine Magazine*, February, 1956.

Temper gets you into trouble; pride keeps you there.—*Sunshine Magazine*, February, 1956.

News Notes

✘ We, in East Nigeria, were pleased to have the visit of Pastor R. W. Coon, Principal of the V.O.P. Bible School during February. Large gatherings were held at Calabar, Aba and Warri. Many V.O.P. students were contacted and the interest created will be followed up.

✘ In East Nigeria an evangelistic effort is envisaged for the Advanced Evangelists in training at Ihie during the next long vacation in July this year. Brother Hulbert is in the midst of an evangelistic effort at Calabar. Pray for the success of these campaigns.

✘ We regret to hear of an emergency operation for Sister Hughes of Liberia. A sudden illness demanded an emergency operation in New York and the Hughes family are waiting for her recovery before returning to Liberia. We trust that it will not be long.

✘ The construction of the new science building at Bekwai is nearly completed and it is hoped that it can be occupied at the beginning of the second term which begins in mid May.

✘ Congratulations to Brother and Sister Ian Wolfe of Ihie on the arrival of your son, born April 3rd.

The most utterly lost of all days is the one in which you have not laughed once.—*Sunshine Magazine*, February, 1956.

A good scare is worth more to a man than good advice.—*Sunshine Magazine*, February, 1956.

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Editor - - - - - J. O. GIBSON.

Don't Give Up!

*'Twas only an ugly tomato worm,
Destructive and thoughtless and bold;
He fed on my plants, destroyed my food,
Ate up my hard-earned gold.*

*And I would have crushed him, cast him aside,
This worthless, pestiferous pest,
But a voice said, "Wait—you don't know
him yet,
Sit down for a bit and rest."*

*So I sat down to wait by that ugly old worm,
Saw him shrink to his chrysalis stage,
Saw him fashion his nest and then go to sleep
In his hardened and ugly brown cage;*

*And then as I waited what glory was this!
The cage opened up in the light
And out stepped a gauzy-winged beauty
so rare
I gasped in amaze at the sight!*

*'Twas a year ago now I stood in my room
A-teaching my girls and boys,
And there sat Henry, jangling my nerves
With his smartness, his tricks, and his
noise.*

*"Out with him," first was the thought of my
mind,
Away with this creature so crude,
Why should I cast my pearls before swine?
Why struggle with one so rude?"*

*But a voice said, "Wait—you don't know him
yet.
Calm down and rest for a while;
Before you take action, take a walk with
the lad—
Try him the second long mile."*

*So I held myself down and watched o'er that
boy,
Till a light came down from above
And touched the cold heart of that lad in
my room
And he answered the call of God's love.*

*That hard shell broke open before my dull eyes,
And out stepped a man for God;
And Lucifer snarled at losing his prize—
Now I looked for a gem in a clod.*

—Murl Vance